



by
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Chapter 01

Author's Note! Okay guys, I am sure this might be a little confusing, Camp Bam Bam is the title of book 2 of The Unit. If you have not read the Unit, then you would not have a clue as to what's really going on. However, feel free to read The Unit, and then you will understand what's going on here. For everyone who has read the Unit, I really hope that you like what I'm doing here. I also would like to thank my new editor. Boxerdude, thank you so much for helping out with this story. You have really helped make this chapter as good as it is. Please feel free to send comments.

Adam walked into the very crowded theater room, looked around at the over four hundred people seated in the room and then moved up onto the stage. He still couldn't keep up with everything that happened that day. It all started after that very strange dream that seemed to have come from Jimmy. Adam still had a hard time believing that Jimmy was as dangerous as the dream showed him, but he'd been assured that the younger boy was. Thankfully, Janet was watching out for him, cause Adam had way to much stuff to do right now.

Unfortunately, as far as Adam was concerned, that wasn't really the weirdest thing that happened. This morning, right after he woke up, and found out the rest of his brothers had the same dream, one of the Clan boys came and told him that Seth needed to talk to him ASAP. Adam remembered that Seth was the communications officer for the Clan, so off he went to CIC.

When he got there, Seth informed him that they were starting to get overwhelmed by calls for kids needing help. "We can handle a lot of kids," Seth had said, "But this many is way out of our league. Think you can help?"

Of course Adam said they would help, and to just give them a few hours to get ready. Adam then went around waking up Unit members, and letting them know that it was time to go back to work. They all gathered to head back, and Ark was nice enough to do the honors. That's when things got REALLY weird.

They appeared in the hanger bay, or at least what looked like a hanger bay... just not the one they had before. As everyone started looking around trying to figure out what was going on, Levi popped in right next to Adam scaring the shit out of him. "Sowwy... they keep sayin I shouldn't do that. But it's fun!" The little imp laughed. "So what ya think about the new place? I got a couple of friends to help me remodel. Here's a map that your puter guy made up. He's really cool too. Well... gotta go... see ya!" Then he was gone.

Adam looked at the map, and nearly fell over. The complex they had before was only four levels, this one was seven. Adam knew the other one could hold about a thousand people. This one looked to be able to hold many more. "Dailess?" Adam called out.

"Yes Adam?" The reply came from speakers all over the hanger bay. Adam could easily hear the laughter in the boy's voice. Adam didn't know where to start... so he just told him to forget it, and then set about exploring their new home. An hour later, all he could say was that he was very impressed with the work that was done. He knew he would have to explore more, but now he had work to do.

That's what he'd been doing for the last several hours, and now it was time to get everyone else involved.

Adam took his place behind the podium and looked out over the crowd. Most of the people there, he didn't know. But he trusted all of them. Some more than others of course, but he wouldn't have let anyone into the base that he didn't trust. However, the ones that he didn't know were all part of the Clan, so that made them okay. At least for now.

Adam took a deep breath then began once everyone was silent. "First off, thank you all for coming. I want to take a brief moment and introduce a few people. When I call your name, please stand up so that everyone can see who you are. First we have His Royal Highness, Prince Henry of Wales." Adam smirked a little bit as Harry stood, and many gasps were heard throughout the crowd.

"Second," Adam continued, "I would like to introduce the leaders of the Dragon Division of the Vulcan Special and Covert Operations. First we have Division Commander Jason Evans, Voice of the Dragon. Next to him is Commander Nathan Evans, Fire of the Dragon. Commander Victoria Evans, Heart of the Dragon, Commander Telez Zorin-Fisher, Wisdom of the Dragon, Commander Antony Parnell, Eyes of the Dragon, Commander Koth Evans, Talons of the Dragon. Also we have Sub-Commander Korris Evans, Chief of Security, and Lieutenant Oliver Evans, Psi-Corps." One by one, they all stood up and polite applause filled the room.

"SCREEECH!"

"Sorry," Adam smiled. "Finally, Oliver Evans' Spirit Guide, Iori!"

The young eagle on Oliver's shoulder clucked happily at Adam, then went back to preening Oliver's brown hair.

This did get some laughs from around the room. Adam waited till everyone quieted down again.

"Okay, now to bring everyone up to date on what's going on. As of 0930 this morning, all calls for help are being routed here. Also, in all the states that have adopted the title of "Safe Haven States", those being Iowa, South Carolina, Florida, Montana, Utah, Maine, Massachusetts, Vermont, New York, and North Carolina, they have agreed to help as much as possible. I just finished up a conference call with the Governors of all those states, and they have agreed to place rally points in all their major cities, and route all calls to them for police pick up. The Police or other officials will bring the children to the rally points, at which point the Clan members there will make the determination if they can go into the local social services system, or they come here."

He took a breath and then continued. "As far as the other states go, all the calls from them will require a team to go investigate, and they will have to make the same determination there. I will let Logan explain the rest of what is going on. I am leaving him in charge of the actual intake, and rescues, while Chang will head up any and all military action that might need to be taken. I have something else I need to see too. While all this is going on, I cannot bear the thought of those family members that died two days ago being forgotten about. So with that in mind, I am personally taking on the responsibility of planning and executing the funeral arrangements." Adam had to stop for a moment as he started to choke up.

I also have one final announcement to make” Adam started to say as he looked out at all those assembled, at least until the tears clouded his vision and he had to stop for a moment to try and collect himself. “As of this moment, this complex will officially be named Camp Bam Bam, in honor of those who sacrificed their lives so that others...that...others...” but he had to stop as he choked up again and it was only Logan reaching out and steadying him which allowed him to continue. “To those who sacrificed their lives so that others,...so that members of our family...so that they might live” he finally finished brokenly. Almost as every single Unit member in the room rose to their feet and with applause adding their wholehearted agreement to the proclamation just made, all of them, with at least a few tears in their eyes. Adam looked around at the support he saw there and was moved to more tears at seeing it as he held up his hand for silence. “Before I go, I think it would be appropriate for everyone here to know **EXACTLY** what those boys in that helicopter did on that afternoon. With a deep breath Adam reached down and pressed a button on the player in front of him. Silence reigned as another voice filled the room, Seth’s voice “Wow it's getting pretty crowded up here.....” As the minutes went by the room got to hear those final moments and what had transpired on that fateful day for the crew of Bam Bam. They learned what four boys had been willing to do for the love they held of their family. They heard Seth’s agonizing scream of “Do something” followed by Dennis telling them what the cost would be and soft cries could be heard as they listened to the two littlest ones determinedly say “Do it” and Eric adding “We can’t let em die” They listened as Dennis sent the bird on a course which they all knew could have only one ending even as Will screamed out at them asking them what they were doing. They heard Dennis softly say “What we have to” and finally they heard Dennis tell his brothers “I love you guys” as sobs filled the room before the final words, “Guess we're gonna find out bro.” brought muffled laughter through those sobs which ended abruptly with the explosion of static that filled the room before Adam reached silently down and shut the cockpit voice recorder off. No one in the room had a dry eye when their final run to save the lives of their family members had been played out and as Adam silently walked off the stage Logan took him in his arms and they just hung onto one another in a tight embrace crying into one another’s shoulders, taking strength from each other. When they finally let go, they looked up to find every single one of the Unit there at attention and saluting the picture and recording before it, as both dissolved into tears once more. No they would never be forgotten; Adam knew then, never.

Logan broke the hug, and then walked up and took his position behind the podium. He looked out at everyone out there, and started to get a bit nervous. This is easily the biggest thing that he had ever been in charge of. He took a second to gather his resolve, and then started. “Again, thank you all for coming. As you heard from Commander Casey, there are a few states that are helping us out, which will help us out quite a bit. However, there are a number of states that are not helping out as much as we would like. This is due to bureaucratic red tape that they are not willing to shred through, the way the other states have done. So with that in mind, we will have to just go in and remove the children that call, if that is warranted. This is how things will work. Commander Jason Evans, if you would be willing, I would like you to have the Dragon Division setting up inside the rally points. I would like at least two people per rally point, as they will be aided by the local officials.” Logan paused, and Jason gave an easy going nod of understanding.

“Okay, now for the rest, here is what I would like. First off, all Unit members that have full military training are to be in full dress uniform, carrying at least a side arm. Groups will be no less than four armed members, and with each group, there will be at least one adult. The reason for this is simple. Even though we know that the kids here are the ones that really have the authority to do removals, most people will not understand that. Therefore, the adults are there simply to lend credence to what is being done. Adults, if you have to, get involved, but remember the kids are in charge. Kids, use the adult the-

re if you need to. There is no reason to have something get out of hand that doesn't need to." Again Logan waited until he made sure everyone understood before he continued.

Of course, someone had to bring in a smart assed remark. Koth sniggered. "Let anyone try disobeying my big brother!" He giggled to Juan, who was on his right.

Jason reached over and patted Koth's shoulder. "Hush, Koth-boy. No giving away secrets, now," he said jokingly.

Logan smiled down, trying not to laugh. "I guess I should also mention at this time, and yes, Juan, I am speaking directly to you. We want to keep the body count as low as possible." Logan said with mirth in his voice.

That prompted Juan to give an "Oh man... do I gotta?"

Many voices from all around the room echoed in answer, "YES!"

"Jeez! You sound as bad as Korris... I like!" Koth giggled as he lightly tickled Juan's ribs.

"HEY!!!!" Juan cried out as he squirmed in his chair. "Don't do that!"

Koth gave him an open, toothy grin, and then quietly filed that bit of information away in his mind. 'He's ticklish; goin' to be fun!'

About that time, an elderly Japanese man suddenly appeared standing next to Logan. Of course Logan jumped, and gave a startled shriek. However, once he recognized the man, he calmed down. Of course, almost everyone else in the room gasped with shock, except for a few of the kids from the Dragon Division, who were looking around wondering why everyone was so shocked. They had seen him all along.

"Greetings my son, it is good to see you again." Isamu Takamora said, with a slight bow. Adam, Juan, Logan, Chang, Will, and Jory, all jumped to their feet to bow to their Master.

"Master..." Logan said, "It is good to see you again as well. How may we help you?"

"Actually child, it is not how you can help me, but how I would be able to help you. I have received word that you are in need of supplies. I have arranged to have supplies readied for you. You will find a full listing of what is available to you on this data pad." Isamu said as he handed Logan the pad he had in his hands. "I also noticed that you have Starfleet personnel installing transporters. That is very good, as you will need them. However, I must leave you again, as I know you have much to do. Be well, and follow your heart." Isamu then turned out toward the crowd. Every single member of the Unit knew who this man was, even though many of them had not actually met him. "That goes for all of you as well. You are all doing very important work, and it lightens my heart to know that you are doing so well." With that the old man bowed to everyone, and then turned and walked off the stage, Logan stared open mouthed as he scrolled through the pad that had been given to him, and that pretty much ended the meeting.

'God I hope these people can help.' Thirteen year old Chris Davis thought to himself as he headed for the rec center he saw on TV. 'It's either that, or I swear it... I'll just step in front of a bus, or something. I can't handle this anymore.' He said silently to himself as the tears came again. He knew being on his own was going to be tough, but he had no clue as to how bad it would really be.

He'd been on his own for just over a year, and things hadn't been too bad. He'd learned the areas to go to get food, and the areas to stay the hell away from. But it hadn't been good enough. Last night he got jumped in the park. The park he'd been staying in for the last two months. He thought it was safe enough there, and for a while it was. Well lit, and patrolled by the cops. Just stay hidden when they come around, and everything was cool.

That was until a group of older boys decided that he looked like a fun play toy, so they dragged him off into the bushes. He tried to fight them off, but one of them had hit him over the head and he was seeing stars. When he came to his senses, they already had him gagged and tied up. It wouldn't have been too bad had they not kicked him as hard at the end. Hell, he'd survived worse treatment by his step dad. The problem was, he was pretty sure he had some broken ribs.

He'd been able to check earlier, and thankfully he wasn't still bleeding from his butt. That was something he was thankful for. While it did hurt, none of them had been anywhere near as big as his step dad had been, so he was used to THAT kind of pain.

The beating wasn't as bad as his step dad did either, except for the last couple of kicks. Thankfully they stopped when they heard the ribs break. He never thought that the sound of bones breaking would be that loud, but it was. Now he was limping towards help, and hopefully a future away from all the hell that his life had been.

Clan Short, that's what the television had called them, something about a Vulcan clan on earth. He really didn't understand it, all he knew was they said they would help kids who needed it. He really wasn't sure what he would find, but he hoped they could help. It was definitely time to get off the streets.

He turned the corner, and saw the rec center just down the street. The place was surrounded by cops and reporters. 'What the fuck?' Chris thought to himself as he stopped and stared. He saw a police car come up to the building, and watched as two kids got out of the back, and went inside, escorted by the police. This was not what he expected it to be. For a brief moment, he thought that this could have been some type of trick, trying to lure street kids' right into the hands of the cops. But then why bring them here, and why were those kids not in handcuffs? Chris wasn't sure, but he figured he didn't really have much to lose.

It took a few minutes, but he finally got the courage up to keep walking. Mainly it was because the pain had started to come back, and he really just wanted it to go away. He started to slowly limp towards the rec center, and was almost there when one of the reporters saw him.

She screamed out a question at him, and that's all it took. Within a few seconds, reporters were surrounding him, and barraging him with questions. Microphones got shoved in his face, and bodies pressed all around him.. one of them pushed too hard, and he felt a hand press on his ribs, the ones he was

sure were broken. He couldn't help it, and screamed out in pain. For a second nothing could be heard but the whimpers of pain escaping from Chris.

Ken Savage looked into the camera and waited to hear from his producer that he was broadcasting live. When the signal came in, he started talking. "Thank you Samantha. Yes, I am here at the south Des Moines Rec Center, and as you said, it's been taken over by representatives of Clan Short. As you may already know, two days ago, a battle happened between Clan Short, and radical members of a religious organization. We are still waiting to hear who or what was in charge of the attack, but reports seem to indicate that they were targeting the Patriarch of the Clan, one Cory Short. Thankfully he was able to escape with minor injuries. However, that event has triggered a number of states, including Iowa to declare themselves "Safe Haven" states.

Ken took a second to let what he had said sink in, and then he continued. "What happened this morning is even more shocking. This morning at around 8:45 local time, an announcement was made that any and all children that need help can either call their local police, call Clan Short directly, or show up at one of the rally points spread throughout the United States. They would then be helped by Clan Short. From what I understand so far, this is a huge undertaking by not only local police, and Clan Short, but they have also involved the Federation Youth Services as well as a number of local and state offices including the Department of Social Services." Ken took another deep breath, and was about to continue when he heard a commotion off to the side.

He glanced over, and saw a young boy, maybe twelve or thirteen years old, and the throng of reporters rushing to him and surrounding him. Then he heard something that made his heart break. The kid let out a cry of obvious pain.

Ken never hesitated, he dropped the microphone, ripped the ear piece out of his ear, and ran over to the kid. Bodily, he threw himself through the crowd and wrapped himself around the boy there. The kid looked up with tears in his eyes. He was stunned for a second, because he looked so similar to his own son David. The reporters around him pushed back still trying to talk to the boy, and that pulled Ken back to what was going on. "Come on son, let's get you out of here."

From there, Ken lowered his shoulder, and pushed his way through the crowd, and was met by some police, who were also making their way to the group. They immediately formed up around the two of them, and hustled them into the building. Chris looked up with a small smile on his face and whispered a soft "thanks."

"No problem kiddo. When I saw what was going on, I just had to put a stop to it." Ken said as he pulled the kid into a tight hug. Chris whimpered again, and Ken jumped back like he'd been shot. "What's wrong?!" He asked with obvious concern in his voice, as he knelt down to be on the same level as the young boy.

"I... I think I got some broken ribs." Chris said as he looked down, with more tears falling. Ken was about to reply when a Vulcan man walked up to them.

"Greetings, may I be of assistance?" The man looked back and forth between Chris and Ken.

Ken stood up, and put an arm over Chris's shoulder, and then met the Vulcan's eyes. "Yes, this is.. umm..." Ken looked down with a question in his eyes.

"Chris...Chris Davis." He said softly, not really looking up at anyone.

The Vulcan man nodded, and then turned. "Please follow me Mr. Davis." Chris started to follow the man, but then turned back to Ken, and gave him a questioning look. Ken just nodded, took a step forward, and put his arm around the young boy's shoulder. Chris smiled slightly, then they followed the Vulcan man further into the building.

Ronnie walked into the office that was located inside the main control room. He knew that Adam and Logan wanted to talk to him, but he wasn't really sure why. As soon as they saw him, both Adam and Logan smiled, and waved him to a seat. "So, have you found your room yet?" Adam asked.

"Yeah, it's cool, they're set up like they used to be, but I'm a level lower than I was. This place is HUGE! Did you get a chance to see the rec deck yet?" Ronnie asked, his excitement overflowing.

Both Adam and Logan shook their heads. They had both been too wrapped up in what was going on to see everything in this place. "Well, you really need to." Ronnie said. "It's amazing. There's a huge pool with diving boards, a full sized football field with a track around the outside, and a working bowling alley with like sixteen lanes. A two screen movie theater, a putt putt golf course, AND an arcade with like a hundred games... and... and, I even saw, a basketball court, batting cages, and a couple smaller rooms I don't even know what they are for, but there surrounded by glass." Ronnie was so excited he was nearly jumping out of his seat. Adam and Logan, though, both had their jaws on the floor.

"Your shitting me!" Adam finally said, still not believing. Ronnie was about to reply when from somewhere in the room they heard a little boy's giggle. "It's true. Hope you like." And then the voice was gone. Adam and Logan knew who's voice that was and just shook their heads in both amusement and disbelief.

"Thanks Levi." Logan said softly, and then focused his attention back to Ronnie. "Okay kiddo, we got a job for you. Master Isamu gave me a list of supplies he has waiting for us." He said as he handed Ronnie the data pad. As Ronnie started looking it over, Logan continued. "I'd still like to know how the hell he got a hold of all of that."

Adam just gave a short chuckle. "Trying to figure out how Master does things is like trying to figure out how I can talk to all you guys in my head. I've just adopted the phrase... it just is. I don't care how it works, it just does. I don't care how Master always seems to know what we need before we even know we need it, I'm just glad he does."

The other two just nodded, and Ronnie went back to looking over his list. Finally he got down to the bottom, and looked up at his boyfriend's dad and pop. "You know what. I've done a lot of research into distribution centers, and to be honest, this looks a lot like it could be one for like Wal-Mart or something."

Logan sat up a bit straighter when Ronnie said that, and turned to his computer. "You know, you're right. Hold on, let me look at something." For the next few moments, Logan's fingers flew over the computer keyboard. He sat back suddenly with a huge grin on his face. "Well, I'll be damned, kiddo, and your right. The address on that list is for the Target distribution center in Ogden Utah. And if I had to guess, because of the fact there's not a single truck leaving that's loaded yet, they got a shit load coming in, I think that's exactly what it is."

Just at that moment, Isamu appeared behind Ronnie, and placed his hand on the boy's shoulder. "So Ronald, does that list meet with your approval?" He said with a small smile on his face.

"Umm... yes Master, it does... but... but.. I mean how?" Ronnie sputtered after getting over the shock of the older man just appearing behind him.

"Well, let me ask you this, what would the purpose be of purchasing the company, if I cannot use it to help my family?" This left all three boys with their jaws on the floor. Isamu couldn't help but laugh a bit. "Do not worry, Boys, everything will be explained shortly." He never waited for anyone to answer, he just bowed slightly, and walked out of the room.

Adam just laughed harder, and soon was joined by Ronnie and Logan. As soon as they calmed down, Adam looked at Ronnie. "Okay, here's the deal. I'm leaving in a few minutes to meet with Cory Short and a few others about the funerals, and I'm taking Jimmy and Kent with me. You our Quarter Master and have done a great job so far. **WE** want you to keep that position. Get whatever help you need, and start getting the supplies we need in here. Essentials first. We've only been at this for an hour, and we've already got over a hundred new kids going through intake. The first ones should be done shortly, and we need to have a place for them to go that's ready. I know we have the supplies to handle that many, but I think this may just be the tip of the iceberg. We could fill this place in a week. That's three thousand bodies, and I know we don't have those kinds of supplies on hand." Adam finished up, and looked at Ronnie to see what his reaction would be. He knew he was dumping a lot of pressure on this little kid, but he was sure Ronnie could handle it.

Ronnie, for his part, was more than a bit nervous, but also excited. This would be one hell of a challenge, and he loved challenges. Finally he looked up at Adam and Logan. "I'll take care of it. You both got a lot of other shit to worry about. Don't worry about supplies, I'll get a few people to help, and we'll have everything ready when it's needed." He said a little bit more confidently than he actually felt.

Chris appeared in the middle of a huge room, easily the largest indoor room he'd ever seen. He was still really nervous, as he had never been transported anywhere before, but Ken had been with him the entire time, and even now, when Chris knew that Ken's boss was calling all the time, Ken just shrugged it off, and stayed with him. He hadn't asked why Ken was being so nice, Chris was just really glad that the man was. He was the first man that had been nice to him just because. The teachers at school, when he went, were nice to him, but they had to be, it was their job. Ken was nice, and he didn't have to be. Chris really felt comfortable with the man, but he still didn't know why.

He didn't have much time to think about it, because almost as soon as they appeared, there was a kid, who was no older than eight or nine who came running up to them. Chris almost had to laugh because the kid was wearing a military uniform. But then he noticed that there were a lot of people in similar uniforms all over the place.

"Hey there!" The kid said excitedly. "You guys new here?"

Chris just nodded, however, Ken spoke up. "Yes, this is Chris Davis, and he needs a place to stay." Chris looked up as the man squeezed his shoulder, and smiled softly. "He also needs some medical attention."

The boy stopped suddenly and looked him up and down. "Are you hurt, we can take you to the medical ward right away?"

"No," Chris said, "it's not that bad. I've had lots worse."

"Okay, if you're sure." The little boy said, as he looked him over once more. "My name is Ray. If you want, I can help you figure out where you need to go." The boy looked so cute, as he blushed a little bit, and Chris couldn't help but squat down so he could be eye to eye with the boy.

"That would be great, I'm a little scared right now, and if you could help me out, that would be great." The boy immediately brightened back up, grabbed the boy's hand, and started to lead him deeper into the room.

Ken stayed right with Chris, but did take a moment to look around and was astounded at everything he saw. He'd spent some time, before his wife died that made him have to be home for the boys, covering the military and what he saw around him was a military base. If it wasn't for the age of the kids wearing uniforms, they would have been just like the soldiers scurrying around any number of bases that he had been on.

They finally got to a few tables that were set up near the back of the room with more kids sitting behind them, all of them with computers. Ray walked up to the girl sitting behind the first table. "Hey Mommy, I got another one that just showed up."

The girl looked up, and her smile brightened. Ken thought he saw the start of a tear, but she quickly wiped it away, and looked over at Chris and Ken. Ken was stunned. This girl couldn't be more than sixteen or seventeen, yet she had a son that's seven or eight?

"Hey there, welcome to Camp Bam Bam, I'm Emily, and I'll start your intake process, but before we begin, do either of you two have any questions?" She asked as she looked first at Chris, who shook his head, then to Ken. Ken had lots of questions, his reporter nature coming to the fore, but he pushed that aside, cause now was not the time. Right now, his full attention was on making sure Chris was okay. "Okay, then let's get started. Ray, you wanna go get your new brother, then you two can show these two around when we're done."

"Sure!" Ray said, and then bounced off with a grin. Emily watched him go with a smile on her face, then turned back to Chris and Ken, then motioned for them to sit on the chairs in front of the table. Once they were seated she began.

"Okay, first off, I am going to be giving you a lot of information, and asking a lot of questions. If you have questions at any time, feel free to stop me, and I'll answer them as best as I can. Okay?" She said, the entire time, looking right at Chris, who nodded.

"First, is this your father?" She asked while looking at Ken. Chris quickly filled her in with what happened earlier. After he was done, she smiled at Ken, "it's nice to know there are some adults out there that are willing to help kids out, even when it might not be in their best interests." As if on cue, Ken's cell phone rang. He looked at it, then hit the ignore button for the twentieth or so time this hour, this time though, he shut it off.

"Sorry, that was work." He said with a bit of a blush.

"No problem, shall we begin?" Emily asked, while turning to the computer. Chris nodded, a bit scared at what the questions would be, and reached out a hand to Ken, who squeezed it reassuringly.

"Okay, we'll begin with the easy ones." She then went about asking name, age, his date of birth, she asked for his social security number, which he didn't know, then asked about his parents. That's when he started to get really nervous, but all she wanted to know was easy details, like names, ages, mom's maiden name, things like that.

After a few minutes of the easy questions, she leaned back, and looked Chris over. "Okay Chris, now things will get a little tougher for you. But before we go there, I want to assure you that everything you tell me goes no further than me, and the computer file, which only six other people have access to."

Emily watched Chris's eyes, and knew he was scared, so she decided to try and make this easier for him. "Chris," she said, her voice softer, and holding a lot of comfort, "I can tell just by looking in your eyes, that you've been through a lot. Please believe me when I say that nothing you have gone through, or things that you've done will be held against you. If you want, we can ask Ken to leave us alone..." She never got to finish, as Chris started to shake his head no.

"Okay, he stays, but maybe if I tell you a little bit about my past, it'll help you feel more at ease. See, I'm seventeen now, and have been here for almost a year. However, before that, and since I was thirteen, I was living on the streets. I just couldn't deal with my dad raping me anymore. It happened every night since I was eight, and I just couldn't handle it anymore, so I left." She said, the emotions playing across her face, and a few tears threatening to spill over. "For two and a half years I lived on the streets of Seattle Washington. Then I tried to get down to Florida, figuring things would be nicer there. I ended up hitching rides from a lot of truckers. Most of them wanted sex in exchange for the rides. It was the most terrible time of my life, and I only made it to Salt Lake City, before I couldn't handle it anymore, mainly because the last guy got really rough."

She paused for a moment to wipe the tears that were falling. Chris was also crying, their stories were real close. He looked up at Ken, who was wiping away his own tears, then looked back at Emily.

"Thanks, it does make me feel a bit better to know that you know what I went through, mine was pretty close. My step dad was the one who liked to come to my room at night, and I tried to tell mom, but she wouldn't believe me. So I left. Things were good for about a year, but then last night, I got jumped by a bunch of guys, and they tied me down and... and raped me." Chris couldn't keep going at that point, and Ken gasped with surprise. He guessed Chris had been hurt, but he never guessed that.

Emily handed him a tissue, which he used to blow his nose, then looked back at her, determination shining in his eyes to finish his story. "The... rape... didn't hurt that bad, my step dad was a lot bigger than any of them, but then they started to hit and kick me. I guess they finally left when I passed out. I woke up this morning, and went into a fast food joint to get cleaned up. When I came out, I saw you guys on the TV, and figured I had nothing to lose."

Emily nodded, fighting back her own tears. It was hard to remember that there were actually adults out there that cared about their kids. As a matter of fact, and a fact that she had to keep reminding herself of all the time, was that kids like her and Chris were the exceptions, not the rule. Most parents did love their kids.

"Okay, so I don't have to ask about your sexual activity. But please understand when I say we are going to have to check you for any STD's during the physical. Don't worry though, since we are part of a Vulcan clan, we have access to Federation tech, which means even if you did catch something, we'll have you fixed up in no time." Emily said, trying to be as reassuring as possible.

Chris did feel a little bit better. He knew all too well the dangers of STD's, and had tried to steer clear of all of that. But the guys last night didn't really give him a chance. "Now, the last thing I need to ask is about drugs. I need to know if you have ever done any, or are addicted to any." She asked watching Chris very closely, she didn't think Chris would be addicted to anything, but she also knew that kids who live on the streets sometimes get addicted cause it helps them cope with what their lives are like. "And before you answer, understand that we will know when we do the physical." She left the rest unsaid.

Chris just shook his head, "Nope, never got hooked on that shit, although I did try pot once, about eight months ago." Chris held his head high. He knew that a lot of street kids did drugs, and it was something he was proud of, that he never did.

"Okay then, we're all done here. Also Chris, thanks for being so honest, it really does help us here. I think you'll do fine here, and if you ever need anything, just ask for me, and I'll help out if I can. Okay?" She said while standing. Chris and Ken both stood at the same time, and they shook hands, and then Emily pointed them off to the next place they had to go.

Twenty minutes later, Chris walked away from the other table, now really confused. They had given him a card and told him that it would be what he used if he wanted to buy anything that wasn't already provided for him. The kid there said it already had five hundred dollars on it, and that the money was a gift from the Clan. He was also told that food and regular cloths were provided, but if he wanted anything special he would have to buy it himself. He was told that he would earn more money, mostly for doing things like going to class, and helping keeping the place clean. The normal things a kid would do anyways. He was starting to think that this place was too good to be true. But then he was told he would have to have the physical next. That brought him back to reality.

He walked up to the waiting room outside of the hospital ward, and went to talk to the kid behind the desk. He was still trying to figure out why the adults that were around were letting the kids do all the work, but he figured since he hadn't seen all that many adults, maybe the kids really did run things.

The kid took some information down, and then called someone from the back. Another kid, who couldn't have been any older than him came out wearing a doctor's lab coat, and motioned him back. Ken went to go with him, but was told that only the individual going through intake was allowed in he-

re, but he would be out in an hour or so. Chris gave Ken a big hug, "Don't worry, I'll be okay... you'll be here when I get out... right?"

Ken bent down and hugged Chris, being mindful of the ribs, and kissed him on the forehead. "Don't worry kiddo, I'll be right here when you're done. I'm even going to ask if I can bring my sons here for you to meet. I'm sure you'll like them." Chris had a huge grin on his face, and hugged Ken again. Then turned and walked into the doctor's office area.

Ken walked away from the Doctor's office area, and found a seat off to the side of the big hanger bay. He sat down hard, still not really believing everything he'd seen today. He broke down and just cried for a few minutes. He cried for what he heard that both Chris and Emily had gone through, but also for the other kids who were here. He was sure that there were many other kids here, whose stories were as bad or maybe even a lot worse.

Finally he pulled out his phone and turned it back on. "Twenty six messages, I wonder if I still have a job?" Ken thought to himself, as he pulled up the voice mails. Five minutes later, he closed his cell phone, it wasn't good. His boss was threatening to fire him for walking out on a live broadcast. He really wouldn't have cared too much. The guy worried more about ratings than he did about people. He would have quit a long time ago, but he had three boys that he had to worry about.

He nearly jumped out of his skin when his cell phone went off in his hands. He looked at the number, and sighed. It was his boss. "Hello." He said, and wasn't able to get a word in edgewise for the next five minutes. Finally he just couldn't deal with the bull shit anymore and almost screamed into the phone. **FINE! GO AHEAD AND FIRE ME! I HAD TO HELP THE KID OUT, AND I DON'T GIVE A SHIT IF YOU DON'T LIKE IT!** Then he hung the phone up. He fell back into his seat, and dropped his head into his hands. "What am I going to do now?"

"Mind if I have a seat?" Someone asked, and Ken looked up to see a woman in her early thirties smiling back at him. He jumped to his feet, and turned to face her. "Sure... umm... sorry about that."

"No problem, I'm Janet Hayes, and I could guess that your boss wasn't happy with you?" She said, as she sat down on the bench, and Ken sat down next to her.

"Yeah I guess you could say that... Wait a minute, how'd you know?" He asked in surprise.

"Easy," Janet said with a laugh, "Emily's one of my kids, and after Chris left, she told me the whole story. Then we watched the news from earlier and saw what you did. I would like to thank you for that."

"Oh, I kinda forgot that was live." Ken said blushing a bit. "I just couldn't let Chris get mobbed without stopping it. But now it looks like I'm out of a job." He said in dejection.

"Maybe not." Janet said with a smile on her face. "See, we also looked up your background, and found out a bunch of stuff. Like the fact that you used to cover the military till your wife died, leaving you

with three boys to raise. We also know that you've turned down better jobs because you wouldn't be able to be with your family." Ken's mouth was wide open, and Janet couldn't help but laugh.

"When you get to know the kids around here, you'll know that they can uncover anything, as long as it's on a computer somewhere. But I must say that I can't help but respect your dedication to your family. We're all one big family here, and we have to be. You know what happened a few days ago, and it's hard for all of us. More than sixty members of our family died in one day." She had to stop as the tears came again. She hadn't really had the time to grieve for the kids that died, but there were other things they had to do now.

Ken reached out, and gave her a small hug. "I don't know if I could handle it if even one of my boys got hurt. I can't imagine what you're going through right now."

Janet wiped her eyes with a handkerchief that she had, and then turned back to him. "Thanks, it's hard, but we're managing. But let's get back to the reason I came over here. I can gather by the conversation I overheard that you might be interested in a new job?"

"Yeah, I would love one, but I have to think of my kids, and that place was the only place that would actually work around my schedule." Ken explained to her.

"Well how does this sound to you. We've been getting hammered with calls from the press asking for information. We've decided that we need someone to be a press liaison. We were thinking one of the kids, but it would be nice to have someone with some experience." She held up her hand to stop him from interrupting. "Please, let me finish. This would include housing here in Camp Bam Bam for you and your boys. Full health care for all of you, school for your boys, as well as training in a field of their choice for the two older ones, your youngest would be eligible for that when he turns ten, also a salary of fifty thousand a year." She finished up with a smile.

Ken sat there trying to absorb what he was just told, he couldn't believe it. It would be an increase from his current salary, but he just wasn't sure if his boys would like it. "I... I appreciate the offer, but I'd have to talk it over with the boys."

Janet's smile widened. "Good, if you had answered any other way, I might have had second thoughts." She was about to continue when another boy approached.

"Hey Mom," The boy said, and Ken turned to look at him. He was about thirteen years old, and had the same sandy blond hair, and bright blue eyes that Janet had, so he guessed this was her natural son. He'd done some research of his own before heading out to cover the story this morning.

The boy hugged his mother, then turned to face Ken. "Hey, I'm Logan, and you must be Ken." He said as he held out his hand.

Ken shook it, and nodded, and the boy went on, looking over to his mother. "So did he accept?"

She laughed, and ruffled his hair. "Not yet, he said he wanted to talk it over with his boys."

"Good, I thought you'd say that." Logan said while looking back at Ken. "How much did she offer you?"

"LOGAN!!" Janet said, but Ken couldn't help but laugh.

"She offered fifty thousand a year." Ken got a bit worried at the look that came over the boy's face.

"Fifty thousand?!?! Mom, that's not nearly enough, you should have said a hundred!" Logan said looking to his mom, but then someone called him from across the room, and he looked over, and then back shaking his head. "Shit, gotta go, I'll be back later. Hope to meet your boys, Ken." He said, and then was off.

Ken was speechless, but Janet was laughing. "Well Ken, I guess it's a hundred thousand a year." Ken looked at her in shock, and she just laughed harder. "Ken, if you take the job, you need to remember something. The kids here are in charge. I may be his mother, but when he said to offer you more money, I kinda have to. It's really hard to get used to, but the kids here have yet to prove us wrong that they really can handle things."

She looked around for a second, then motioned for him to follow. He did, still not being able to make any words come out. She led him over to one of the helicopters that was sitting off to the side. Ken knew from his time covering the military that this was a Black Hawk Helicopter. He could also tell that it had been modified. "You see this helicopter?" She asked, as she ran her hand over the fuselage.

He nodded, and he and Janet walked around it, and he looked real close at the missile pods on the side. They were loaded he noted. "This is Puff, named after the Magic Dragon from the song. This is also the flagship of our helicopter fleet. As you can see it's fully armed, with a few modifications." She paused and waited for him to nod his understanding, and then she continued. "Currently there are only four people who are qualified to operate this helicopter on a combat mission." Again she waited for a second, and when he nodded clearly wondering where she was going with this. "The oldest one of those four is fifteen year old Sarah Martin." She said, and watched as Ken spun to look at her, with his mouth agape.

"Damn mom, and you call me mean." Ken looked over and saw a laughing boy walk over to them. He looked to be twelve years old, with platinum blond hair, almost white, and bright shining blue eyes that danced with humor. "Hey there, I'm Will..." He said as he ran his hand lovingly over one of the missiles on the side. "So, you like my baby?"

Ken couldn't help but smile, still not really believing any of this. "Ken, I'd like you to meet one of my sons, William Casey, he's the Unit's Air Wing commander."

Will stuck out his hand, and said with a laugh. "In other words, if it flies, it's mine. If you want, I'll take you up for a flight." Ken was now totally stunned about everything he'd heard. But his brain was starting to fire again.

"Oh boy, this really is a lot to take in. Ummm... Janet, do you think I could get transported back home, and bring my boys here for a bit. I want them to be able to look around, and get to know the place, and I promised Chris I would be back for him when he got done with the physical."

Janet smiled she knew that he didn't believe everything, but he would soon. Hell there were times SHE didn't believe everything either. "Sure, Will why don't you show Ken to the transporters, and make sure he gets a communicator, so he can contact us when he's ready to come back."

"Sure thing mom. Come on Ken. I still like flying better, but I guess the transporters are okay too."

Ken appeared back in the hanger bay about forty five minutes later, still a bit in shock, not just from what happened earlier, but what he found out from his eldest son when he got home, Ken Jr. or Kenny as he liked to be called, told his father that most of today in school had been about the Clan, and everything that they'd been doing lately. It seems that his teachers had thought that it would be a good idea to use the Clan as a teaching aid today, so they used the examples the Clan portrayed, and tried to explain to the students who they were, and what they did. Kenny knew more about them than Ken did by this point. He was also really excited to meet everyone, and instantly agreed to the move. The other two weren't as excited as their brother.

Ken's other two boys, Travis and Davey, were both looking around in wonder at everything in the hanger bay. Ken started to lead them towards the doctor's offices when they were met by two young boys, Ken knew Ray, as they had met earlier, but wasn't sure who the other boy with him was. "Hey Ken!" Ray said as the two boys got up to them. "This is my new brother Josh." Ray said in the way of an introduction.

Ken couldn't help but laugh, until he saw that the other little boy looked scared to death. Ken knew there was something wrong, so he squatted down to try and make himself smaller. "Hey their Josh, how are you doing?"

"Fine sir." Came the quiet answer, and Ken could see the boy was shaking a bit. Something was wrong here.

"It's okay Josh, this is the man I told you about earlier. The one that helped the older boy here. He's a good man. Even mom said he was... remember?" Ray said still holding the other boys hand.

Josh nodded a bit, and looked up at Ken. He was still scared, but it wasn't as much. "You... you met momma Emily?" He asked, he was still quiet, but it wasn't filled with fear like his voice had been earlier.

"Yes I did, and she's a very nice woman." Ken said, almost calling her a girl, but thought better of it. He must have said the right thing, because he got a shy little smile from Josh. "Would you guys like to meet my boys?"

Ray nodded eagerly, and Josh gave a slight nod, so Ken stood back up, and put his hand over Kenny's shoulder. "This is my oldest, Kenny, and he's thirteen, next to him is Travis, who just turned eleven and then my youngest is Davey, and he's eight."

Ray shook all their hands, and then Josh did too, although Ken could tell he was still scared. He was very impressed with his boys, they were all very gentle with the older of the two boys. It was kind of sad, Ken could tell that Ray was at least a year or two younger than Josh, but Ray seemed to be older. "I'm Ray, and I'm seven, and this is my big brother Josh, and he's nine. Hey, would you guys like to get the tour. We just got done giving one to another new boy, and we were waiting for someone else, but we could show you guys around too. This place is really neat. We stopped to play in the arcade last ti-

me, this time I wanna play putt putt golf." Ray bubbled almost a mile a minute, and Ken could see that Josh seemed excited too.

He looked at his boys, and both Travis and Davey looked excited, but Kenny didn't really. "What do you guys say?" The younger two immediately started to nod their heads up and down, while Kenny kinda shook his head.

Ken knew what was on Kenny's mind and stopped himself from laughing. "Okay, you two can go with them, but I want you back in an hour..."

Ray interrupted him. "Umm.. Mr. Ken, if you want, you can get a hold of me anytime with the communicator you have. And then we can meet you when you're done. Would that be okay?"

Ken nodded, "yeah, that'll work. You two be good, okay?"

Ken barely got that out before the four boys ran off. He chuckled and put his arm around Kenny. "Come on, let's go see if Chris is done yet?" Ken almost laughed more as he noticed Kenny blush a bit. Kenny had come out to his dad two months ago, and Kenny was really worried how his dad would take it. But Ken made sure to let Kenny know that he loved him no matter what, and that his being gay didn't bother him at all. When Ken had told his son about Chris, Kenny immediately wanted to meet him, while no one knew if he was gay or not, it didn't matter to Kenny. He really just wanted to meet the boy. Kenny was rather a loner at school, and Ken had been on him about making new friends, so Ken was happy that he wanted to meet Chris.

Kenny had really withdrawn into himself before he came out. That's how Ken knew there was something wrong. Kenny still hadn't really made it past that yet.

They had just arrived at the waiting room when Chris walked out. He looked drained, but a smile sprang up on his face when he saw Ken. He rushed over and slammed into the man. "You're here. I didn't know if you would be." Chris was fighting back tears. He wasn't used to an adult actually caring about him.

"Hey there little guy... no tears. I told you I'd be here. And I am. Now, there's someone I want you to meet. This is my oldest son Kenny." He pried Chris away, and turned him towards his eldest. He couldn't help but smile as both boys looked rather bashful all of a sudden. He knew that Chris was a good looking boy, and so was Kenny. Chris reached his hand out, and Kenny took it. They both felt a little electric shock, and Ken could only smile as the boys suddenly didn't know anyone else was there for a few seconds.

They all walked out of the office, Ken with an arm around both boys, when they got another shock. A huge man came walking up to them. Ken knew who he was right away, and knew that Kenny would know him too. It seemed Chris did as well by the gasp that escaped his mouth.

"Heya, I'm Hulk Hogan." He said to Chris, who shook the offered hand. "I'm here to show you little dudes around, and show you to your room, if you want." Ken was blown away by this. Hulk Hogan, the wrestling legend, was there, and helping to show people around. This was just too much.

"Uhhh... okay... can Kenny come too?" Chris stammered, while looking up to Ken for approval. Ken nodded, and Hulk clapped his hands together.

"Sure thing little dude, come, this place is great." He said placing a huge hand on the shoulders of both boys, and leading them away from Ken. Ken really wasn't sure how much more he could take. But figured he'd better get ready for more. This place was full of surprises. But he'd already made his decision. He was certain the younger boys would agree, and he really couldn't turn down this offer.

He turned to go find Janet, to tell her he was going to take her up on the offer, and almost ran into a boy that was walking up to him. In his hands he had a state of the art video camera, one that would make most news agencies drool. He had a huge grin on his face as he looked the thing over. Right behind him was a smiling Janet.

"Excuse me sir, are you Ken Savage?" The boy asked; he couldn't have been more than fourteen or fifteen, with black hair and emerald green eyes.

"Yes I am; can I help you with something?" Ken asked wondering what was going on, but having a pretty good idea what it was.

"I'm Gordan and was told that you could help teach me how to use this. I'd seen this thing in a bunch of magazines, but never thought I'd actually get the chance to use it." The boy was bubbling over with excitement. Ken would almost swear he saw the kid's jeans tented out.

Ken looked up at Janet, who just smiled. Ken nodded his head, and she got the message. "Hey Gordan hold on a second, I need to talk to Mr. Savage before you get a hold of him."

Gordan looked up and blushed a bit. "Okay Aunt Janet." He said, then moved off a bit, going right back to fiddling with the camera.

"Sorry about that; he got so excited when we asked him about which camera we should get. He ran all the way to his room and came back with this dog eared magazine. He said if we wanted to go with the best we needed to get that."

Ken smiled back at her. "That's no problem, and he's right. There's no better camera on the market. I used to be a camera man myself, and that thing is great. Never got to use one, but I know people who have."

"Great, Gordan was a camera fanatic when he was still in school, from what he says, but then he had some things happen at home that forced him to come to us. But that's another story. So, what do you think of our offer?" She asked while motioning him off to the side so they could sit.

"Well barring anything dramatic happening, I think I'll take you up on that offer. But there is something I need to ask first. I've heard that you guys can certify adoptions in an instant. Is that true?"

"Well, yes and no." Janet responded. "It's a bit complicated, but in essence yes. I don't think I can, but almost any of the kids can. All that is required is that both the child and adult agree to it and that one of the clan telepaths okay it."

Ken's mouth dropped..."telepaths?!?!"

Janet smiled slightly. "Yes, see that's one of the things about us that many people don't really know. There are a lot of the kids around here with some very special abilities. It's those abilities, as well as huge hearts that allow them to do what they do. That and I really think their age helps them a lot. See, the way I look at it, most adults "know" what they can and can't do. Kids don't have that hang up. No one has ever told them they can't do something, so they figure out how to do it."

Ken had a perplexed look on his face as he thought about what she just said. "You know, I never thought about it like that. But you know it makes sense. If you don't know you can't do something, you'll try until you figure out you can't... or until you figure out how to do it."

"Exactly. These kids are perfect examples of that. All of these kids are gifted in some way or another, but most of them only have one gift... a really big heart. I think before we go any further, you should know a few things about the Unit in specific before you really accept." For the next hour, Janet told Ken all about project Genesis, and how these kids came to be where they're at. To say Ken was stunned would be an understatement. But in the end, he now knew he would have to be a part of this.

Daileass was focusing his entire attention on the incoming calls, routing and rerouting them so that the best people answer the relevant calls. Some were going to Orlando, some to Charleston, and many to other places in between. Of course, a large amount were being answered by the Unit, and all had to be checked over first by Daileass.

If it was not so serious, he would have been having fun, but since the rest of his abilities seemed redundant, he was getting bored.

'I can help, Daileass' came a voice he did not recognise.

'You are not a caller. Who are you?' the thirteen year old AI asked curiously. The other voice seemed strange, yet calming.

'I am Draco, a Vulcan AI and part of Technical Ops for the Dragon Division. I, too, am handling 'Clan Short' calls from the European Protectorates, just to give you state side people a breather, but I too am... bored. 'Eyes' is with you, so I cannot play chess to relieve my stress.'

'Well, to be honest, the person I mostly play games with, Alvin, is rather busy. Would you be familiar with a version of Chess called 3-D Chess?'

'Of course; it is a Vulcan game that was based off human Chess.'

'Oh cool... wanna play?' Daileass asked with obvious excitement

Equally excited, Draco bubbled, 'Bugsy bein' black!'

Juan looked over at Koth as they walked back into the control room, he stopped and pulled Koth off to the side a bit. "Hey Koth, I hope you don't mind, but I had asked that we be teamed up."

Koth smiled at the shy look Juan was giving him, and giggled, "'Corse not! But, ummm... if I may ask, why? Why me?"

Juan took a deep breath, not really used to the feelings he was having inside. "Well see... I talked to Tony last night, while we were going to sleep, and well, we talked about you." Juan said, but then rushed to keep going. "I was just really curious about the stuff that happened in your past. I mean the things that were dumped in my head... and... well I just thought that we could be friends, and stuff, cause... well, cause I went through a lot of stuff like that too." Juan finished up, blushing a bit.

As he had been saying it, Koth's smile grew broader and broader; and Juan saw that as he stood there blushing. "So, you'd not mind either if I told ya I've been kinda following what you've been doin' for the past month or so?" Koth asked, his own face darkening noticeably.

"You have?" Juan asked surprised, "But why? I mean what makes me special, or.. or whatever"

Koth's eyes widened, and then he looked a bit sad. "You're special 'cos you're you, Juan."

Juan's eye's filled slightly at the soft sound of Koth's voice.

Koth continued, "And 'cos you're real cute, you fight honorably, you've got a cute butt, you're funny and exciting to watch when you're angry, and you're cute."

Juan was about to reply, even though his face was so red, he could have died of embarrassment, when they heard the Intel boys speak up loudly. "Hey there... does anyone know how to speak Spanish?"

Jason, who had been watching the two boys near the door with a mysterious smile on his face, moved over to Simon. "I do. What's up, Chipmunk?" Jason asked, a gentle smile on his face.

Simon looked up, and he took off the head set. "I got a kid here that sounds like he needs help, and I can tell he's speaking Spanish, but I don't know enough of it to understand everything he's saying."

Jason held out his hand, and Simon handed the head set to him. Everyone watched as Jason spoke with the kid on the phone for a little more than a minute in rapid fire Spanish. Finally he handed the headset back to Simon. "Don't worry about him, he'll be okay." Then he looked around at the other kids on phones, sixteen of them in all. And spoke up for everyone to hear. "Hey guys, put your calls on hold for a second." Once they did he closed his eyes for a brief moment, and then opened them while all sixteen of them, including Logan gasped. "There you go," he said with a little laugh, "now you guys can speak every language in the world."

Koth giggled from his corner with Juan, "My bro is going to have just too much fun with that, Juan."

They both slowly moved over to join the others, and without even noticing it, Juan had shyly taken Koth's hand.

Jason looked down at his Klingon brother, winked, and then ruffled Juan's hair. "You guys are cute."

Juan immediately pulled his hand out of Koth's and jumped back a bit. Sputtering he tried to protest, however, Jason quickly put Juan's mind at ease. "Easy little guy, there's nothing wrong if you like my little brother. I happen to know he doesn't mind at all." Jason said smiling. Juan looked over at Koth who nodded shyly, and Juan couldn't help but let a small smile play on his face.

Koth moved over towards his new friend, then looked back at Jason seriously.

Jason smiled, "I won't 'listen', Koth-boy. Promise."

Koth nodded with a smile, then leaned in and whispered into Juan's ear. "I kinda know what you're worried 'bout, Juan. If you want that 'stuff' to be 'more than friends' then don't worry that I know more than you. It'll only be what you want to do, and I'd never hurt you. I'm not like a lot of Klingons... I'm kinda... a big gentle softy..." he trailed off, his heart in his eyes as he pulled back to look into Juan's. "I kinda like you a whole heap too, Juan..."

Juan was lost in those eyes, and was about to respond when they got an interruption. "We got someone who needs a rescue!" Alvin said loudly.

Logan looked around and spotted Juan and Koth standing there. "Juan, Koth, you're up."

Juan smiled a bit and said softly while looking down. "Tell me something I don't know."

Koth giggled, moved in quickly to lightly kiss Juan's lips, and then grabbed his hand. Together they ran over to Logan and Alvin, while Juan was still open mouthed at the kiss.

Koth saluted with his free hand, and cheekily asked, "Okay, who needs the two cutest guys in the whole wide world to save 'em, Mr Hayes?"

"It's Logan, 'little brother'. Can't have my Juan's new boyfriend calling me Mr, can I?" Logan chuckled before turning to Alvin. "You're up, little bro," he said, while Koth and Juan blushed to their neckline.

Then Logan looked around, "Okay, who do we have for an adult?" He looked around and saw Joe speaking softly to Sarek's wife Amanda, in the corner. They both looked up when Logan said that. Logan knew that Joe couldn't go, as he was still stuck in the wheelchair, and he wasn't about to ask Amanda to go.

He started to look around, however, Amanda spoke up. "I'll go."

Jason and Logan shared a look. "I'm not sending the Lady Amanda off without more than two," Logan said firmly.

Jason and Koth both nodded. "I'm good, and I know Juan is good, but she's my grandma; we need two more," Koth said, his blush receding.

"I don't think I should. I've got a feeling about it," Jason trailed off. He then tapped his communicator, "Kor, you there?"

"You pick the most damnable times to call, Jace!" came Korris' reply after a ten second pause.

Logan sniggered, "Why? You and Chang 'sword fighting'?" he asked, not referring to a sparring match. Alvin and Simon sniggered as well.

"I was attempting to locate his tonsils," came Chang's dignified reply.

"Umm, Korris: you didn't tell him Klingons don't HAVE tonsils?" Koth asked curiously.

*"I saw no reason to tell him that, **Koth-boy**. We'll be there in a moment, Jason."* and the signal went quiet.

Juan was on his butt, laughing, and Koth soon joined him. "By the way," Juan said as the others regained some of their self-control, "Koth and me are friends. We're not boyfriends..." He looked into Koth's eyes, and added without thinking, "... yet."

Koth grinned, and kissed him again.

"Oh, so it is not just Chang finding tonsils, kid bro?" Korris asked as he came into the room, Chang right behind him.

Both kids stood up fast and blew raspberries at their older brothers.

Chang smiled slightly, and then looked over to Logan. "What is it that you needed, brother?"

Logan, who had just barely managed to stop laughing, looked at the four standing there, then over at Amanda. "We have a rescue to go on, however, Amanda is the only adult that is able to go. We don't like the idea of sending her with only two people, even if they are Juan and Koth. So we would like you two to go with them.

"Your reasoning is sound," Korris said seriously. "I think between two Klingons, a gun-happy ten year old and a Samurai, she'll have all the protection she needs."

Juan couldn't help but put a cheesy smile on his face, "HEY! I resemble that remark."

Chang shook his head and looked at Logan. "What is the situation?"

Logan looked down at Alvin, who took over, grin falling from his face. "Okay, situation we have is this. Eight year old Jason Smith just called worrying about his friend, seven year old Reuben Jacobson, who lives with his stepfather. Father died before he was born, mother died two years ago. According to Jason, the abuse started then. Jason's parents have been trying to help, but local social services would not intervene. Jason was supposed to meet Reuben in the park, and he did not show up. When Jason stopped by his friend's house, he heard the step father yelling, and heard some crashing. Parents called police, but they would not investigate." Alvin told them in a very professional manner, although he did have a hard time containing his anger. "You'll be going to Sin City itself. Las Vegas Nevada."

Logan also could not keep the anger off his face, "You guys get going." He said to the four, and Amanda, who was already heading towards the door. He then turned to Alvin. "Unless you're needed for a call, I want you to look into why this piece of shit is being protected."

As Amanda was joined with the four boys, she heard Korris call into his comm, "Draco, do you have the address?"

"Of course, and I take it you want me to transport all five of you?" the AI replied.

Before he could respond, the doors opened, and a man walked in, followed quickly by an older boy with a video camera. And right behind them was Janet.

"Great!" They heard Logan exclaim. "Korris do you mind taking those two with you? They know to stay out of the way."

"As long as their ready to go now." Koth replied for his brother, and both the man and the kid nodded. "Okay Draco, let's go... ten seconds ago." Koth ordered, and they all vanished in a shimmer of light.

When they appeared in front of the house, it didn't take more than a second to know something was drastically wrong. The father of the boy in question was standing behind them a bit, with a shotgun resting on his shoulder, and in front of them, there were two police officers, standing over a couple who were handcuffed and laying face down on the ground. Off to the right was a young boy, who couldn't have been more than eight years old, sitting on the ground, sobbing, holding the side of his face. One look and anyone could tell he'd been slapped hard, the hand print still clearly visible, as well as a small trickle of blood coming from the side of his mouth.

Immediately, Koth and Juan got behind Amanda, Juan already having two pistols out, and Koth had his wrist mounted phaser, both of them aiming them dead center on the man with the shotgun. Meanwhile, Korris and Chang positioned themselves between Amanda and the cops, who already had their guns out, and trained on the two boys. Korris, was in his favored battle stance, Bat'leth held loosely in his hands, with his weight on the balls of his feet, ready to move in a second. Chang had drawn both swords, and had the blades pointed at the ground, in a low defense stance. Also ready to move in a second. Ken and Gordan for their part quickly moved off to the side. Gordan's camera already going, and Ken wondering if he really had made a good choice.

"Now just hold it right there!" One of the cops said, moving his gun from covering the two adults on the ground, and now pointing them at the group. Korris growled lowly under his breath, and was about to move, when Amanda placed a hand on his shoulder, trying to keep him calm.

"It is alright officer, we are just here to help. I am Amanda, Wife of Sarek of Vulcan." She was about to go on when one of them cut her off.

"I don't give a shit if you're the wife of the Dali fucking Lama. You're interfering with a police matter. Now get the hell out of here!"

The boys were pissed, and Juan wanted nothing more than to drop the two pigs, but he couldn't leave Lady Amanda's back open to the prick with the shotgun, so he called to Logan, telepathically, while the cop was mouthing off.

'Logan we got a shit storm brewing here. We need some help. Here's what I got in mind...' The sadistic smile on Juan's face growing even more. The guy with the shotgun watched as Juan closed his eyes, and when he opened them again, the normal eyes of a ten year old were gone, only to be replaced by bright yellow eagle's eyes.

Ken watched in amazement and more than a bit of fear as the cops trained their weapons on the group, and mouthed off to Lady Amanda. He couldn't imagine what would happen now, but knew it couldn't be good. About that time, he noticed 3 shimmering figures appear behind the officers. "WHAT THE FUCK IS THAT?!?!?!" He cried out, as the cops spun, and both had to look up into the face a huge feline face.

"What seems to be the problem officers?" The huge cat person said, as he reached out lightning quick, and took the guns out of their hands. Next to him had appeared a huge black cat, who simply went up on hind legs, and knocked both of the cops to the ground.

At the same time that they appeared, Juan fired his guns, both bullets slamming into the shotgun, one bullet tearing into the stock, just above the trigger, and the other shredding the chamber that held the shells. The guy with the shotgun immediately dropped it while jumping back.

The third person, a kid that couldn't have been more than ten, patted the huge cat on the side. "Good Girl Fluffy," Tommy quipped, "now, make sure they don't move, and NO... you can't have a snack." To which the cat simply walked over and sat in between the two officers, one huge front paw set on each of their chests. She stood over them, licking her lips, and then looked over at Tommy. "I don't care if you're hungry, you CAN'T Eat them... yet.

Gordan was laughing so hard he couldn't keep the camera steady. "Yeah you get'em Fluffy. Nice job Khan!"

The huge cat person simply looked over, and waved, with a smile on his muzzle. "Thanks, this was the most fun I had today. You guys need anything else?" He said looking at the four boys who were shifting away from Amanda so as not to suffocate her.

"Nope, I think that's it. Thanks Khan." Juan said with a grin. "Actually can you check on that boy, we got these guys, Korris, Chang, why don't you take Amanda inside and see if you can't find the boy in there?" He said as walked over to the guy that had the shotgun. With a quick move of his feet, the guy was laying on the ground flat on his back. Juan then jumped up on the guy's chest and sat down, with one of his huge pistols pointed right in the guys face. "I think I got this one." He said with a laugh.

Koth grinned as he sat next to the man's head, and then started sharpening his mek'leth blades, one at a time. "Yeah, I think we're going to be 'best friends', isn't that right, humie?" he said as he lightly patted the man's forehead.

"Do you have any idea who I am....mphhhhhh" The guy started to say, but got interrupted when Juan shoved the barrel of his gun into the man's mouth.

"Please don't, your whining is hurting my boyfriend's ears." Juan said, then blushed as he looked over at Koth.

Koth's face was a picture; his mouth dropped open, then a fat, foolish grin covered his chops. "Yeah," he giggled, "we Klingon's get *very* bad tempered when our ears hurt!"

"Come on, children," Amanda said to Chang and Korris, who were casting smiles at the two foolishly grinning ten year olds. "Let's go find the youngster."

The last thing Korris heard as he followed behind Amanda, with Chang at point, was Koth asking Juan, "Sooo... is that a gun in your pocket, or...."

Chang led the way into the home, looked around for a second, and then went up the stairs. "I can hear him, upstairs. He is injured, and having difficulty breathing." Chang took the stairs two at a time, almost running. He heard from behind him that Amanda was having no difficulty keeping up. She may have been an elderly woman, but she kept herself in very good shape.

When they got upstairs, Chang paused for a second, then went off to the left, and then went to the first doorway he came to. He tried the door knob, but it was locked. He applied more pressure, and soon enough the door knob snapped and let him into the room.

Lady Amanda couldn't help but gasp at what she saw when she followed Chang into the room. In the far corner was a naked boy laying in a pool of blood, urine, and what looked to be his own feces. She followed Chang who immediately went over to the boy who was barely conscious, and sobbing. When they got there, she knelt down and pulled the young boy's head into her lap. Chang simply nodded to her, as he pulled out his tricorder and started figuring out how bad the boy was hurt. "Shhh, honey, it'll be okay." She whispered to the boy who looked up into her eyes. There was a small moment of clarity in the boys eyes, and he smiled as much as he could, but then went limp in her lap.

Her eyes jumped up to Chang who simply nodded his head. "He is still alive, barely."

That's all that Korris needed to hear. He spun on his heel, and stalked back down the stairs, and outside.

Koth looked up when the front door was slammed off its hinges by his obviously enraged elder brother. "Heads up, Juan," he said quickly, standing to his feet, "it's going to get real!"

"Chang has already told me of the situation." Juan stated the rage barely contained in his voice, his yellow eyes blazing with anger.

Koth watched as Juan pulled the man they were guarding to his feet, and also saw that Fluffy still had the two policemen pinned down, however, Kahn had already released the couple that were on the ground. They were now comforting their son, and waiting to see what would happen. In the distance

more sirens could be heard coming closer. Koth, however, had other things to deal with as he moved over to his angry brother. "Report, Sub-Commander," he ordered formally.

Korris took almost a full minute to calm down before he met his younger brother's eyes. Meanwhile, three more police cars showed up, and Kahn had moved over to intercept them, already pulling out his ID. In most cases Korris would take the lead for the two boys, but in this instance, Koth was his commanding officer. "Sir, upon entering a locked bedroom, we found the subject lying in a pool of his own blood, urine, and feces. From the looks of it, the child had been beaten savagely. I do not know the extent of his injuries, but I did hear Chang say that he was alive, but barely."

Koth nodded and took out his tricorder. He moved to the suspect, got him and Juan to stand and started scanning the man. He found bruises on the man's hands, and then grabbed one.

"Don't touch me, you little shi... AHHHH!" Juan's gun being jammed into his spine brought Mr. Jacobson's outburst to a swift close.

Koth scanned the man's hand carefully, and found blood on it, but no cuts or lacerations. He tapped his comm, "Chang, I am sending you a tricorder reading. Please confirm a match with the child's."

After a second a quick, "It's a match," came from Chang.

"What is the state of the child?" Koth asked as he released Mr. Jacobson's hand.

"Critical. If we had been a moment longer, he would be dead. He may still die, in fact. Also, there is evidence of semen still inside the child," Chang said, fury barely contained in his voice.

"Sending a DNA sample of Mr. Jacobson," Koth spat out.

After another moment, Chang sent back, "Match."

Koth stepped backwards to Korris and they shared a look. Nodding, Korris stepped forwards while Koth turned to the little boy and his family. "Jason, cover your eyes, sweetie."

The boy did, and so did his parents. They could sense that something serious was going to happen. Two pissed off Klingons sort of gave that away.

Facing the now nervous Mr. Jacobson, Koth stated, "You have been charged with and found guilty of the attempted murder, abuse, rape and assault of Reuben Jacobson. In accordance with the Federation Safe Haven Act, and by the Authority of the Vulcan Special and Covert Operations Divisions, I hereby sentence you to death. Sub-Commander, proceed."

While this was going on, Khan was busy dealing with six more police officers, who were not happy about what was going on. However, Khan was intimidating enough to keep them at bay, for now.

Korris walked up to the man, quickly swung his Bat'leth around, and before the man knew what was happening, his head came away from his body. At the same time, they heard a gunshot, and then all hell broke loose...again.

Khan immediately drew his pistol, and fired, while jumping over one of the cars to find cover. Tommy immediately started to pull Jason and his parents behind another car. Korris and Juan immediately ran over towards them to do the same thing. Koth for his part, simply pushed a button on his belt, as he looked down at the bullet that was meant for his brother. Thankfully the shielding they wore had stopped the bullet.

Suddenly everything around them went into shadow as a large space ship decloaked directly above the house. At the same time, a large number of Vulcan Security forces started to appear around them. Khan, Tommy, and Juan were returning fire at the cops that were shooting at them, but they stopped when the Vulcan's appeared. Within twenty seconds every single police officer was stunned and being secured on the ground.

"I think we have a load of paperwork to sort through," Koth murmured. "Lieutenant," he called to the lead member of the Vulcan Security group, "please check out the local enforcement agencies. Corruption reigns here."

"Acknowledged," came the reply as all the stunned police were beamed to the hovering ship above.

Korris looked over to Juan and Koth and gave them a nod in the direction of the house. The three of them then moved into the house, and up the stairs at a run. When they got into the room, Chang quickly looked up from working on the young boy. "We need to get an ambulance here now, he is too unstable to be transported anywhere."

Juan nodded, and pulled out his cell phone, but Koth placed a hand on Juan's. "Ark... Ark can teleport, and it's a lot safer than anything else." He said as he pulled out his own communicator. "Ark, Can you transport everyone here to the Unit's hospital, also please alert their AI what is happening."

And a moment later they were all gone.

First Editor's Notes:

WOW, I am in awe of how Roland was able to move from "The UNIT" into this new book so effortlessly!! And to think, that "All Hell Breaks Loose" happened on Saturday and here we are on Monday, 3 days later, with a new place and a bunch of new characters! I have to tell you, I really like that Levi!! I want one! Well to get to the point, we have a whole new setting and another story to tell and Roland starts off kicking! We are now part of the Clan and Adam is a major force to be reckoned with. Oh, I just have to mention that Juan is so darn cute and he has such an awesome personality. I can't wait to see what Roland does with his character! This is a perfect start for this new book. To be honest, if there was to be a title for this first chapter, I think it would be appropriate to call it "New Beginnings" as this is the rebirth of our awesome group of kids and adults. They get to start over with even more tools, people, and things to work with. Can you imagine how many lives they are going to change!! The cool thing about it is that there is no end to what they can do here on Earth or anywhere in the Universe now. Roland is a true artist and this just proves more than anything, there is nothing he can't do or write about! I am honored to be a part of his team and be his editor! Thanks for my new beginning!

David aka: Boxerdude (yeah another David to deal with! LOL)

Second Editor's Notes:

Very nicely done, guys. It kind of makes you wonder how we manage to get along at all without the help of the unit and other members of The Clan. Of course Ark is also very helpful. I must say that Camp Bam Bam is starting out to be another interesting and compelling story, right in line with the first book of The Unit. I'm sitting here with worms in my mouth (bated breath) for the next chapter.

Darryl AKA The Radio Rancher

Chapter 02

Ken was absolutely amazed with everything that he was seeing as Janet gave him a personal tour of the complex. He had already run into his boys, as well as Chris and Hulk Hogan. He still couldn't believe that the famous wrestling icon was here, and willing to show his boys around the place. They had met up when Janet was showing him the "pod" he was staying in. The "pods" themselves were remarkable. Each "pod" had ten bedrooms, which were set up to hold two boys each. Ken couldn't help but notice that every single one of the bedrooms there were bigger than the bedroom he had in his house. When he looked around the bedrooms, he saw that each one of them was set up to be as comfortable as possible, even though it housed two kids. There were two separate full sized beds, two different desks, both with laptop computers on them, two different dressers, and closets. He was then informed that one of the rooms would be his and his alone. That's when Janet started explaining the plan they have about "Pod Parents".

Basically, the whole idea was that there would be at least one adult in each pod, who would generally be responsible for keeping the peace in each of the "pods." Since his three boys would be in this one, as well as Chris, Janet had asked if he would be willing to be the "Pod Parent" for this pod. Everyone grabbed a seat, and the boys even found some cold soda in the refrigerator in the pod. While Ken was debating with himself, Janet got up and fixed them some coffee. He couldn't help but look around some more. In each pod, he saw that the "common room" as Janet had called it, held five different televisions, each one with hookups for game systems, there were five couches, many different chairs, and tables, plus a kitchen that was the size of the one he had at home, and he had always taken pride in his kitchen. It was big enough to handle an army. Everywhere he looked, he saw things that were there to make the place feel comfortable, yet at the same time, hold a large number of kids. Of course, that led to a few questions.

"Janet, I was just wondering. How many people can this place hold? I mean I heard the boys say there are seven levels, and this is only the third, and it's huge." Ken asked as he sipped his coffee. He nearly spit it out when she said that the facility could hold around three thousand people.

Janet just sat there with a smile, and then got down to business. She wasn't too concerned about the boys being there, and Hulk seemed to have them occupied swinging them around on his massive arms. "I don't know if you know this or not, but according to the Census Bureau, just last year, they totaled

the number of homeless kids at somewhere around seven hundred and fifty thousand. These are not kids that are staying with relatives, or friends, these are kids that sleep out on the street each night." Ken just sat there with his mouth hanging open. He knew the number was high, but he never thought it was that high.

"We can hold three thousand here, but that doesn't even put a dent into the real problem. But that's neither here nor there. We can only help so many, and to be honest, I think that bothers my boys more than it does me." Ken raised an eyebrow in question, and Janet sighed before going on.

"It's really amazing what the boys have made here. I know you probably think that Joe and I did most of the work to get this together, but to be honest, we didn't. The boys did all the work. And, I really think it's because they don't know the meaning of the word impossible. I know what we can do, and it is a lot, but it's not going to be nearly enough for the boys. I am worried that they will get hurt because they can't help everyone out."

Ken just sat there trying to take in everything that she had said, when one of the boys came over and asked for another drink. This time, when Janet came back, she had coffee for Hulk as well, and they now all sat in a circle. Ken then had to ask the next thing that came to his mind.

"One other question, Janet, but.... could you tell me about the name of this place. I mean Camp Bam Bam sounds like a weird thing to name a military base, I mean it sounds like something from the 'Flintstones.'"

Janet's eyes got a little misty, "well, that's a story I guess you do need to hear, but I would ask that you wait for a bit on that. There's a few others that need to hear the full story as well... and I don't really think I could make it through more than one telling.

Koth was walking towards the room that Dailess had said that Juan was in. He had stayed with Amanda for a few minutes after they got to the base, just to make sure the little boy was going to be okay, so now, he went in search of his boyfriend. At least, he hoped Juan was his boyfriend. That slip earlier, although cute as hell, and it made Juan blush, was still bringing uncertainty up in the young Klingon. Who would want him? Riti and Victoria, although they loved him, loved each other far more, and so he had felt less than worthy for months now. Did Juan like him? Even if only a little?

When Koth opened up the door, he was struck with loud music, almost painfully loud. Then he heard Juan's voice start to sing along with the music. The music itself was very fast and angry sounding, Koth really wasn't sure what to make of it, but then the lyrics started, and he really wasn't sure how to take it.

*Brothers I am calling from the valley of the kings with nothing to atone
A dark march lies ahead, together we will ride like thunder from the sky
May your sword stay wet like a young girl in her pride
Hold your hammers high*

*Blood and death are waiting like a raven in the sky
 I was born to die
 Hear me while I live
 As I look into your eyes, None shall hear a lie
 Power and dominion are taken by the will
 By divine right hail and kill*

*Hail, Hail, Hail and Kill, Hail and Kill
 Hail, Hail, Hail and Kill, Hail and Kill*

*My father was a wolf
 I'm a kinsman of the slain
 Sworn to rise again
 I will bring salvation, punishment and pain
 The hammer of hate is our faith
 Power and dominion are taken by the will
 By divine right hail and kill*

*Hail, Hail, Hail and Kill, Hail and Kill
 Hail, Hail, Hail and Kill, Hail and Kill*

Juan turned around as the guitar started playing a solo, and that's when Koth saw them, those big, bright yellow eyes staring right at him. Juan slowly reached over and turned off the music, never breaking eye contact with the other young boy.

A low growl started in Koth's throat and he began to look at Juan with a feral grin. There was something animalistic in Juan's eyes, and it struck a chord deep in the Klingon's psyche. As unexpected as the change in color was, it did stir Koth's growing attraction.

Also, the music: it stirred his warrior's blood.

Breathing deeply and raggedly, he moved over to the other boy, and his now heightened senses could smell Juan's blood.

It was then that Koth recognized the actions: his blood parents had acted this way often, before mating. He reigned in his emotions and stood there, fidgeting.

Juan shut his eyes, and for a moment he was the picture of concentration, but when he opened his eyes back up, they were back to the large dark brown pools they always were. Only this time, there was fear in them. "I'm...I'm sorry." He said, and then collapsed into the chair.

Koth was nonplussed. What was going on? Where did the young warrior that was just sitting there go and where was the boy who had blithely sat on that asshole's chest and called Koth his boyfriend while having his gun firmly wedged in Mr. Jacobson's mouth.

"Juan?" Koth's own voice trembled, had he scared him; his friend, hopefully his boyfriend? "Juan?"

Juan sat there crying for a few moments, and then looked up at his friend. "I'm sorry..." he mumbled. "I...I can't help it sometimes... HE... He just comes out at times."

Koth moved over and sat on the floor looking up at his friend. He leaned forwards, and gently drew the unresisting Juan down so that he had the slightly smaller boy cradled on his lap. Juan sat chest to chest with Koth and continued to cry softly while Koth barely held his own emotions in check.

"I thought *I'd* scared you, Juan!" he half whispered eventually. "I've never done that with anyone... your eyes, that look... it was Klingon... I'm sorry if I did, I really am..." he rushed out.

Juan looked up and then deep into his friends eyes. Finally he just sighed and looked away. "It wasn't your fault. It's... It's just that... well... I have a slight problem. See... Well... really, there's two of me.. I guess. Oh... damn it... I'm not explaining this well." Juan said as the tears started flowing again, and he tried to figure out how to tell Koth the truth about himself.

Ever since Jeremy and Tyler explained to him that sex didn't have to be painful, he'd been trying to let that part of him heal. He'd been able to put a lot of it behind him, but... but he still had to deal with the "other" side of himself. And now, that "other" side may have cost him...

"Tell me, Qu'raki," Koth whispered, all his emotions showing in his eyes. "I cannot hate you, nor judge you, for something that you have no control over, but it is still who you are."

Juan looked up at Koth again, not really knowing what the word meant, but not really caring. Could this boy actually accept him for who he was? Could he reveal his secret to him, and not be hated by Koth. The only ones that knew about it were his family members, he could never tell anyone else. Maybe.... maybe now was the time. He took a deep breath, and then looked out over the room, his eyes seeing things from a long time ago.

"I don't know how much you know about me, but. Well the first thing I need to say is that I'm really only six years old. I was born in a laboratory, and they used something to make me age faster, right after I was born. They... they trained me to kill. But, but I didn't want to. I couldn't handle some of the things they made me do, and some of the things they.. they did to me. I don't know when HE came, but at some point, someone else took over for me. I don't know everything that happened, cause... well... cause I don't really remember what happens when HE takes over." Juan paused for a second to wipe his tears and gather his thoughts. Koth simply held him, and waited for him to continue.

"HE took all the pain... everything they made me do that was bad... HE did it. The problem was HE LIKES it. The other part of me LIKES killing... HE likes to make others hurt, and... and HE likes to be hurt. HE always took over when... when the doctor... when the doctor raped me."

He was about to go on when they heard the alert siren going off, and Daileass's voice come over the speakers. "Red Alert... all personnel to your battle stations... all civilians on base please stay where you are. Again, this is a red alert. This is not a drill.

Koth sprang to his feet, Juan still in his arms. He quickly placed the boy down and together they ran from the room towards the Command Center. As they entered, they saw Jason, Nathan and Logan by the Intel boys, throwing questions at them.

"Orlando CIC under attack?" Nathan asked Alvin.

"Draco, report!" Jason called into his Comm.

Before anyone else could say anything, Daileass came back over the speakers in the room. "Red alert's been canceled, turns out it was just Saint Mikey with a rescued kid. He scared the shit out of everyone there."

Logan couldn't help but chuckle a little bit as he ordered, "cancel the red alert. Let's get everything back to normal."

Everyone nodded and turned back to their computers, when another voice came across. "Logan, its Adam, what's going on?"

"Just some confusion in Orlando. Nothing to worry about." Logan replied, still grinning a bit.

"Copy, Casey out."

Juan stood, still hugged mutely into Koth's side. The ten year old Klingon did not seem to feel the need to let him go any time soon. Koth nodded at his older brothers, who smiled back knowingly, before noticing Logan walking towards them. "Just the two boys I wanted to see," Logan said. "Can you report on your recent mission please, Juan?"

"Um, yeah," Juan said, forcing his other emotions down for a moment. "Let's go in the office, though," he stated as he went straight for the office in the back of the command center. Logan and Koth just followed him in, and once the door was shut, Juan turned to Koth and all he said was, "Okay.... why don't you give him the report, that way I don't get my ass chewed."

Koth started grinning, "But it's such a cute ass to chew!"

Juan started to blush heavily, and was trying to stammer out a response, but couldn't make anything come out. Finally Logan decided to have pity on the boy. "Okay... so what the hell did you do on this rescue?"

Koth wanted to reply with the part that stuck out most in his mind, that of Juan calling him his boyfriend, but instead he snapped to attention. "Commander Koth Evans, VSO Dragon Lead Seven, reporting on a summary judgment and execution of a Mr. Jacobson. Do you wish to hear the report, Sir?"

Logan's eyes about fell out of his head. "Execution?!?!" He breathed, his voice rising a bit at the end. "You executed someone?!?!" Logan was about to rant on, but then saw the look in Koth's eyes. He'd seen it in Adam's many times. This kid was military, and had offered to report. Logan knew that since he was in command, he couldn't let his emotions get in the way, rather he had to keep his cool and act with rational thoughts. He stood a bit straighter and squared his shoulders. "I apologize for my outburst; please... go ahead with your report."

Koth nodded his head. He was about to launch into Juan's and his prepared speech when he felt his own hand taken by another. He glanced quickly at his 'friend', and smiled.

It took less time than they had expected for Koth to replay the events of the extraction. This was helped as, unlike when he made reports to his mother, Koth did not have Logan acting like a concerned mother hen.

"Okay," Logan breathed out. "I accept the report. However... what the hell! You killed someone?!"

"Yes sir," Koth nodded. "And it is here that Juan has asked I explain your new position within a Vulcan Clan."

"Okay, so you're telling me that because we are now a part of Clan Short, we can execute someone?" Logan said, not really believing.

"Within limits," Koth said, as he gestured to the chairs. "I think we need to sit, Logan. I'm dropping titles now as the report is over. Now, you need to 'know', so... teacher Koth to the rescue!" he finished with a giggle, that was echoed by Juan.

All the boys took seats, and then Logan reached down and opened up a door on the desk. He then handed each of the boys a bottle of Jolt cola. Juan's eyes lit up, and he took his, opened it up, and downed half. Then looked over at Koth with a grin on his face, while Logan said "okay Koth, please teach us."

Koth looked curiously at the bottle, opened it and took a sip. "By Kahless!" he gasped and downed the bottle greedily. "That... I..." he trailed off, his eyes looking far away.

Juan just sat there, laughing.

"Where was I?" Koth asked a few seconds later.

Logan couldn't help but laugh. "You were going to tell me how we could get away with executing people?" he prompted.

"Yeah... oh yeah, I was... umm... can I have another?" Koth asked dreamily.

Juan shuffled his chair over towards Koth's and took his hand again, "After, Koth. I don't think a hyper Klingon would be a good idea when we we're trying to talk. I'll grab you one afterwards."

"Sweet... okay... First, I'll tell you about Vulcan Law."

Logan nodded and took a slow drink from his own bottle.

"It's all Tradition, really. Vulcans have very few laws, as such. Anyhow; as members of Clan Short, you are under the Authority of the House of Surak of Vulcan and a part of the same, as is my Clan, Clan Evans. In that position, and with the correct training, Clan Members can act to judge criminals. Vulcan Justice is very direct, and the logical punishment is always taken and tailored to fit the crime. Telepathy is usually used, but not always. When it is, then one trained telepath extracts the information that is relevant from all parties concerned, and then the recovered information is reviewed by a second trained telepath. For Vulcans, that would be by Mind Meld.

"Once there is consensus between the reviewers, the information is either acted on by the one who holds the highest rank, or it is transferred to a third person. Example, you know the Double J's? Jamie and Jacob?" Koth asked Logan.

"I've heard of them, but haven't met them yet..." Logan said, still trying to figure out where this was all going. This really sounded like too much for him to handle.

"Cool. Now, if Jamie was to take the information from the accused and the others involved, it would then be reviewed by Jacob. Once done, they would pass the complete information to Cory. Cory would then examine the evidence, and base his judgment on that. Guilt or innocence is known with complete certainty through telepathy, so there can, with three involved, be very little room for errors in judgment to creep in."

"If someone murdered another, and it was done deliberately, then Cory would likely find that person guilty and sentence them to death. He could then either carry out the judgment himself, as he has in the past, or appoint another in his place, again, as he has done in the past.

"I think that about covers what you are allowed to cover as Clan Short. If found guilty, then the logical judgment is taken, if you committed a crime, yet you were either emotional, a crime of passion, or did so unawares, then the judgment changes. The crime is still a crime, yet the intent changes. It's all down to what the facts are, and what the logical response should be."

Koth looked at Logan's face, and could see many emotions playing across his features. "I think it's best you ask me questions on this, bro. You look like you're trying to swallow a Targ sideways!"

Logan slammed his mouth shut, and then tried to think of what to say. "You mean... you mean that we act as judge, jury, AND executioner?!?!"

"Not alone, no. In what me and my Dragon bros call a Tribunal, yes. Like I said, Vulcan justice is direct, swift and to the point. If someone should go to a prison planet, they go. If they should be executed, they are. If castrated, again, they are. The punishment always fits the crime, and you are to always be fair." Koth answered with a slight tightening in his eyes at his last example. Juan cast a curious, even nervous look at his new friend at the same time.

"But.. but... how do you know what is fair?" Logan stammered.

Koth half smiled, yet it did not reach his eyes. "It takes training. Your Clan telepaths have been trained, as has Cory, Sean and many others. They know how to act and prepare their minds for such a task. You would not be expected to do so unprepared, bro; that wouldn't be fair on you," he finished gently.

Logan nodded to himself, and then a thought struck him. "But... but you guys didn't have any telepaths..." he let the sentence die out, while looking at Koth.

"Correct. Under Safe Haven, any Starfleet or Clan Short personnel who witness the crime, or are there first hand to see the recent evidence do not need telepaths. However, I am not Clan Short, and the Safe Haven Act does not cover Clan Evans in that regard as yet. Therefore, I and Korris acted as VSO, Vulcan Special and Covert Ops, and that is a whole other ball game. The limits on standard Vulcan Justice do not apply to the Covert Ops. Instead, we have other safeguards; rather harsh ones, in fact, should we deliberately misuse our authority."

Koth half smiled again, "Sorry, but in a way, VSO authority outranks Clan Short's. Since I ain't Clan Short, I had to go with what I've been trained for. That, though, ain't something you need worry about.

Once you are trained by the Clan in these issues, then you won't need to even think about VSO unless you want to."

Logan nodded to himself, and then just sat there staring off into space for a few seconds, before reaching down, and grabbing another bottle of soda. He handed it to Koth, just as a knock came at the door.

"Enter." Logan responded, while looking at the door. Alvin walked in just as Daileass came over the speaker. "Logan, Adam's on the line for you."

"Thanks, Daileass. What's up, Adam?" Logan spoke into the air, really glad the Daileass had both speakers and microphones in almost every room in the complex.

"Hey Log... I need you to do me a favor, and I'll explain when I get back. Can you send Hermes and Mercury to the Short Compound? Tell them to pack all their gear, as they'll be there for a bit. Tell them they are on bodyguard duty, and they'd better be fully equipped for it. They can meet up with Bast and Mont, who'll give them their full orders. There's no rush right now, but they need to be there as soon as they can." Adam finished up, and Logan could hear a lot of people behind him. He wondered for a second how things were going with the funeral preparations. But he had a job to do here.

"You got it, Adam; I'll let them know right away."

"Thanks, Log. I love you. Talk to you later."

Logan blushed slightly but then turned to business. "Daileass, please ask Herm and Merc to come up here as soon as they get back from their pick up."

"You got it, boss," was the reply.

Then Logan looked over to Alvin. "What's up, bro?"

Alvin walked in further, and hit a few buttons on the phone, while saying to his big brother, "You really need to take this call."

Logan just nodded, and Alvin hit one more button on the phone. "Mr. Stevens... I have Commander Logan Hayes on the line for you. Please explain your situation to him."

"Ummm... ok... Commander, are you there?" came the rather harried voice from the phone.

"Yes sir, I can hear you. What can I help you with?" Logan said, giving Alvin a bit of a strange look. He wasn't sure what kind of situation would cause his brother to hand the call off. Of all his brothers, Alvin was the one with the best head on his shoulders.

"Well, sir," came the voice from the other line. Logan still had to get comfortable with adults calling him sir. "I was calling to see if you could take my four children." Logan raised an eyebrow in question, but couldn't say anything as the man on the other end of the line rushed on. "See, I lost my job, and my wife can't work. We've lost everything, and have been living in a car..." He paused for a second, and Logan could hear the man trying hard to fight back tears.

"I... I just want my kids to have the best chance at a good life... and if that means giving them up to someone who can give them that..." He trailed off, this time not being able to stop the sob. Juan signaled for Logan to mute the call, which Logan did with a tap of a button.

"Oh, fuck that!" Juan said with more intensity than really needed. "If that man loves his kids, there ain't no way in hell he's gonna be separated from them. Let me go talk to him. I'm sure if he and his wife are as good as they seem, there are more than a few kids here that could be helped by having loving adults." Logan stared at Juan for a brief second. This was out of character for Juan, but Logan couldn't help but agree.

He hit the button on the phone, and spoke, "Mr. Stevens, please stay where you are, and I will have someone there to meet you within five minutes. They will discuss the options you have, and then, hopefully, we can all come to an understanding. Is that acceptable?" Logan was speaking as professionally as possible, hoping that it would cover up his nerves.

"Ummm... I guess so; you'll have someone here in five minutes? Are they that close?" The man asked, clearly sounding both confused, and a bit nervous.

"Yes sir, there will be someone there within five minutes; just please stay right where you are, so that we can find you. And please, do not worry; your children will be well taken care of." Logan said, trying to sound as reassuring as possible.

"O..okay. We'll see you in a bit." With that, the line went dead. Logan barely had time to nod before Juan and Koth were out the door.

Janet was walking with Ken out to the hanger bay, to see how things were going with the intake. Just as they entered the cavernous room, alarms started to blare throughout. "Attention in the Hanger bay!" Daileass's voice rang out over the speakers. "Please move to the back of the hanger bay, and past the large yellow line as quickly as possible. There are helicopters coming in to land. Again, please move behind the large yellow line as quickly as possible. All ground crew to stations. Thank you."

Ken looked at Janet who just shrugged, but moved to where everyone else was being herded to by the Unit personnel. Once everyone was behind the yellow line, one of the ground crew kids hit a big yellow button on the wall, and a wall started to rise up right at the yellow line. Janet was impressed to see it was about two foot thick and looked to be glass, or maybe hard plastic.

Everyone was staring at the wall as it rose the one hundred feet to the ceiling, while at the same time, on the other wall, another section was actually descending into the wall, making about a fifty foot opening in the top part of that wall, which showed the outside.

There was silence for about a minute, and then gasps could be heard as a helicopter, one of the Huey's, Janet noticed, came in, and maneuvered into position on top of one of the new hanger elevators that were there.

Once it was on the ground, a second one came in, another Huey, who repeated the same maneuvers, landing next to the first one. Then a third helicopter came in. This one drew gasps of shock from many of the kids, as helicopters this big aren't normally seen. The big MI-26 slowly came into the hanger bay, the opening barely being big enough for the huge rotors on its top. It then made a slow turn, and moved over to the largest of the hanger elevators.

Everyone watched as it touched down, and then the rotors slowly came to a stop. Everyone watched as the ground crews ran up, once the rotors stopped turning, and went to work on the helicopters. Janet watched Tony, Elena, and the rest of their family come out of the back of the MI-26. But the thing that got the most attention was the pilots of the two Hueys. Janet heard more than one gasp of shock when fifteen year old Sarah Martin came out of the pilot's compartment of the first Huey, followed by fourteen year old Chris Dempsey.

"Jesus, Janet." Ken said in shock. "I really thought you were kidding when you told me that kids flew the helicopters."

Janet chuckled a bit. "Nope. That's Sarah and Chris. Two of our better pilots and both of them are non-augmented."

"Non-augmented?" Ken asked, not understanding.

"Remember when I said that some of the kids here had been genetically enhanced? Those two kids haven't been. They both busted their asses to learn how to fly, since we got here, almost a year ago. And both of them are damn good at it." Janet said as the pride was clearly evident in her voice.

Ken could do nothing but shake his head, and watch as the two kids embraced. They both had mile wide smiles, and could easily hear the chatter that broke out from the two hundred or so other kids waiting for the intake process. Ken thought that this was a good way to show the kids that what they were being told was true. If you wanna learn how to do something... no matter what it was, you could learn it here.

Janet waved over Tony and his family, once the glass wall came down, and when they got there, Janet gave Tony, and Elena both hugs. "Ken, I'd like to introduce you to some of our friends. This is Tony, and Elena Guilipo, and their children. First is Esteban, who's seventeen, then there's Marissa who's fourteen, the twins Miguel and Juanita, both nine, Antonio who's seven, Marco who's five, and finally their youngest, Jason, who's three."

Ken smiled and nodded to all of them as Janet introduced them. He was about to say something else, when suddenly there were a bunch more people appearing around them. Tony's smile got wide when he saw the man that appeared. "It's about fucking time, Mike. What'd you do, stop for ice cream on the way over?"

Ken stopped listening as he noticed two of the "kids" that appeared. They looked a bit like the huge cat person he saw earlier, but these two were smaller, had light brown fur, and looked to be almost cougar like in their appearance. Ken couldn't help but think that they actually looked cute, that was until one of them opened his mouth, and Ken saw the line of very sharp teeth.

The next thing Ken knew, Janet was leading the whole group into one of the side conference rooms. A bunch of the kids went to find friends, but some of them stuck around, the woman that came with them, Samantha, went off with the kids.

Once everyone was seated around the table, Janet introduced Ken to the rest of the newcomers. "Ken, this is Eric Carlson, and Mike Reynolds, and one of his boys, Sam Sam. Then there are two more members of the Feline Assault Team, Vishnu and Kartik. Guys, this is Ken Savage, he's the new liaison between the press and all of us. Ken, I know you want to talk to Mike about everything that's happened, but please hold off till later." She said this because she saw the look of recognition in Ken's eyes, when she introduced Mike and Sammy. She then turned back to everyone else and continued. "He and his three boys have also decided to move in here. Right now, they're being shown around by none other than Terry Hogan, better known as "Hulk" Hogan.

"Hulk Hogan, wow! Can I meet him?" Sammy asked before anyone could say anything.

"That's all we need." Mike muttered as Sammy asked, "What?"

"I don't think professional wrestling is ready for you yet, Kiddo." Mike told him, which got more laughter.

Janet noticed something strange, while everyone was laughing. Vishnu and Kartik were quietly talking to each other. Kartik, it looked like, wanted Vishnu to say something. Finally Vishnu nodded, took a deep breath, and then turned to Janet.

"Ummm... Aunt Janet. Can I tell you something, without you getting mad?" Vishnu said, in a very small voice. Everyone could see how nervous he was, but Ken was really surprised at how human it sounded. It sounded almost just like an eight or nine year old boy.

Janet moved over to where Vishnu was curled up on Mike's lap, and knelt down in front of him, gently taking his hand. "Of course, Vishnu, you know you can tell me anything."

Vishnu took a few moments to gather himself and then looked up into Janet's eyes. "Well... see... I know you offered to adopt us, and well... KT and I are really happy that you did, but... well.. see.. we kinda asked Mike if he would adopt us. I.. I hope you don't mind." Fear clearly evident in his face, hoping that he didn't offend the woman who had helped take care of them.

"Of course I don't mind. If that's what makes you guys happy then that's all I care about. I just want you to have a good home where you're loved and while I'd have been very honored to have you for sons, if Mike wants to adopt you two and you want him to, then that's fine with me, just as long as you are happy and loved."

"We are." Both said and she could see the tears in their eyes.

Then she reached out to both boys and pulled them into her arms hugging them tightly and saying softly, "I'll always love you though; don't forget that."

"We won't and we will always love you too." Both responded hugging her again before she let them go, smiled up at Mike and said, "I just hope you can handle them."

Mike just laughed and said, "Hey, I can handle SamSam, so these two should be a breeze."

Sammy had been smiling at his newest brothers, but now turned to Mike with an indignant look and said, "HEY!"

"What?" Mike replied as he pulled both cat boys into his lap and gave them some snuggles and kisses.

"You mean, I handle you, old man," Sammy said with an evil grin.

"Old man?" Mike said, looking at him.

"Kill him later, Mike, so I can finish this meeting," Janet interjected

Sammy replied, "He'd have to catch me first," as Vish and KT just giggled.

Poor Ken looked almost lost.

"You'll get used to it." Janet said, laughing at the look on poor Ken's face.

Mike couldn't help but add, "You mean, you are?" In his best confused voice.

Janet mock glared at Mike and said, "Stop it, you're gonna scare him off and leave me to face those rabid vultures all by myself!"

"I bet I know who'd win," KT said, smiling, although with all those teeth it was more like a ferocious grin.

Ken was shaking his head smiling and finally got a word in edgewise to say, "I do have three boys of my own, so I have some small idea... but Janet, I hope you don't mind, but you said before you'd tell me why this place was named Camp Bam Bam?"

It felt as if cold water had been poured on everyone in the room, as the laughter died out while Ken just looked puzzled.

"It was because of what our brothers did for us." Vishnu said into the silence and everyone could hear the pain and loss filling his voice.

Janet wiped away the tears that suddenly found their way leaking out of her eyes. "Ken, everyone here but you knows the story. I'll give you the background, but then there's something everyone needs to hear.

"Bam Bam was the name of one of the helicopters, one of the Hueys. It had a crew of four. Dennis North, he was the pilot and sixteen years old. The co pilot was Seth Hopkins, age thirteen. Then there were the two gunners. Eric Maro, eleven, and Kieth Serty...he..." She took a breath as a sob escaped her then finished "He...he was...only...ten years old."

She had to stop for a minute to wipe the tears from her eyes and regain her composure a bit before she could continue but she finally managed, "You've heard about the battle Saturday, in Montana. Well,

two of the bigger helicopters... the MI-26's... were carrying the bulk of the non combatants, the little ones. See, we were heading up there for some rest, and relaxation. Mike had invited us to go, and most of the kids needed it. On the way up there, we got the call that they were being attacked. When we got there, we pushed them back... or so we thought. When it was clear, Adam called for the first MI-26 to come in and land. The second one was right behind it. Suddenly Juan spotted someone as they launched a surface to air missile right at the first one." Janet broke down for a second, and Mike handed her his handkerchief.

When she could, she went on, "Nothing could be done about the first one. It got hit, and went down. However, when Dennis saw what happened, he brought his helicopter back down into the fight. He had gone high to try and give room to the big ones as they came in. As he was coming back in, a second SAM got launched, this time heading for the second MI-26. They... They couldn't let it happen. So they flew into the missile, saving over a hundred lives." She had to wipe her tears away again, but this time, instead of continuing with the story, she looked up and sadly said. "Daileass, could you play the tape again, please?"

As the tape began to play, they heard the boys, Ken and Seth, talking. As it went on, they couldn't help but smile at the back and forth banter that went on about sex but it was little Keith saying "If that's all I'm gonna think about in a couple of years, then I hope I never grow up," That broke hearts because they all knew that all too soon he wouldn't be, even as Dennis told him "Ah kid, it ain't that bad."

It was obvious that Ken didn't know anything about this from the look on his face as the recording continued and the end began.

Suddenly there was a scream over the radio of "SAM INCOMING!!!"and they listened as another crew fought desperately to stay alive and knew that so many wouldn't.

It was little Keith screaming, "They're hit, they're hit" that brought them back as if they'd been slapped, yet they couldn't stop listening as Seth cried, "Oh God", then the deathly silence that filled the speakers before a voice filled with cold and fury quietly uttered, "Viper 8 descending to one thousand and we're live!"

It was almost like they were there as Dennis then told them, "Look alive, we're hot and it's payback time!" and they all felt the horror as if they were there when the next words came across.

"Shit! They got another SAM! Helena, break left!"

They all held their breath as they listened to the boys beg Dennis to do something, anything, to save their family members.

Keith finally cried, "There's gotta be something,"and Eric added, "Dennis, ya gotta save em, you can't let them die too."

They listened as Dennis told them it would mean their deaths and then heard the younger boys both say, "Do it!" together.

Sobs filled the room by this time, and they only got worse as the boys resolutely confirmed the decision that would cost them their lives, and Will shouting, "Viper 8! Dennis! What the hell are you doing? Get outta there!!!"

A voice filled with peace and determination came back with four simple words that tore everyone to pieces, "What we have to."

The tape didn't play much more than that, as Dennis told his brothers softly for the last time, "I love you guys," and finally Will's strangled gasp of "NO!" as he desperately called for things not to be happening as they were.

Sammy joined the other two in Mike's lap, crying along with him, but it was the pitiful mewling of Mike's newest sons that Ken would remember the most from today.

Such pain and loss in those cries that it would break anyone's heart as it was breaking his right then.

Janet finally asked into the tears and sobs, "Do you understand why, now?"

They all did.

Juan and Koth appeared outside of a shopping center in a small town outside of Sioux Falls, South Dakota. After looking around for a moment, Juan started to head over to a pair of adults who were sitting on a bench next to a pay phone. Both boys could see the tear stains on their faces and the rather ragged clothes that they both wore. The wife had a cane leaning up against her side, and Juan could see that her left leg was in some type of brace.

As they approached, the man got to his feet, and the woman tried to do the same. Juan put his hand up, "Don't bother getting up, Ms. Stevens." Juan stuck out his hand for Mr. Stevens, who shook it, and then he offered his hand to Ms. Stevens. Juan introduced both himself and Koth, and motioned for them to move over to one of the restaurants that were nearby. When Mr. Stevens started to protest, Juan insisted, informing the man that it was his treat.

Once they were all sat down, and had ordered some drinks, Juan took a deep breath and then began asking the questions he had, "Mr. Stevens, obviously we have some questions that need to be answered before anything can go forward."

"Of course, and please call me Geoff, and this is Lisa." The man said with a smile.

Juan smiled to both of them, and then began his questions. They sat there chatting and eating for almost a half hour, when Juan sat back, fully stuffed from his meal. "Okay, let me re-cap everything, just to make sure I have all the information right. Geoff, you were a construction engineer before the company you worked for went under, and since then you have been unable to find work."

Geoff nodded, while trying to hold back the tears. Juan was surprised that he could actually feel the sadness, but more importantly, the shame that the man was feeling. Juan sensed that Geoff was a proud man that he felt he should be able to provide for his family's needs. He couldn't help but respect the man for his beliefs. "Lisa, you had been going to college for teaching when you got pregnant the first time, and dropped out to take care of your kids. Then about two years ago, you were in an accident

when a drunk driver ran a red light, and slammed into the driver's side of your vehicle, shattering your left leg. Since then you've had to have four surgeries, and should be getting more, but you can't afford it." Both adults nodded, Lisa not being able to hide the tears falling from her face, and Juan knew that these people needed help.

"Lastly, you have four children, eleven year old Geoff Jr., nine year old twins Dillon and Devon, and four year old Katie." Both adults nodded, and Juan sat back while taking another deep breath, and quietly consulting with Logan through the link that Logan recently tapped into. Everyone was silent for a few moments while Juan ran his ideas by his eldest brother's lover.

Finally Juan opened his eyes, and looked at the adults. "Okay, we can offer you two different options. The first one is this; we bring all six of you back to Camp Bam Bam, which is where we are bringing the children that need a place to go. It is a very large place, which can easily handle around three thousand people. But as I said, we would bring all of you. The place needs adults who care about the kids, which I can see that you do. While we may be able to provide a safe place for the kids to grow and learn, we can't replace their parents. You both have proved that you love your kids more than anything else. And as such, I cannot see splitting you up. So we would offer to have you guys live there as well. Of course there is a catch." Juan said the last part with a smile, and both adults, who were sitting there with the mouths opened, suddenly shut them, and were now looking at Juan with a bit of suspicion. Koth, who had been silent up until this point, looked at Juan, and told him to "hurry up, and don't keep them waiting."

"Okay, geez... sorry. The catch would be this. Geoff, we would hire you to help get the place in shape. I'm not talking about cleaning up, or being a janitor. What I mean is helping with the maintenance. You would be in charge of the maintenance staff within the Camp." Geoff was silent for a second, before slowly nodding, a look of hope, and a tear coming into his eyes for the first time in a long time. Geoff was beginning to feel like he was worth something again and could contribute to his family and from the sounds of it even more, kids. Then Juan turned to his wife.

"Lisa, we would ask that you finish your teaching program, at our expense, and then help out once we have the school programs set up. School is a big thing, because every child that lives there will be going to school, along with some other types of educational programs. Dave, a teacher who is in charge of setting up the schooling program, will explain that more to you later, if you agree. You would both be paid a salary of no less than fifty thousand a year each." Juan trailed off to let that digest. He was hoping they would agree.

"And the second offer?" Geoff asked after a minute.

"Well, that one's much easier, basically, we buy you a house, and help you either get a new job, or get retrained. And until you can support yourself, we would support you. Nice and easy."

Geoff was shaking his head before Juan even finished. "I appreciate the offer, but I couldn't accept it."

"I wouldn't think you would accept it." Juan said with a smile. "So that means you'll accept the first offer?"

Geoff looked over at his wife, who nodded slowly, and then Geoff responded. "Yeah, I guess we will. Ummm... I hate to ask, but... well... can you really make that kind of offer." Geoff asked hesitantly, but then quickly went on. "No offense intended, but...."

Juan just giggled a bit. "No offense taken, and yes I can. Why don't you and Lisa go get your kids, and then we can get out of here! I'm sure they want to see their new home. Oh, and make sure to bring everything you want." Geoff nodded, and with that, everyone left. Juan and Koth waited by the shopping center while Geoff and Lisa went off to get their children.

Koth looked over at Juan with a goofy grin on his face. "You know... you didn't do too bad in there."

Juan grinned at his friend. "Hey, what can I say? When you're good... you're good."

Koth snickered his reply, "and so modest."

Juan's grin grew huge, and he started to sing. "Oh Lord, it's hard to be humble... when you're perfect in every way!"

Koth almost fell over laughing; however, Juan did, as soon as he was done singing.

When Juan was finally able to get himself back under control, he climbed to his feet with Koth's help, and hugged the young Klingon boy.

Koth melted into Juan's hug, and they held each other for a few moments, until something very strange happened.

Juan suddenly went very stiff, and Koth heard a low growl emerge from the boy he was holding. Koth quickly let go, and looked into Juan's eyes... his bright yellow eyes.

Juan's gaze was fixed on something in the distance, and Koth quickly turned to see what he was looking at. "What's going on, Juan?!"

Juan didn't say anything, but the growl continued. Koth finally figured out what got Juan's attention. Coming out of the grocery store across the street was a woman and a child about five.

"What... Who... Juan?" Koth asked while turning back to look at Juan. Juan suddenly reached into his pocket and pulled out his communicator. Without answering Koth, he hit the button on it. "Dailess, get me Emily right now. It's an emergency. Tell her I found Josh's little brother."

Ken looked through his tears around the room at everyone there. Every single one of them was crying, even the strange cat boys. When he first met the big one, when they were in Las Vegas, he could never have imagined these cat people could be as human as these two were. They didn't look human of course, but right now, Ken could only think of them as nothing but hurting little boys.

He was trying to figure out what to say when the intercom came to life. "Janet, there is an issue going on. Logan has requested your presence in the control room."

"Thanks Daileass. I'm on my way." Janet said while wiping her tears and getting up. Everyone else got up too, and headed for the door. Tony informed Mike that he was going to go find his family, and then explore the new place some.

"This place looks really cool, Dad... think we still got our old rooms?" Sammy said, while taking Mike's hand.

"Well, let's go look. Come on boys; let's see how much this place has changed." Mike responded, while holding his arm out, then draping it over both KT and Vishnu. Both boys still seemed down, but Ken could tell that the love Mike showed for them was starting to heal the wounds in their hearts. Ken watched them walk down the hall, Sammy saying something about Hulk Hogan, before he turned and followed Janet.

When they were almost to the door to the control room, they saw Emily and Donnie sprinting down the hall towards them. Ken couldn't help but gasp as he saw both of them were trying to get the last bits of the weaponry into place on their fatigues. Right behind them was little Josh, looking completely lost, and a little scared.

"Excuse us!" Donnie said hurriedly while they rushed past and into the control room. Once the three youths made their way past them, Janet and Ken walked into the room slowly behind them, as they both wondered what the hell was going on.

When they got in there, they heard Alvin cry out from his terminal, "I got satellite!"

"On screen." Logan ordered, and on the main screen in front of the command center, a hazy image came up, looking like a shopping center.

"Daileass, can you clean that up, and magnify?" Logan asked while motioning for Ken and Janet to come up to where he was.

"Working on it, Boss." Came the reply, and everyone watched as the picture grew closer and clearer.

When the screen cleared up the final time, a few minutes later, they stood there looking at a boy around five or six years old, who was holding hands with an older woman.

Janet was about to ask what was going on, when they heard a high pitched wail from someone in the room. All eyes turned to Josh who was standing there, eyes intently focused on the screen. Emily quickly handed her rifle to Donnie, and then bent down in front of her new son.

"Josh, I need you to look at me. Is that Kevin? Is that your little brother?" She asked in a soothing voice, but all she got out of Josh was a small nod of his head.

"Okay little man, don't you worry, your momma and I will go make sure he's safe, and then bring him back here. Is that all right with you?" Donnie asked, also bending down to be on eye level with the nine year old boy.

"You... you guys would really do that?" Josh asked very quietly. Janet and Ken watched with breaking hearts as the little boy looked at the two older teens with a mixture of terror, and hope.

Emily pulled the boy into her with a tight hug. "Of course we will, Josh. He's your brother. We'll do everything we can for him."

Josh pulled back so he could look her in the eyes. "Does that mean... that... that you'll adopt him too?" He asked more hope radiating from his eyes.

"Of course we will," Both Donnie and Emily said at the same time.

Josh smiled, and then threw himself into their arms crying softly. Ken looked over at Janet, with a look that she knew well. Ken wasn't sure what was going on, but didn't want to ask right now. She pulled him off to the side so she could give him a quick answer to his question.

"About three months ago, two young teens were found brutally raped and murdered in a park in northern Illinois." Janet started, but Ken broke in.

I heard about that. They said they caught five older teens that not only admitted doing it, but actually bragged about it. Last I heard they were still being held in jail. Their lawyer is actually trying to claim freedom of religion to get them off." He paused for a second, and then his eyes shot to Josh. "There were two young boys... the younger brothers of one of the dead boys... they were kidnapped by their father, and hadn't been heard from or seen since. Are you saying that these kids are those two boys?"

Janet simply nodded, and Ken rubbed his hands through his hair. "Oh shit. What have they been through over these last three months?"

Janet shook her head, and quietly told him how they found Josh. "It was bad. Josh was found on Saturday, right in the middle of the battle. He had a bomb strapped to his chest and was forced to run right at us."

Ken gasped at the thought of that. "Thankfully, Adam saw what it was, and ordered Juan to drop him. Juan claims he missed, and only hit Josh in the leg. But, well. Juan doesn't miss. Jory was able to disarm the bomb, and we took Josh to the hospital. But..." Janet trailed off shaking her head.

Ken looked up when the door opened, and saw the boy that had met them when he and Chris first got here. Ray, he remembered his name was, ran up to Josh, and engulfed the older boy in his arms, and led him off to the side. Donnie and Emily immediately went back to get ready to go rescue their soon to be son.

Juan and Koth had followed the woman and the child as they made their way through the streets of Sioux Falls, South Dakota, making sure not to lose them. Geoff came with them, as their guide, after they sent his wife and four children off to Camp Bam Bam.

They finally made their way to a small shitty hotel and Juan watched as they went into the room on the end. He told Koth and Geoff to wait there, while he went and re-conned the area.

When Juan came back, Geoff gasped when he got a look at Juan's bright yellow eyes. Juan closed his eyes, and took a moment to take a few deep breaths. When he opened his eyes again, his normal deep pools of brown returned.

"Okay, here's the deal. There are three adults, and four kids in there. Two of the kids are tied to the beds in the adjoining room. The two younger ones are feeding them right now, while the woman and one of the men tend to the third adult who has at least one gunshot wound to the shoulder." Juan paused for a moment, trying to fight back the anger within him, the anger that would trigger "HIM" to take over.

"The wounded man... it's Josh's father. It's the fucker who strapped a bomb to his own child..." Juan said, in a very slow and measured voice, trying hard not to let his rage get out of hand. "...Then... they forced him to run towards my brothers... he was going to blow up his own son so he could kill my family." Finally the rage could not be held back any more, and those beautiful brown eyes of his, flared into the yellow eyes of his alter self.

"He tried to kill my family, and now... now I will show him..." Juan was interrupted when next to him, three shimmers of light appeared, and then a moment later they were gone, leaving Donnie, Emily, and Jory standing there.

Juan turned to look at Jory, who grinned and handed him a duffel bag. Juan grinned ferally, and opened that bag. Over the next few minutes, they stood there while Juan got his armor and weapons on, and told everyone what he found.

Finally, they decided what they were going to do. It would be nice and simple as Juan said. Bust in the front door, and take out anyone that resisted. It was actually Koth who was able to convince Juan that all the adults needed to be tried properly, and not simply executed like Juan would have wanted. It might have had something to do with Koth grabbing him and kissing him as he tried to object. Juan stepped back from the kiss, the yellow eyes gone, as he breathed heavily. "Okay..." he said, rather meekly, "we do it his way."

Jory fell over laughing, and the others couldn't help but grin a little bit. Donnie and Emily just shook their heads, and then Emily spoke up. "Okay, let's get this show on the road. Josh is standing by with Janet, to get beamed in when we have the place secure. Juan, you and Jory go first. If they have weapons, when the door busts open, they will aim chest high to an adult. So we'll let you two squirts go first."

Both Juan and Jory protested loudly, but with big grins. Once they quieted down, Emily went on. "Once we're in, Koth, you cut the boys loose on the beds, and get them into the bathroom. Try and get all four kids in there with you. Geoff, I want you to stay outside. If you start to hear cops coming in.. please warn us, so we can be prepared."

"Ummm... okay... this isn't like... illegal, is it?" Geoff asked sounding more than a little worried.

Donnie looked at Geoff, trying not to laugh. "No sir, this is not illegal, at least not by the laws of Vulcan, which we operate under. This is also clearly laid out in the Safe Haven Act, adopted by the United Federation of Planets in 2002. As it says in Section 3.1: To remove any and all children found in unsuitable environments and to place them with a person or persons in environments that are healthy, loving and nurturing. There are other sub sections that I could quote.. but, that one covers it the best.

Emily stood there stunned for a second, but then a smile crept onto her face. "Just a stupid guy... huh? Donnie.. I really do love you." She then stepped up to him, and gave him a kiss that made Juan and Koth both a little jealous.

"Okay guys, let's go." Emily said, and with that, they were off.

Juan looked to the others and got nods in return. They were all crowded around the front door of two hotel rooms. While Juan and Jory were going into the room holding the adults, with Donnie and Emily as back up. Koth was going in through the other door to make sure that the kids, who were tied to the beds, were covered and protected.

Juan took a deep breath, his yellow eyes glowing brightly from under his helmet. He always loved this time, the adrenaline pumping hard throughout his body. His senses elevated to a level that no normal squishy could ever hope to have. He's joked about the fact that when he was like this, he could hear a flea fart from a couple hundred feet away. He joked about it, but it was true. When he was in "the zone" everything was so clear.

Juan raised his foot, and with a mighty kick, the door split into three parts, one of which flew all the way to the back of the room, embedding into the wall right over top of the man sitting in the chair. Unfortunately, the crash of the door bursting in was suddenly over powered by the thunder like explosion of a shotgun going off.

The next thing Jory knew, Juan was lifted off his feet, and thrown right back out of the room, taking part of the wall with him. Jory immediately raised and fired. Triple tap, two to the chest, and one to the head. Then he was moving, as Donnie and Emily were right behind him.

Emily came through, having to put the sight of Juan flying backwards from the shotgun blast, out of her head. 'No matter what happens, you must stay focused on the mission. You can deal with everything else afterwards.' Adam's words came back to her, and she pushed her concern aside and did her job. Juan had been taken out of the action. He was supposed to sweep to the left. Jory did what he needed to, and went right. Emily was supposed to go straight into the room, but no Juan meant no one went left. So she had to. Donnie, coming in right behind her, went with the change seamlessly, and headed right into the middle of the room. She had to go left.

She saw a woman screaming, and trying to hide in the corner, no threat there, but she still kept an eye on her. A little boy was screaming and trying to hide behind the woman. A man was lying on the bed, bandages on his side, left shoulder, and right leg. He tried to scramble off the bed, but Emily put a bullet in his other leg. Non fatal, but he stopped reaching for the gun that was on the night stand. Emily looked around as she heard Jory yell through the comm, "CLEAR!" Then there was Donnie's echo of "CLEAR!" and then she started to relax. "Clear, two adults subdued, third adult down. Juan's been injured, Logan, send in Josh and Janet, as well as a med team for Juan." She said.

"Understood" came Logan's response over the comm. They had been monitoring the situation back at base, in case things went bad. Emily pulled off her helmet, and went over to where the little boy and

the woman were still cowering in the corner. She motioned with her gun while talking to the woman. "Get up, and sit on the bed next to him." As she pointed towards the man that was lying on the bed, clutching his left leg, and screaming at them.

"What the fuck do you think you're doing. Do you have any idea who I..." He never finished as Donnie dug his thumb into the bullet wound that Emily just gave him, while picking up the gun on the nightstand and throwing it over next to Jory. His words died in a scream. "If you know what's good for you, you'll keep your fucking mouth shut. If you don't, I'd be more than happy to shut it for you... permanently."

Emily squatted down, and looked at the little boy. "Kevin?" She asked.

The little boy nodded through his tears... "yeah...but.. how do you know... my name?"

"Because your brother Josh told me." Emily spoke, and it had the effect she wanted. The boy immediately brightened up.

"Josh... you know Joshy... is he otay?"

"Yeah little dude. He's doing great. He'll be here in a few..." Donnie's words were cut off as group of people started to materialize in the room. Donnie was kinda of confused, he had only expected a few, but there were a bunch coming in.

Janet, Josh, Ray.. he knew about. Three of the others, okay, they were medical, but the other four he didn't understand why. Vishnu and Kartik, in full armor, and weapons, looking around for any threats, then Sammy and Mike Reynolds. He wasn't sure why they were there. The medical personnel went right outside to check on Juan. Donnie knew Juan was alive still, as the steady stream of curse words they came through the comm, definitely made it apparent he could talk.

Josh saw his little brother, and gave a short cry, "KEVIN!" and rushed over to grab the little boy into a hug. The two boys dissolved in tears, as Ray stood nearby, eyes on the two adults in the room, and hand on the pistol he wore at his side. He may only be seven, but he wasn't going to let anything happen to his new brothers.

Emily watched the two boys hug as she moved over to stand next to Mike and Sammy. "Hey, not that I mind, but why'd you guys come?" Saying this, she looked out to see Janet taking the armor off of Juan who was still using some very colorful language. He spit out some blood, and Janet was having a hell of a time trying to keep him still. Juan clearly stated; "I want a piece of the mother fucker that shot me."

"Sorry bro... I already took him out." Jory laughed through the comm.

"Asshole, he was mine!" Juan retorted before wincing in pain.

"Juan got shot..." was the reply Emily heard before Juan started on his rant!

"Ummm.. guys... you may want to come in here." They heard from the other room where Koth was.

"I got these guys." Donnie said as he motioned for the others to go.

Emily gasped as she got into the room, and heard Jory curse under his breath. The two boys on the beds were strapped down, backs in the air, with something large and black protruding from their butts. Both boys also had very large, red and angry looking welts all over their backs, butts, and thighs. Someone really went to town on them with the whip that was coiled on the desk. When Emily looked closer, she could see they had some type of gag strapped to their heads, making it so they could only whimper softly.

"Janet, we need you in here NOW!" Emily called, as she rushed over, and started to untie the boy closer to her. Sammy helped her, while Jory went over to help Koth untie the other one. Mike moved to the young girl, maybe five years old that was curled up in the corner crying, muttering "oh sweet Jesus," as he bent down and pulled her into his chest.

"What's up.... oh my God!" Janet gasped as she walked into the room. She quickly moved in between the two beds, and pulled out her tricorder. She scanned both boys, as the others finished up untying them, and then started working on the gags. Emily's face burned red with anger, as she gently pulled out the rather large ball gag that the boy she was tending to had in his mouth. Emily knew the boy couldn't be much older than eleven or twelve, and looking closer she could see that the other boy had to be his brother... twin brother.

"Okay... can I kill these fuckers now?" Juan said as he walked into the room. He had the chest plate of the armor removed, and his shirt had been cut open. There was a very large red welt on his chest, and Emily could easily see that at least two ribs had been broken.

"No Juan, they need to be tried... Clan style." Koth said with a very sardonic grin. Juan narrowed his eyes for a moment, and then grinned evilly as well.

"Right... so all we need is a couple of telepaths to try them, and THEN we can kill them." Juan reached down and grabbed his comm link. "Hey Logan, think you can rustle up some of those Dragon guys that are telepaths. We need to have a trial."

"I'll see what I can do. Who's gonna act as Judge?" Logan asked.

Emily looked up and said. "Not me. No way could I be impartial." That sentiment was quickly echoed by Donnie and Jory. As much as Juan hated to agree, he had to as well.

"I will be," Juan heard Sammy say, as all eyes darted to the boy.

"You?" Emily asked.

"Yes. I am a division head and it's my responsibility as well as duty. What was done here...well, someone has to pay if they are still alive to do it." Everyone nodded except for Mike who was looking at Sammy worriedly.

"It's something I have to do, Dad." He said before Mike could say anything.

They held eyes for a moment, before Mike gave a small nod, still clearly not liking it, but knowing it was to be.

"Okay Logan. Sammy's gonna be Judge. Which is just as well seemings as I guess he runs all of North America. You got the telepaths yet?" Juan spoke into his comm, but before Logan could answer, two shimmering beams of light appeared in the room. Two small figures in robes appeared, hoods down, and Juan could see it was Vicky and Ollie.

Before anyone else could say anything, Janet spoke up. "Okay, whatever you need to do, do it in the other room. And send the medics in here, I'm gonna need some help before they can be transported."

No one dared to argue with her, so the kids all filed out of the room, Mike following with the crying girl still wrapped in his arms. As they were walking out, Logan came across the communicators. "Just to let you know, I've taken care of the swat team that was coming in due to the gun fire. The cops won't be bugging you."

"Thanks, Logan," Emily said, as Juan started to explain the situation to the two Dragon division members. Vicky held up her hand for him to stop. "Don't tell us anything, we'll get the information we need. For now, if you could move all non essential persons outside, it would help immensely.

Everyone nodded, and Emily led Ray, Josh and Kevin outside. Mike went out with them, but quickly returned, minus the little girl. That left only Juan, Jory, Donnie, Sammy, Mike, Vicky and Ollie in there with the two adults.

"Okay, let's get going then." Sammy said. Vicky and Ollie nodded, and then both closed their eyes as Vicky said, "This will take a few moments as we get the information. It's the boring bit for those that are watching, sorry."

And she wasn't kidding. They all stood around looking from one to another for almost five full minutes. The only thing that interrupted the silence was a sharp snap, and Juan sighing. His ribs had just snapped back into place.

When Ollie and Vicky opened their eyes, they both seemed completely emotionless. Vicky turned to Sammy, rather formally addressing him. "Director, we have completed the scans of both the adults in here, as well as the four involved children outside. Would you like a verbal report, or shall we transfer the details directly into your mind?"

Sammy took a deep breath and said softly, "My mind."

"As you wish, Director." She said, and the two young kids both closed their eyes again. This was when the man, who was still lying on the bed, decided to make his presence known. "I don't know what's going on here, but..." That was all he said, as another scream ripped from his throat. Juan had taken a small throwing dagger, and hit him directly in the wound that Emily had made earlier. Thankfully the screaming didn't last long, as he passed out from the pain.

Vicky murmured under her breath as she completed the transfer, "Thank God; hope the prick stays quiet!"

Sammy was silent for a few seconds before he looked over at Juan, "Damn, Juan, did you have to do that? Now I have to wake him up so I can kill him."

Mike stiffened in shock as he knew Sammy wasn't kidding.

"Oh please... allow me, Director." Juan grinned as he walked over to the guy, and started to slap his face, none to gently. "Wakey Wakey, Asshole."

Finally the guy started to come around, and Juan stepped back. "There you go, Sir. Happy to help."

"Do keep him quiet for poor Vicky's sake if nothing else, please." Sammy said, but quickly added as he saw the look that came to Juan's face, "Conscious and alive for now, just quiet."

"Aww man." He mumbled but moved back over to the man's side.

"Shhhh," he said menacingly to him as Sammy turned and walked over to the woman.

She looked up at him and Sammy took a deep breath before beginning.

"You are the mother to the two boys and little girl in the other room. You are supposed to protect them above anything else in this world, and yet you did not do that," he said.

"I..." she started to say but he interrupted her.

"You didn't do that! You went along with everything that was planned for them and everything that was done to them. You stood by and let it happen. Yes, I'm aware that you were abused and beaten, but you didn't protect your children, not once. You didn't even try. They were beaten and had things done to them that even adults shouldn't suffer through. But the worst is, that you helped in what was done. Scared or not, you had a higher duty to which you failed," he said as he paused, she could only look at him in shock.

Sammy shook his head and continued. "The one person who they were supposed to be able to count on wasn't there for them and actually hurt them. As of this moment, they are removed permanently from your custody and placed under Clan protection."

He turned to look at Juan. "Will the Unit accept custody of those children and place them at Camp Bam Bam?" He already knew the answer, but had to ask anyways.

Juan stood and replied just as formally, "yes, Director, we will."

"Then the three children are hereby placed at Camp Bam Bam."

"You...you can't do that. They're my babies!" The woman cried.

"I not only can, I already have." Sammy told her coldly.

"How do I get them back?" She asked then, apparently not listening to what he had said earlier.

"You don't. It's a permanent placement unless other parents are found for them there, and then they will be adopted by those people." Sammy told her.

"No..." She moaned.

"As for you, I sentence you to a Federation prison planet for your actions... or lack thereof." Sammy told her, then pulled his communicator out and opening it called, "Reynolds to Lafayette."

"Lafayette here, go ahead." He heard in reply.

"This is Samuel Reynolds, Director of Operations Clan Short North America Division. I have one female for transport to a Federation Penal Colony."

"Security and transporter control standing by, Director Reynolds." The voice said.

"The woman is directly in front of me, transport when ready, Reynolds out." Sammy said before closing his communicator.

Before it was completely closed, the woman was no longer there and he turned his attention back to the man, who thankfully had remained quiet.

"Sammy?" Mike said, and Sammy stopped and slowly turned to face his father, the pain clearly evident on his face.

"Dad, please!" He almost begged before turning back to the man and walking the rest of the way over.

"You, I don't know where to begin with you." He said with nothing but total disgust.

"Fuck you!" the man snarled up at Sammy.

Juan gave one of his gunshot wounds a smack which got a howl out of him as he said, "What? Don't you understand English?"

"I don't know where to begin. What you did to Mark while he was alive, along with Zach, or your complicity in their deaths would be cause enough to sentence you to death. Your murder of their mother and what you put your two remaining sons through, or maybe the bomb you strapped to Josh's back when you attacked my family also deserve a sentence of death. The torture you put those two boys in the other room through, once again would be a capital offence. There is just so much, I don't even have a starting place. You sicken me and disgust me, and the only thing I'm sorry about is that I can't make you suffer one tenth of what you've put others through."

He just glared at Sammy.

"Do you have anything to say, before I pass sentence on you?" Sammy asked reluctantly.

"Who do you think you are? You can't pass nothing but gas, you little shit!" He screamed at Sammy.

Sammy just shook his head and said, "I'll make this simple enough for even you to understand, Asshole, I sentence you to death for your crimes. You're evil and I hope you rot in hell."

"I'm not afraid to die, you little pissant, my Lord will be there to greet me and comfort me for battling His enemies." He told Sammy defiantly.

"Not the Lord you think," was Sammy's reply, then without saying anything else, he pulled the gun from his side and aiming it, pulled the trigger.

Juan jumped in shock, as Jory muttered "Holy Fuck."

Sammy's hand slowly fell as the tears he had been holding in, finally started to fall. Mike was right there to catch him before he fell, and Sammy buried his face into his father's shoulder as the gun slipped from his hand. It was over.

"This is Ken Savage reporting to you, directly from what has come to be called Camp Bam Bam, in the Utah Mountains. This is an update on what members of Clan Short have been calling "the Intake." Since this morning, they have received approximately 4,673 phone calls requesting aid. They have responded to 657 of those calls, the rest were determined to be less the critical, there by not needing direct intervention. 296 of those that were responded to, the children needed to be taken out of their current situation. 212 of those children were living on the streets.

Of the one hundred and forty seven intake centers set up around the country, they have processed 6214 children asking for help; 4573 of those were able to be handled on the local level. 1324 of the remaining have been transferred to adjacent counties to be handled there. The rest were processed and brought here to Camp Bam Bam. That brings the one day total of children being brought into Camp Bam Bam to five hundred and twenty nine. Again, that is just today's numbers.

However, it has not just been children that have come into the Camp today. Twenty nine pediatricians have volunteered to come in and help with any and all medical needs. Fourteen of them have agreed to become permanent residents. One hundred and two nurses have shown up, with sixty eight of them agreeing to stay. There are also twelve psychiatrists who are here to help with the children's emotional needs.

There are also three hundred and nine other adults, ranging from school teachers, to celebrities, and even two chefs, all of them coming to try and help the children that have had to come here to be residents.

These numbers are very high, but after touring the place, and speaking with Janet Hayes, the director of Medical, here within the Camp, I can assure everyone that this place can hold three thousand people comfortably and more if they need to. However, they are looking for more areas to help hold the children that need it. Also, they are running low on supplies, and ask that anyone that would be willing to help out, please contact their local law enforcement agency, who can pass everything along to Clan

Short. I was informed that there is no shortage of necessities, but if people would be willing to donate items like children's toys, etc., it would help immensely.

Any requests for information will now be handled through the Camp Bam Bam public relations department.

Thank you, and from all the residents of Camp Bam Bam... Thank you very much for everyone's help.”

Editors Notes:

Well, this has been another exciting chapter! Roland you are awesome! I know we owe some thanks to DarkStar as well as he helped with some of his characters and scenes. Personally, I am happy that Sammy got to Judge over this last situation and I think it was a bitter sweet job for him.

Roland has really got us going now, what on earth is going to happen next. I mean this has been a fast few days since the Camp was named. These boys definitely do not waste any time! So will, Juan ever become Koth's boyfriend? Hmmm, they do make a cute couple! What about Geoff? He and his family will have a lot to deal with when they get started on their new life and jobs. There is so much happening that I just am at a loss for words. I just cannot get enough of this story! There are a lot of kid's being helped here and they just got started! Day one and they have 529 new brothers and sisters. Roland, keep us guessing and we look forward to more!!

David

AKA: Boxerdude

Next Editor's Notes: Let me add my congratulations here on this chapter of book two of the U.N.I.T. 'saga'.

This darn program that I am using seems to want to capitalize any word that appears after a period. The only way I could convince it to go lie down was to put those marks around the word saga.

Anyway, I am really enjoying this new story. I too want to know what will happen next, but I guess I will just have to wait like all the rest. Thank you Roland, great job as always.

Darryl AKA The Radio Rancher

Chapter 03

Tommy's POV

We had gotten into bed and I gently leaned forward bringing my lips to his in a brief kiss.

I could feel his body tense up, but as I moved forward once again and touched him the tightness left him although as the kiss went on I could feel that it didn't leave one part at least.

Finally, it had been so long since we'd done anything and I'd really missed it.

I pulled back and looked at him only to see a little smile on his face as I brought my lips back to him and kissed him some more.

We may have been little but we knew what we liked and we definitely liked this.

It had been hard since he came back from that place, and sometimes I wondered if we'd ever do 'stuff' again but now it looked like maybe we were gonna.

As I felt that part pressing into me, I moved my hand down and gently took it into my grip slowly moving my hand back and forth.

For a moment, all was right with the world but then that rightness came crashing down as Ronnie screamed and pushed away from me.

"Ronnie?" I cried, not quite understanding what was wrong, as I moved forward to take him in my arms and let him know everything was alright.

But it wasn't, and my movement seemed to completely terrify him as he scrambled back falling off the bed and curling up in a shaking ball sobbing "No" and "Please not again."

"No" I whispered, getting down on the floor with him to try and help. But, he suddenly lashed out and even though I moved back quickly I still got a foot in my stomach. Even though, not with full force, it still sent me flying and landing on my ass which left me gasping for breath.

It was what he said, as he lashed out, that sent icy tendrils of fear crashing down on me.

"No...Please...Don't touch me...not again," and the look on his face.

I'd never seen anything like that before, such a look of pain and hurt yet anger too, I couldn't even describe it.

I felt myself shaking my head as I slowly got up and said "I'll get help Ronnie, I'll get help" and then with a sob escaping me at seeing the look on his face I turned and ran from the room, tears falling as I ran blindly to the only one I could think of for help.

The look on his face was as if he was somewhere else, and he didn't even recognize me.

Jeremy's POV

"Oh GOD!" He moaned, as I smiled, while I was busy but couldn't resist stopping for a moment to say, "We need to put this down in our schedule for each day."

"Talk less, suck more." He pleaded pushing my head back down as I giggled softly.

"Oh God!" He said again, and I was so happy that I could make him feel that way.

"Yes!" He cried out and I knew it was almost time, as he began to get more energetic, then suddenly the door burst open and a voice called "JER!"

"Jesus Christ, can't we ever get any time!" I said as I came up and turned to find out who the hell was bugging us now, only to freeze at the look on Tommy's face.

I was up in a second with Ty right behind me as we ran forward to the boy who was saying, "Ya gotta come quick!"

"What's wrong?" I asked, kneeling down to the out of breath little blond guy in front of me.

"It's Ronnie," he sobbed.

"What?" I asked.

"He...he's like totally freaking out and I don't know what to do!" He sobbed, before collapsing in my arms.

"Ty get Janet!" I said, which got a quick "NO! Please?"

"Why Tommy?" I asked, looking at him.

"Jeremy, please you gotta help. He doesn't even know who I am!" He cried.

"What happened Tommy?" Tyler asked softly.

"I don't know," he almost moaned in distress.

I looked over at Ty and finally back at Tommy and asked, "Why don't you want Janet to come and only us to?"

Tommy looked down for a moment before saying "Cause, I think it's about what happened to him and..."

And he didn't have to finish, as I felt the pain come back briefly only to feel Ty's hand squeezing tightly on my shoulder and not letting it overwhelm me.

"You were doing some playing weren't you?" Ty asked softly, and I watched as Tommy's head nodded before he looked up and said, "He liked it, he did...then he...he...."

"Freaked out," I said softly.

"Yeah," he replied.

"Come on," I said, picking him up in my arms and hugging him tightly as I carried him at a run from the room; Ty on my heels and memories flooding through me.

"Jer are you sure?" I heard softly, asked from beside me.

"Yeah, I am." I replied, thinking back to when it was me.

I can remember thinking that everything was fine and good, until I actually went and tried to do something with the boy I really liked.

The pain, the fear, the overwhelming memories taking over and bringing me back to a shower in the hole I had been in.

No Ty, no nothing just being back there in hell and it hadn't mattered how much I had wanted to do stuff either, it hadn't mattered.

I knew what I was going to face was myself, and yet I didn't know anyone else who could do it. It was my job, as it had once been Ty's and Dave's.

As we rounded the corner, leading to their room, I could hear this pitiful moaning coming from it and it broke my heart to hear it again and from someone even younger.

When we got to the entrance, I could see Ronnie cued up in a corner, next to the bed, holding his arms around himself and rocking on the floor keening this long hurt sound mixed with mumbles of "no, no, no" that tore something deep inside me hearing it.

I stopped and felt Tommy struggle to get down.

"No, little guy, you can't go near him now. He's not here, he's where he was and going to him might send him there forever."

"But..." he said.

"I know you want to help, but right now, just sit with us and don't try to get too close." I said softly, as I moved near but not too close to the ailing boy. I sat down, placing Tommy next to me on one side, while Ty took my other grasping my hand tightly.

He knew what this meant to me as well as what it would do to me.

I started by just calling his name as gently as I could over and over again then added words to that like, "It's gonna be alright."

I knew he didn't, couldn't believe that it ever would be alright, just as I didn't but I also knew that I had to get him to believe just as Dave and finally Uncle Mike had made me believe.

~~~~~Flashback~~~~~

It had been a week ago now; as I tried everything I could to avoid Uncle Mike.

I should have known, he wouldn't put up with that shit forever and he didn't.

I was making my way across the hangar when I heard, "Jeremy!"

I tried to keep walking when he said, "Jeremy STOP!"

I stopped.

I heard his footsteps moving rapidly to catch up to me and another's as well.

As he got closer, I slowly turned to face that which I really did not want to face.

"Why have you been avoiding me Jer? What's wrong?" He asked.

I smiled and said, "Nah Uncle Mike, I haven't been avoiding you just been real busy is all."

Sammy just stood there looking at me and I could almost feel that he knew what I was thinking or something by the look he gave me.

"Bullshit!" Mike said, causing my mouth to drop open in shock.

"What...what'd ya mean?" I stuttered.

"I mean you've been avoiding me as much as possible since we got here. You've been here how long and the first we hear of it is when we get here? Why didn't you call? Why didn't you let us know Andy had died? Why didn't you ask us, any of us for help Jer?" He asked, and I could hear the hurt in his voice at not being asked.

"It's alright." Sammy said to me, and I looked quickly at him and was surprised to see the pain in his eyes as he said that.

I couldn't look Mike in the eyes and after an uncomfortable silence he simply said, "Why Jeremy?"

"Because I couldn't," I whispered.

There wasn't a response for a moment or two and I hesitantly raised my eyes to look at this man who stood in front of me in pain and clearly not understanding.

"Jeremy you're family, any of us would have been there in an instant for you," he said softly.

"No, you wouldn't." I said just as softly.

"What on Earth could make you think that?" He asked me, shock clearly in his voice.

"Because everything dad ever taught me, everything he believed in, that you all believe in, I failed to do." I whispered, looking down again.

"You know when I went to the Juvy they made me do stuff, things I didn't want to do. Bad things and when I went to the foster home from there it wasn't just kids but the foster dad who liked little boys. Dad still loved me even after he found out about it." Sammy said, quietly as my head snapped up to look at him in shock.

"You were assaulted?" Mike hissed out softly, which caused me to laugh; only there was nothing funny in the sound as I replied bitterly, "Oh I was way more than assaulted."

I heard him gasp and then suddenly felt his hands pulling me into his body in a hug which I tried to fight at first but finally gave in to.

"Oh Jer, no, no. I'd never stop loving you because you got hurt that way, none of us would," he said gently.

"You don't understand, I...I...couldn't stop them. I...I tried but...I..." I said, as I began to cry brokenly.

"Oh sweetheart, no, you can't blame yourself," he told me.

"Dad...he said...he said there were things that...that were worse...worse than dying and I couldn't...couldn't stop them." I cried again.

"You were raped?" He finally asked.

Now I heard this agonizing wail from somewhere, howl out with such pain and fury that it was almost unrecognizable as a human voice, one word, "YEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEESSSSSSSSSSSSSSSS!"

It took me a while to realize, that horrendous sound had come from me.

"I tried...believe me I did but there were so many, I tried." I told him, before finding myself bawling in his arms like a baby.

I hadn't done this in ages and it had been with Dave, I thought I was over it but...

When I had calmed down, I told him what happened, all of it and finally, "I was too ashamed of letting it happen, I couldn't call any of you, I'm sorry!"

My heart fell through my feet at his first words of," I'm sorry too Jeremy."

I was right, he didn't want me either, and no one would now.

"I wished I'd known because we would have been there for you," he said next, which brought my head up to look him in the eyes.

"But...but I'm...I...I'm...dirty now." I whispered, never taking my eyes off of him."

Suddenly, fear ran through me at the anger that appeared in his face and then in his voice as he said ,**"You listen to me Jeremy Michael Rose! I do NOT EVER want to hear you say something like that again! DO YOU HEAR ME?"**

"Yyyes," I got out, as he went on. "It is not your fault. It is never the fault of the victim even if there had been only one attacker. You did the best you could but it wasn't enough. I know that and you know that. **BUT** that doesn't mean you didn't try. You're right there are things worse than death but you haven't done or been subjected to any of them. Jeremy you're eleven years old and you did more than most adults manage to do in that situation. You have nothing, absolutely nothing to be sorry for. Do you understand that?"

"But...I didn't overcome the opponent," I told him.

"It's about doing your best, not winning. You won't always win Jer, but it's that you tried and you should be proud of how you did. I love you Jeremy and the rest of your Uncles do too. You have always had family with us and you always will," he told me.

"Even though I...was...raped?" I got out. As that word, being the hardest to finally speak for the first time.

"It has nothing to do with it. It doesn't matter in the slightest to me or any of us, I can tell you that right now. It wasn't your fault, son." He said, as I felt the tears falling again.

"It wasn't your fault!" He said again, as he leaned forward and gently kissed my forehead looking at me all the while.

"You mean that? You really mean that?" I asked, fearfully hoping against hope that maybe he did.

"Yes he does. He loves me even though people did bad stuff, sex stuff to me," SamSam said.

"Did Andy ever tell you where you got your middle name from?" Mike asked gently.

"He said..." and then I stopped as the realization hit me.

He just smiled and said, "You've been family since before you were born kiddo. Matter of fact, since the day Andy started driving us crazy when he learned he was going to have a baby."

I felt something deep within me change and leave me finally with the words he said, as I looked into his eyes and saw nothing but love returned and with a cry I launched myself back into his arms holding as tightly as I could while I cried, only this time in relief and release.

This time, I was crying because something I didn't even know was still hurt was getting better.

When it was over, he softly whispered, "It's time to come home son." But, I knew it wasn't meant to be, as I pulled back and just looked at him for a moment before shaking my head and said, "No" just as softly.

"But..." he started to say, but I brought my finger up to his mouth gently silencing him. As I said, "I have family now Uncle Mike, not only you and my other Uncles now, but brothers and a dad. We've made a life here and we get to help others who need it. No Uncle Mike, you, Sammy, and the rest will always be family but my place is here now."

He looked at me for a long time before Sammy said, "Remember Kelly?"

I watched as Mike turned and looked intently at Sam before turning back and saying, "Okay son, but you remember that you're always part of our family too."

"I will, and thanks Uncle Mike, thanks a lot." I said smiling at him, before taking him back into what I thought I'd never really get again from him, a hug.

A hug after he knew everything that had happened, and yet still loved me, a dream I never thought would happen, yet now was.

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I don't know how long it was, that we sat there with me just repeating "Ronnie, Ronnie, its okay Ronnie, you're Safe Ronnie, it's alright," and stuff like that, before I saw the shudders racking his small body begin to slowly subside.

A while ago, it had been Dave trying to calm another frightened little boy curling into ball as another boy looked on with worry and fear.

Now it was my turn, and I remembered what he had done for me as I in turn tried to do the same with the boy several feet away from me.

"It's gonna be alright Ronnie." I said again, in almost a whisper, watching as the body stilled while I kept talking softly, gently and with all the promise I could put into my voice.

Finally, as memories overlapped, he like I had before said brokenly, "No, it's not."

"No, you're right, it's not but it can be." I told him gently.

His head moved rapidly from side to side as he said one word, "No."

"Yes," I replied, and his eyes opened looking at me.

"They won't leave me alone," he said, and I knew he was talking about the memories, the people who had hurt him so badly.

"I know," I told him gently.

"It hurts!" he wailed. Now, as I moved closer and very carefully pulled him into my arms, he began to cry sobbing over and over again, "They won't leave me alone!"

"No, they won't but you can learn to deal with them," I told him gently, and watched as he shuddered at hearing that.

Finally though, the word I had been waiting for came out, "How?"

"By talking about it and realizing that they are memories and they don't have to control everything you do," I said.

"What would you know about it?" he questioned me, a hint of anger now in his voice.

"Everything," I whispered to him.

I heard him gasp as he looked up at me staring intently into my eyes and I softly told him, "Not long ago I was in a juvenile detention center where some people thought it would be nice to see the little white boy raped. In the end, five of them did everything you could imagine in every place you can think of and for quite a while too. That was after they almost killed me." I heard Tommy gasp, and while I knew he knew some of it he didn't know all of it, at least until now.

"Not that long ago Ronnie, I was where you are now. Really where you are, curled up on the floor and feeling like I was dying, like I wanted to die. You see I have a lot more training than you do yet I couldn't stop them. I tried, oh God I tried, but I couldn't do it. I thought after a long while I was all over it until one night Tyler and I were in bed and I would guess doing what you and Tommy were when I lost it. Suddenly I was back in that shower room at Juvy, and it wasn't Ty but 'them' and I couldn't get out and back to Ty. Soon it became where there was no Ty anymore just, 'them,' doing it over and over again," I said, as he gasped in shock.

I could feel the tears on my face and Ty holding onto me tightly.

"That's what happened, I swear Tommy, it was like they were there then you weren't." Ronnie said looking over at Tommy.

Tommy asked fearfully, "Can I hug you too?" And I saw the pain come to Ronnie, at hearing that question as he sobbed out a broken, "Yes please!"

"What do we do?" He finally got out, as we held them both.

"You get some help and you go on, but first of all, you realize that you aren't at fault for what happened and that you didn't do anything wrong. Most importantly, you have to believe deep inside that you aren't bad for what happened." I told him.

"But.." he started to say, when I interrupted and told him, "I've said it all myself and you aren't at fault. Someone told me something and I want to tell it to you. When something like this happens, it's never the victim's fault. You didn't do anything to deserve this and you aren't bad because it happened. There was nothing you could do about it!"

"I've had training to...to..." he stuttered out. As I replied, "All the training in the world can't stop people like that sometimes."

"I..I've tried to forget....I really have," he cried.

"I know, I did too, and that's why you've been running around like a crazy person, hasn't it? Why you and only you can do everything?" I asked.

"If...if I'm doin stuff then..." he got out, as the tears fell like raindrops on a window.

"If you're doing stuff then you don't have time to remember?" I asked gently.

"They can't get me then," he whispered.

"Is that why you're always too tired or too busy for us?" Tommy asked softly.

"I..I'm sorry TomTom, really I am." Ronnie sobbed brokenly, as I turned to the little guy in our arms and said, "Tommy it's not you believe me it's not..." but Ronnie interrupted me, "Every time it's like they're there too Tommy. I don't want them there with us, I don't," he said crying softly still.

I looked at the confused expression on Tommy's face and was trying to figure out how to tell him when Ty spoke up.

"Tommy, I know it's hard to understand and it was for me too at first. You're feeling kinda like he doesn't want you anymore or to do anything with you anymore either right?" he asked.

Tommy looked at Ronnie for a minute before slowly nodding his head which caused a sob to come from Ronnie as he moaned, "No" and buried his head back into my chest.

"Every time I would get close to Jer, he'd push me away. He'd find something to do or someone who needed his help. One of the little guys would need some help or cuddles or something, it was always something. At night when we'd go to bed he'd be too tired or say he wasn't up to it even though I could see it was up just fine. It was always something, and it was hurting me real bad. I began to think he didn't like me, like I thought he did anymore. I started to think he didn't wanna be with me. Does that sound like anything you've been feeling?" Ty asked gently.

"Yeah," the boy muttered brokenly.

"The thing I didn't know, was that for Jer, he was hurting even more than I was. He was trying to protect me. He'd told me what happened to him and I knew he still had nightmares but he hadn't told what was going on with him. I bet Ronnie hasn't told you everything either cause he doesn't want to hurt you." He said.

"I wanna help," Tommy said softly.

"I know that little guy and so does Ronnie. You see, when it was me, I couldn't tell Ty that stuff. I couldn't tell him every time I thought about him that 'They' were there or that every time I wanted to do something suddenly 'They' came back and were doing the touching instead of him. If I could get up in the morning, and keep doing stuff till I fell in bed at night then they'd leave me alone except in my dreams, but they'd stay away all day. I couldn't tell Ty that every time I looked at him I saw 'them' and I bet Ronnie was doing the same thing." I said.

"They won't leave me alone. I try to get them to go but they won't!" Ronnie cried.

"I know, they'll always be there you havta just learn to send them away after a while," I told him softly.

"Jer finally tried to make me happy by coming to bed with me one night and being with me like he used to when what happened to Ronnie tonight happened to me. I freaked out too little guy and Dave, our new pop, came running in. He sat there like we did and talked and talked for like forever until Jeremy calmed down. Then we all talked for a long time. We found out that the stuff we were keeping from each other, trying to protect the other, was hurting us more than if we'd just talked about the stuff. We finally did that night and well things got better." Ty said softly.

"It won't be easy for either of you, and it wasn't for us, but we got through it and most times now we can be together and we're alone finally. Ty'll tell ya though there are times when they try to come back and I never know when that'll happen but Ty gets me through it now and sometimes Pop helps too." I said.

"I just wanna forget." Ronnie said, looking up at us.

"I know and that's the one thing you can't ever do. No matter how hard you work or how tired you make yourself they'll always be part of you." I told him.

"I don't want them to be," he said softly.

"No, I don't guess you do and I don't either but they are. They took something from us that we'll never get back and it hurts and its okay to let it hurt Ronnie. You just have to share that hurt with those you love and who love you. That's how you get through it and how you get on with things and the funniest part is, that the sharing is the hardest thing you'll have to do of them all," I told him.

He looked at Tommy for the longest time before saying, "How can I do that to him?"

"How can you not?" I asked softly, remembering Ty asking the same question that night, 'How can you shut me out like this?' and how much it hurt.

I watched as Ronnie hung his head and it was Tommy saying, "I love you Ronnie, and that means I share the bad stuff as well as the good stuff with ya," that brought that head back up as he looked long at his little boyfriend.

"I love you too Tommy, I do, really." He said, almost begging, as the tears fell again.

"Then you have to let him in to help like Jer had to let me in." Ty said softly.

"But...you don't understand," he whimpered.

"Maybe not, but I do," I replied, looking deep into his eyes.

"I...it...what happened...it...I'm nasty, that's why they won't leave me alone," he said brokenly.

"No Ronnie, you aren't and neither am I. We're just kids and they hurt us so much." I told him, as those feelings flashed back in my mind.

I could feel Ty squeezing me knowing what I was feeling as Ronnie looked up at me.

"They said I liked it because...cause..." he stammered.

"Because you got hard sometimes during it?" I asked.

I felt him nod his head into my chest as I replied, "Dave told me that part of the body reacts to things whether we want them too or not. It doesn't matter to your dick that you were being forced to do stuff; it just knows that something is happening that makes it feel good. That's part of the problem isn't it? Some of it felt good even though you didn't want it too."

I felt him sob into my chest a strangled, "Yes!" escaping his mouth. "I didn't want it too, you have to believe me I didn't," he cried, looking up at me.

"I know," I told him, as he searched my eyes repeating it gently, "I know."

"Why?" he asked. "Why did they do that to me?" he cried out in pain!

"I don't know," I finally answered, as he began crying again heavily and his head fell back onto my chest.

Finally I heard, "What's dad gonna think of me?" from him.

"He's gonna think he's got a son who's been hurt real bad and needs lots of loving Ronnie." I told him, as he looked up at me.

"He'll hate me!" he said.

"He didn't hate me when he found out," I replied, as he looked long and hard at me before burying his head back into me.

The cry of "Why" could be heard for some time as he cried with all of us holding onto him but I knew this was a first step, a very small first step in a long road ahead of him.

A road Ty and I would be there with him to help him reach the end as others had helped me.

As the cries slowed, and finally stopped, I realized he'd fallen asleep in my arms. The pain at an end for now, this little boy finally relaxed in my arms, the healing began.

Softly I asked Ty for a blanket, and when he grabbed the one off the bed and wrapped it around us I gently lay down, all of us huddled together holding one another and finally drifting to sleep, again together as I whispered softly, "I love you Ty and I love you too Ronnie and Tommy."

Only one of my brothers answered sleepily as Tommy mumbled, "We luv ya too."

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A few hours later, Ronnie was awake, showered, dressed and feeling better than he had for a very long time. For the first time in a long while, he looked forward to his work for more than just running away from his thoughts. He gave a sleeping Tommy a quick kiss and then headed out. It was still only 0630, but he had a meeting to go to.

Just outside of Logan's office, he caught up with Janet. Or more closely, Janet caught up with him. He couldn't help himself though; he almost ran over to her and gave her a big hug. He just smiled at her confused look, and then turned to go into the office. Of course, his smile was short lived, as the doors opened and he heard Logan's voice.

"THERE FUCKIN DOING WHAT?!?!?" Logan almost screamed into the phone. Ronnie heard someone, probably Adam on the speaker phone sigh, as Janet's voice came in behind the younger boy.

"LOGAN!" That's all she needed to say, as her tone was making it clear to everyone that she wasn't happy.

"Sorry mom... but not right now. Adam just told me those ungrateful... mother fuckin... AHHHHHH!" Logan slammed his hand down on the desk in complete disgust.

Janet took a deep breath before turning towards the phone, "Adam, please tell me what's going on?"

Adam sighed, knowing this was going to be bad. "Their having a wedding today." Adam was going to go on, but Ronnie spoke up.

"Who?!?"

"Cory and Sean are getting married today." Adam said, with another deep sigh.

"WHAT?!?! We go and shed a hell of a lot of blood for them, and they go on partying like nothing fuckin happened. It's a good GOD DAMNED thing I ain't anywhere near those assholes right now.... I'd make Juan look tame." Donnie said, he'd walked in just as Janet yelled at Logan.

Right behind him, Emily spoke up. "Come on tiger, let's sit down and get the whole story. I'm sure there's a good explanation for this."

"Oh yeah.... this I gotta hear. It should be really fucking good." Logan snorted out, as everyone found seats. Jack, Dave, and Ken were already there, but all three men decided to keep their mouths shut for right now. Everyone looked at the phone that sat in the middle of the table, waiting to see what Adam had to say.

They heard him sigh, and Logan could just imagine him running his hand through his long black hair. "Look, I don't like it much either, but this comes from higher up. I ain't got a choice. The explanation I got was that they wanted to do something for their family, so they could all be pulled together...."

Logan cut in... he just couldn't keep his tongue in check. "So while we're getting ready to bury a THIRD of our family, they decide to throw a FUCKING party?!?!?! You know Adam, I've never questioned you before and if there was anyone else around right now, I wouldn't. But I really gotta ask. Are THESE the kind of people we really want to be with. The kind that would dishonor the very people that SAVED their FUCKING LIVES?!?!!" He was red with anger.

"Logan," Adam sighed, "there's more to this than just them wanting to get married. There's also a political side to this."

That really set Logan off. Before he could go off on another rant, though, Dailess spoke up. "Uhhh... sorry to interrupt guys, but I just thought you should know that Mike and Sammy are...." He was interrupted as the two figures started to shimmer into existence near the door. "...about to beam in."

Logan looked over at Sammy and Mike showing up, and even though it was out of character for him, he was under way too much stress and this wedding was the final straw. He wasn't pissed at Sammy, but he couldn't hold his tongue. "Let me guess, somehow one of their super fucking kids knows we're pissed and they sent you to calm us down." He snarled.

"Yeah, his name is Vishnu." Sammy replied, causing Logan to stop and look at him for a second before saying, "Save your breath."

"Where's Adam?" Sammy asked, looking around the room only to be answered from a speaker, "Right here and he's right no matter how you cut it, this sucks." Adam said more than with a bit of anger in his voice. He was resigned that this was going to happen, but that didn't mean he had to like it.

"It's not what you think." SamSam replied.

"Oh gee then what is it. Let's see, sixty odd members of our Unit are dead and they're having a party. Yep that qualifies in the "Sucks" department in my book!" Logan said, staring the younger boy right in the eyes. Normally Logan was the quiet one, but he was really letting his temper out. This was his family here that was getting shit on.

"Look when I found out, I felt the same way but there's more to this than that." Sammy tried to say. When Logan once again yelled, "Yeah I heard, there's a political aspect to this bullshit."

"What?" Sammy asked confused and looking over to Mike for a moment before turning back to Logan who was winding up again.

"Oh yeah, according to Adam there is a political angle to all of this, it's to show people they didn't win and it's still bull." He growled out.

"Look that ain't politics that's telling those fuckers they didn't win!" Sammy said, getting a bit pissed now.

"Yeah, whatever." Logan replied.

"No, not whatever Logan... Those mothers attacked us and killed a bunch of the Unit and part of it was to get Cory and his family too. This shows them they didn't succeed at it. It's like sticking your finger up at em and telling them to fuck off. And ya know what, there ain't nothing I'd rather do than that except find a few and make use of a gun on em. So don't tell me it's not important." Sammy said, getting up into Logan's face now.

"Fine, but they could wait till after the fucking funeral to flip em off. This ain't right and you know it." Logan told him, eyes flashing.

"There isn't any way around that Sammy, they don't care and this proves it." Adam added.

"They need this, everyone needs this right now. This has torn their family apart!" Sammy started saying, when Logan interrupted him yelling in his face.

"What the fuck do you think it's done to us? Huh, they didn't have anyone die either. It's just us that did that for them and this is how they repay things?"

"Yes, this is how they repay that by showing their love goes on even through everything that's happened. That they didn't win, that the Unit won for the Clan, for the right to go on!" Sammy yelled right back.

Everyone was letting the boys have it out, but when things started to get a little too heated, Janet tried to step in. "I think this needs to calm down some." She said quickly.

Both Sammy and Logan looked at her and said, "Stay outta this" both quickly looking at one another as Janet said, "Excuse me?!?!"

"Jesus Christ!!! Shut the hell up for a minute and sit the fuck down!" A voice said, causing everyone to look to the doorway where a small boy was walking into the room; looking none too happy at the moment.

"And just who the fuck are you?" Logan snarled, moving back a bit and standing by the table now looking at the boy.

"Umm Logan..." Ronnie tried to say, but Logan cut him off. "Not now Ronnie, I want to know who the hell this little kid is; coming in here like that."

"Name's Pablo now shut up." He said, looking around again as Donny started to stand up.

"Don't even think about it." Pablo quickly said, as he looked at Donny who surprisingly sat back down.

"Look I don't know who the hell you think you are but..." Logan started to say, when Pablo turned back to him and said.

"Shit, I keep forgetting this shit." Suddenly his wings appeared behind him along with his golden glow, for a moment before fading away again.

Logan sat back with a loud thump and his mouth wide open.

"You sit too." He said to Sammy, who had started to open his mouth.

"Pablo..." Mike started to say, but soon found himself seated in a chair, as Pablo turned to look at the speaker in the middle of the table.

"This won't work, no." Then suddenly, Adam and Khan were standing there.

"What the fuck?" Adam asked, as Khan looked at Pablito and growled.

Pablo got a grin on his face and to everyone's surprise growled right back then said, "SIT!" to the big cat.

Khan started forward and Pablo moved faster than possible and the next thing anyone knew, Khan was now lying on his back staring up at the young boy in astonishment.

Adam reached for his gun and Mike started to quickly say something when Pablo said, "Knock it the fuck off!" So loudly that more than one person was holding their ears.

"Who the fuck are you?" Adam asked, he hadn't been bothered by the loud voice as some had, but it definitely gave him pause.

"Ah hell take a good look cause I don't like showing em all the time and this makes twice in one day!" Pablo said, as Adam's mouth dropped open at the sudden appearance of the wings and glow.

"Happy? NOW SIT YOUR ASS DOWN AND SHUT UP!" He said in a very loud voice, as both faded away again.

As Khan stood up, Pablo turned to him and simply pointed to a chair saying, "Sit, Stay!"

"Umm I think that's for a dog." Ronnie whispered not so quietly.

"I don't care, it works." Pablo said, as Khan moved to the chair and sat still glaring at Pablito. Who just smiled at him, before looking at everyone and saying, "Now that there's some peace and quiet you can

all put your dicks away and stop trying to prove who's got the biggest or I'll make all of em into microscopic ones, clear?"

When there was nothing but quick glances and a few nervous moving of hands below the table, Pablo went on. "Since no one wants to listen to SamSam, you get to listen to wonderful ole me instead and believe me you're gonna listen."

"Who exactly are you anyway?" Janet asked into the silence.

"Oh sorry Mama J, I'm Pablo." He replied.

"He's my first son. I lost him about ten years ago Janet." Mike said, as Pablo climbed up into his lap and Mike wrapped his arms around him in a hug.

"Yeah, I look after papa and my new brothers and you already know the rest of my family." He said with a faint smile.

"We do?" Adam ventured timidly to ask.

Adam knew full well what angels could do, and he really didn't know if this one was serious about the size of certain things, so Adam was keeping himself very much in check. Logan had way too much fun with that, and Adam didn't want to jeopardize it.

Pablo giggled softly, knowing full well what Adam was thinking there. "Yeah, Elena is my mom."

There were gasps around the room as he went on. "Now this has gotten way outta hand and you all need to know some stuff before it gets any worse. I got volunteered to come try and get somewhere with those thick heads of yours... and by the way I don't like being volunteered for anything." He said, all this while glaring at everyone in the room.

Logan still wasn't going to let this go. Angel or not, he wasn't going to let someone make him. "You can't make us like what's going on, it's wrong."

"Teenagers, I'm so glad I died before I became one, geez." Pablo muttered, earning a few giggles and a commiserating look of understanding from Janet before he went on. "I'm not gonna make ya do nothing, but I'm gonna tell you some things that'll make you think...I hope even though I know how hard that is for someone your age."

"Hey!" Donny objected.

"Yeah?" Pablo replied with a shit eating grin.

"Ah nothing." Donny said as Pablo snickered.

"Look I know what you guys are thinking and plain and simple you're wrong." Pablo said, next holding up his hand to stop people from saying anything.

"This has been very hard on everyone, and while you have suffered the greatest losses, you also have something they do not... and that's the fact you're military. You're trained to deal with this, they aren't and all the little kids they have certainly ain't..." Logan couldn't hold his tongue any longer.

"And what about the little kids we have that are having trouble dealing with it. Almost no one in this room has slept since this happened, not only dealing with our own demons, but helping the little ones."

"SHHH didn't your mom teach you not to interrupt people when they're talking, not to mention I told you to shut up." He said to Logan, whose face got red and was starting to get out of his seat when Adam placed a hand on his arm.

"Take it easy love. Let's hear him out." Adam said, however, he never took his eyes off of Pablo. Logan sat back down, but everyone knew he was still royally pissed.

"Yes, exactly the point but you're missing out on the fact they've been trained while Cory's kids and the ones in the Clan haven't been. Do you really think Timmy can handle it as well as Andy can? It's not easy on either one but one has training and exposure to how to handle it while the other doesn't. Cory almost died out there and that's got a lot of these kids that depend on him rattled something fierce. They're unsure and afraid and just plain living in hell right now. Before you say it, so are yours and believe me I know, I really know. We've been there for you ya know and we've tried to help." Pablo told him.

Pablo let that hang in the air for a bit, before Adam asked. "Who's we?"

"Oh, I'm not the only one floating around." Pablo replied mysteriously.

"Okay fine..." Logan replied, trying to keep his calm. "But that still doesn't get around the fact that THEY are disrespecting the ones who died by being too god damned selfish to hold off for a day or two. Would it really have killed them to wait?!?!" His voice got a little louder at the end, but was doing fairly well at keeping his anger in check.

"It might have." Pablo whispered softly, causing gasps from around the room as he looked at everyone.

"Right now, Cory is almost losing it and barely keeping it together. I mean that guys, he's right at the edge and only Mikey is keeping him from losing his mind over this. Can you imagine what his family is going through, thinking they might lose the only thing they have. Oh I know they have more but they all look to Cory as the one who holds them together and makes them a family and they all fear losing him. Right now, between his mental state and with what's happened, they are afraid like they've not been before. Imagine if it was Adam, imagine if Andy or one of the other little ones who came from somewhere bad and now had found a home was faced with not only what happened Saturday but losing the only thing they thought they had keeping them safe, making them feel wanted, to feel loved. Imagine that Logan, because that's what the kids in the Clan are going through. They are scared it's all going to go away and they'll lose everything. So yes, holding off might just kill them." Pablo said quietly, anger replaced by pain in his voice.

"And the only way that they could do that, was by having a wedding?" Logan asked. There wasn't much anger in his voice left.

"Basically yes, you see it's not the wedding or party as you call it but what the wedding means. What it means to them, and more importantly what it means to those kids and many more people besides that. Logan what is the one thing that signifies the love between two people on any world even if they call it something else? What is the one thing that means commitment and promise universally to all? What does a wedding mean?" Pablo asked of the boy in front of him.

"I... I'm not really sure." Logan replied, with a confused look on his face.

"It's okay Logan, not many truly do. There's one other thing you should know though and that's that Cory and Sean have been planning a wedding for a while now but the decision to hold it now isn't for them nearly as much as it is for their family. Their family needs that now more than ever. Those kids need it Logan. You see a wedding is a promise to the future and for the future, for their children. It means, they are pledging not only to one another but to their children that they will be there for them and that they won't go away because of what happened. It is a promise to fulfill their pledge, to be there for all those kids who look to them as saviors and parents. It's something those kids need to see and be part of so that they can go on. It's about going on even with everything that has happened. And yes, it's about telling those who would take that away from them and others, that they didn't win and that they won't win. It's also to honor those who gave their lives to make sure the dream survived." Pablo told them.

Logan sat there for a minute. All the anger he had was melting away. But the one thing that was still there, the one thing he couldn't get over, was the hurt. He could understand that they may have needed this. What he didn't get, was them not seeing that this was basically slapping those that died in the face.

"No Logan it's not." Another voice said, and everyone's head snapped around to the far corner. They all knew that voice.

Kuan Ti came walking almost literally out of the wall. Khan had spent the entire time glaring at Pablo. To Khan it didn't matter who this kid was, he wasn't going to let anyone get to Adam, unless it was through him. But when he heard the sound of his brother's voice, Khan spun around, the chair he was sitting in flying off, and stood there staring at his brother.

Kuan Ti had always been a rather quiet person. Keeping his thoughts mostly to himself but, he and Khan were brothers. Not like they were with the other G-Cats, those two were inseparable. Khan had actually felt it when his brother died, and it was like half of his own soul had gotten ripped out.

"Hello my brother." Kuan Ti said, as he came over and wrapped Khan in his arms. "It's good to see you again, but there are a few things I need to say here." Khan broke the hug, and with tears streaming down his furred face, nodded, then sat down.

Kuan Ti walked around to the front of the table and took a second to look at everyone in the room. "I know what every single one of you are feeling right now. Your feeling hurt... betrayed... and even a bit dishonored by what they are doing. But you're missing one very big point."

He took a moment to look around again, meeting eyes with everyone in the room that was angry about what was going on. Once he was sure that every single person there was paying close attention, he continued. "Three days ago, sixty one members of our family, including myself, died. But what did we die for?"

He didn't wait for an answer, he just kept talking. "We died so that every single one of you guys and everyone in Clan Short could live. You know as well as I do, that every single person that died would have chosen not to die if they could have. But, if it meant saving the rest of their family and allowing them to live, every single one of them would have chosen to give their life without reservation. Not for just their family here but that of Clan Short as well. They are their family too. That's what the Clan is...one big family and they would have given their lives for them just as well as for you here. They did." He paused again, and started to pace.

Amur Khan couldn't help but smile a little even through the tears that were still falling. His brother always paced when he wanted to choose his words carefully. "I know that on the surface, what they are doing looks wrong. I know it looks like they are dishonoring our memory by going on as if nothing happened. But there's one thing you guys aren't seeing. They aren't DIS-honoring us by doing this.. they are HONORING the sacrifices that we made by making sure that their family doesn't fall apart and be destroyed by what happened."

"Pablo was right when he said that what happened was still hurting them. I know it still hurts for you guys too, but you have to realize, that in a lot of ways, you guys are a LOT stronger than they are. They NEEDED this to hold themselves together." He paused again. Took a deep breath and started again.

"By doing this, they are sending a clear message, not only to those that attacked us, but also to all those in our family, and those yet to be. They will NOT back down. We all got hurt, but by doing this, they are saying that yes, we have been hurt, but we're not dead... not by a long shot."

This time he stared Adam right in the eyes. "Adam... there is a saying that you live by. I think right now, only Logan knows it, but since I spent some time upstairs, and have been watching you guys, I know what it is. I think perhaps you should share it with everyone else."

Kuan Ti started to recite the Mantra solemnly, and very shortly, Adam and Logan joined in...

"Let the Light of Your Soul Shine Forth and be Revealed."

"Let the Song of You Soul Spread Truth into Darkness."

"Let Those Apart be Brought Together."

"Know Thyself."

"Seek."

"Love."

"Cherish Life."

"And Above All Else."

"DO NOT YIELD!"

"By doing what they are doing... they are holding true to the most important part of that... DO NOT YIELD!"

He looked around at all of them stopping at each one before saying softly, "Goodbye my brothers."

With that, as tears rolled gently down faces all around the room, he simply faded from sight.

## Chapter 04

Adam sat back with a sigh. It had been only about four hours since the meeting in the base this morning, but it felt like a lot longer. There was so much going on, and so many more things to get done. How the hell was he supposed to get a state funeral ready in two days... now less than one? But damn, he was going to do it. He took a moment and looked around.

First, his eyes settled on Chris and Kenny. They had only been in Camp Bam Bam for a day and a half, and already they were fitting right in, becoming a part of the family. He couldn't help but smile at the two of them. They both tried catching glimpses of the other while they thought they couldn't get caught. It was really cute, to watch two young boys in love. Then it hit him. They were the same age as he was. He shook his head sadly thinking about what it might have been like for him, had things not worked out the way they had.

Then, he looked over and saw his younger brothers. Just thinking about what they had gone through almost broke his heart again. Kent, only five years old, watched as his mother got murdered. Then, less than a year later, he had been inside of "Phantom" as it went down and being burned so badly he should have died. Would have died, had it not been for the Clan and their advanced medical tech. No matter what happened, or how upset he might be at Cory and Sean for the wedding they had, he would never forget that.

Then there was Jimmy. Adam had often wondered, when he was in the lab, what it would be like to actually have brothers. His family filled a huge hole in his soul, but Jimmy and Kent were special. So far he only knew a fraction of what Jimmy had gone through, but he already figured it was as bad, if not worse than, what he had gone through.

Jimmy was scared of everything right now, and was clinging to Adam like a life boat. If it hadn't been for the dream he had a few nights ago, he probably wouldn't know any of what Jimmy could do. The boy either couldn't or wouldn't talk much about it. What little Adam knew, was that he was scared shitless of himself and what he could do. After living it through the dream, Adam couldn't really blame him. But, he did see something else in Jimmy's eyes when he looked into them...strength.

Of course, to survive what he went through, he would have to be strong. Adam knew, due to the connection that was getting stronger between him and his brother, that Jimmy has been having flashbacks and nightmares. Adam knew his brother needed help, but didn't really know what to do.

For now, he was letting Jimmy set the rules and those were simple. Wherever Adam went, Jimmy wasn't far behind. Jimmy asked Adam about almost everything from what he should do next, to whether or not he was wearing the right clothes. There was also one other thing that Adam and Jimmy shared...their scars.

Both Adam and Jimmy had crisscross patterns of scars all over their bodies. Jimmy's were almost all surgical, while Adam's were a mix of surgical and injury, but they were both heavily scarred. They also both shared an embarrassment about them. Adam was very good at hiding it, but to those that knew him very well, it was the ONLY thing that he was embarrassed about. There were many times when he and Logan were in bed, that Adam would simply run his hands all over Logan's silky smooth skin and wish his was like that.

"Adam." He heard someone call his name. He looked over and saw Joe sitting in his wheel chair and beckoning him over. Adam nodded and started to walk over to where Joe was sitting very near to the entrance to the bridge. They were having the funeral on a small island called Patriot's Point. This was a very fitting name for a place that was going to be the final resting place for many of his family.

It was only shortly before noon, and already there were many people wondering around wanting to pay their final respects to kids they never knew. Adam really didn't know how to feel about all of the strangers. On one hand, they were trying to be nice to Adam, and many of them have come up to talk to him, but on the other hand, almost every single one of them treated him just like a kid. Yeah, he knew he was only fourteen, but dammit, he had lost his childhood when he was way too young, and now, now it was too late, and treating him like a little kid just pissed him off.

And then, of course, there were the people that came just to speak to him. It was times like these, that Adam really was glad that he could organize things rather well. But the biggest problem, was that he hadn't slept since Sunday night. There was just too much to do. No matter how tired he may have been, he couldn't stop. He had to get this done... for his family.

When he got over to Joe, he didn't like the look of the man in the suit next to him. "What's up, dad?" Adam asked, and as always whenever Adam called Joe 'dad', the man smiled brightly. However, this time the smile came and went quickly.

"Adam, this is Mr. Harold Jenkins, he's from the Secret Service, and is here to talk to us about the security for the funeral tomorrow." Joe's voice said it all. This man was going to be a pain in the ass.

"Commander Casey?" The man asked with a raised eyebrow and a skeptical tone to his voice, which put Adam off. Didn't Joe just say that?

Adam simply nodded and Mr. Jenkins began in a high pitched nasal voice, glancing quickly at notes as he made each point. "The President will arrive at 2:45 PM. He will proceed directly to the site for the memorial service, and he will be introduced by a local dignitary of appropriate rank. He expects to make a speech of about twenty minutes. You can schedule any other speakers around that. We will need to secure the parade route and move anyone without adequate clearance out of the area. No one bearing arms will be permitted within the perimeter except the Secret Service detachment and of course the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff if he is in uniform. I assume you will relay this information to the adult in charge...."

The more Jenkins went on, the more agitated Adam became. Adam, however, had lots of experience dealing with people that thought they knew everything and were rather annoying in their pushiness. The man went on for almost five minutes straight, making point after point. Finally, Adam was able to make his response... and made them point by point. Joe couldn't help but snicker as Adam was talking

"Okay, Mr. Jenkins," Adam started off, and then ticked off the points on his fingers. "One... I am the person in charge here. If you have a problem with that and want to talk to an adult, you can send your request in triplicate to the base commander, and he MIGHT get to it sometime next year."

Joe held back the laugh as the man's eyes got wide and Adam just kept going. "Two... The President is of course welcome to come to the funeral; however... it starts tomorrow at 1400, or 2pm if you can't figure out military time. That is even if the President is not here. There are many people coming and the time is set. No one is going to change that."

The man's eyes were wide as he started to sputter, obviously never having been talked to like this before. "Three...Every single member of MY Unit will be wearing their side arms, and I am sure more than just the one. We were attacked three days ago and sorry to say this, but I will not order my men to be unarmed; whether you like it or not."

"Fourth... The President is more than welcome to make a speech, but I will NOT allow it to be political in nature, nor will I even allow him to try and use the death of my men to his advantage. If he even thinks about it, I will unplug his mic quicker than you can shove your nose up someone's ass."

Jenkins looked like he was about to have a stroke, so Adam pressed home his last point. He was done dealing with idiots like this. "And finally... since I know you'll go whine to the President with this, please give him a message. I and my team no longer answer to the United States government. I'm willing to have a friendly relationship with them, but they will not dictate my actions nor any of the actions of my team. Is that understood?"

Adam finished, never breaking eye contact with the agent. The man was sputtering trying to say something intelligible, but couldn't make anything come out. Adam finally couldn't take any more of it, so he turned and left while the man was still trying to say something. "If you have any complaints, you can speak to Capt. Juan Casey. He'll be the one to answer any more of your questions." Joe did lose it on that one and wheeled away laughing hysterically, while the man stood there wondering what went wrong.

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"You know something, Dr. Jenson; I think I know the perfect person to 'test your skills' on." Janet said as she looked over to the young but attractive man in front of her. He said he loved challenges and she knew just the challenge to throw at him. If he survived this, then he could survive anything here.

"Please... Call me Dr. Phil." He said with an easy laugh. "It usually gets a quick laugh out of the kids I see, and it helps break the ice some." He was confident he could handle anything. He was one of the top child psychologists in the country and thought he had heard and seen everything.

Janet looked back down at the file that Dr. Dan from Orlando had sent her about Phil, and she had to admit, he looked like he was good. But, she also knew that it would take everything he knew and much more to try and help some of the kids here. She decided to see if he could handle things here and then go from there. "Okay, I'll send him down to you shortly. Why don't you get your office set up, and after you're done with him, we can chat and see if you really want to help out here."

"Ms. Hayes, that'll be fine, but I'm sure I can handle anything here. I just want to help out kids and I can't think of anything better than what you are doing here. I just want to be a part of it." He was passionate about wanting to help, and Janet had to give him that. But then again, this was her family they were talking about, and she needed to make sure he could handle it. Plus, Dr. Dan said he was sometimes a bit arrogant and needed to be brought down a few notches... and she knew just the boy to do that. She watched him walk away and finally let the small smirk she had been hiding show as she went to find one of her boys.

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"Hey Logan... you got a minute?" Todd asked as he walked into the control center. He took a quick moment to look over the screens at the front of the room; he was only slightly surprised to see the numbers on the bottom left screen, the number of rescues. Right now, they stood at over two thousand with just shy of forty active rescues, and over eight hundred active intakes going on. This was bigger than anyone thought it would be; thank God it was all running smoothly.

"Sure thing, Todd; let's go into my office." Logan had to laugh... it was still hard getting used to the idea he had an office. But he was learning to like it plus, as Jack told him, sometimes he just needed to lay back and let his guys do what they do best.

He led Todd into the office and just before he shut the door, he saw Alvin get up from his desk and sit down in the command chair taking things over. He may only be eight, but Logan was always impressed by how well the little guy could handle anything that came up.

"So, Todd... what's up?" Logan asked, after handing his little brother a soda from the fridge and sitting down.

"Well, I was thinking about a few things and I think I would like to ask for a detached detail status to go to Maine." Todd said in a rush, trying to get it all out before he lost his nerve.

"Okay..." Logan said while sitting back in his chair. He was happy that Todd was willing to ask about something he wanted, but he wasn't sure why he wanted to go to Maine. "Why Maine?"

"Look," said Todd. "Saturday they got attacked by the FCC too, same as Sammy and them. A much smaller group, nowhere near as well prepared -- but still an attack. Then, a couple of the people there got arrested and needed Starfleet to bail them out of it. They're trying to do the same things we are, or the guys in Orlando -- and it's just a few high school kids and some even younger, with no training and almost no equipment.

"Know what they've got for ordnance? Two hand phasers for the whole group. Transport? A first response van and a plain everyday car -- and one of the Mikyvis kids. They \*need\* somebody with some military background and some firepower for advice if nothing else.

"I really think this is something I need to do, and I can't really explain it, it's just a feeling I have. There's something that's gonna happen with these guys, and I just feel like I'll be needed," Todd said as he

ran down. "Plus, we need to be working with the others, coordinating with them, and we can't do that if we're all here in Utah and they're a bunch of other places. This is where I fit -- I can see it; can't you?"

Logan sat back, got a faraway look in his eyes like he was talking to someone else, then put his hands up in surrender. "Okay... okay... you got it, little brother. If you feel that passionate about it, we'll make it happen. Now... just give me a second..." Logan trailed off as his hands flew across the keyboard in front of him.

Todd sat and watched him for almost five minutes; Logan never once slowed down as his hands flew, typing furiously here and there and quietly muttering to himself. Finally, Logan sat back as the printer started to fire out pieces of paper. Once it was done, Logan pulled the whole stack out and started to go through it. Every couple of sheets, he stopped and signed something; by this point Todd was becoming somewhat concerned as to what his big brother was doing -- hoping and praying he hadn't pissed his older brother off.

Finally, Logan looked up with a grin. "Okay... these first pieces of paper are your orders. You are to report to Division Commander Jonas McConnaghay as soon as possible. You are now acting as the Military Liaison between his Division and the Unit." Logan grinned at the shocked look on Todd's face as he handed over the first set of papers.

"Second..." Logan began as he passed over the next set. "As soon as they are ready, these are orders to have a Weapons locker installed and filled with whatever you think they need. Also, on Thursday, we will send a few guys over to install some computer networks that will hook directly into our mainframe and two set of transporters; one for people, the other for equipment."

Logan's grin got bigger at the look of shock and knew it would get even better with his last little surprise. "Finally, this last paper requires you to go find Ronnie and get your uniforms updated."

Todd looked up in shock, and then down to his uniform. "Umm... Sir... What do you mean; is there something wrong with my uniform?"

"Yes, there is," Logan said trying hard not to laugh. "You need to update your Sergeant's stripes for your Second Lieutenant's Bar."

Todd looked at him stunned for a few seconds while Logan just sat there holding the piece of paper out to him. Finally, Todd took the piece of paper, read over it real quick, and almost knocking the chair over, he jumped to his feet and saluted. "YES SIR!"

Logan stood up, walked around the desk, and pulled his little brother into a hug. "Good job Todd. I know you'll do great, now let's get out there before they destroy a city or something."

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Logan and Todd came out of the office with Logan's arm over his brother's shoulder. Logan saw the pride on Todd's face and still had to wonder why his brothers always seemed to almost need his love and approval. Not that it was very hard, as all his brothers were great kids, and Logan really was proud to call them all brothers. Just as he got back to his seat, the doors open and Janet walked in. Logan

groaned when he saw the look in his mother's eyes. "Oh Gods, mom... what have you done now?" He asked and heard many of the other kids in the room start to snicker.

Janet tried to put on her best 'innocent face' but that just caused almost everyone in the room to burst out laughing. "We don't buy it, mom...", came from one of the kids in the room. Janet stopped for a second and had to fight back the tears. It still made her heart feel good to have all these kids look to her as "mom."

"Weeeeell..." she said as she moved over to where Logan was seated. He quickly moved out of the command chair and let her sit down. "Thanks, Logan," she said as she sat down. "Now... it seems that the crew from Orlando thought that we might be able to use the services of one of Dr. Dan's associates." She let her voice trail off as many of the kids in the room looked perplexed.... until Logan spoke up.

"Wait a minute... Isn't Dr. Dan their shrink?" He asked, looking around the room trying to make sure he was right.

"Yup... that's right. Dr. Dan thought we might be able to use a shrink ourselves... I would have to agree with him to be honest, but... well... we have some interesting cases here, and I want to make sure he can handle himself." Janet sat back and wondered how long it would take for someone to figure it out. It didn't take long.

"Oh no... You didn't..." Alvin asked, half aghast and half amused.

"Oh, but I did." Janet chuckled. "Daileass... would you be so kind as to bring up the video and sound from room thirty two, section six, level C?"

"But of course." His voice came from all over the room as all the video screens in the front of the room changed to show a single room and a young man putting his books away. "You're just in time too... Juan's almost there." Daileass's voice said, this time clear amusement could be heard. "And yes... I am recording."

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Dr. Philip Jensen looked around his office after putting his stuff away. He was anxious to meet this kid that Dr. Hayes was sending to him, but had to wonder why she acted strangely about it. Not that he was too worried. He may have only been twenty eight years old, but he had quickly made his way up to the top of his field and was well respected by the other child psychologists in the country.

He thought back to what made him so good at helping kids. It was the fact, that he had been there himself. Twelve years old and selling his body on the streets of New York City. At least until an older man had helped him out, and gave him a place to live. That man, who later adopted him, gave him everything he needed to survive and all that was asked in return was that he helped out other. This was his chance to do just that.

He was brought out of his musing by something strange. He listened for a moment, and yes... someone was singing as they came down the hallway. He had left his door open so whoever it was that Dr. Hayes sent could just walk in, but now he was hearing someone, a young boy by the sound of it, singing as they came near his door.

"OH Lord, it's hard to be humble.... when I'm perfect in everywayyyyyyy."

Phil's jaw dropped as a young Hispanic boy, maybe nine or ten years old, came skipping into the room singing at the top of his lungs. Juan took one look at the Doctor, then looked around the room and skipped over to the couch where he plopped down, swinging his feet up and crossing them at the foot.

"Hiya, Doc. How's it goin'? Is this where you want me?" Juan asked, trying hard not to laugh at the look on the man's face. To his credit though, he recovered quickly.

"Uhhh... sure... if that's where you want to be." Phil picked up his note book and then moved around to sit in the chair across from this strange boy.

"Before you start, doc, I don't think it would be a good idea to ask me about my mother... you see, I was 'made' in a test tube, and then implanted into the womb of some homeless woman the government kidnapped off the street. I hear she had an 'accident' shortly after I was born." Inwardly he laughed at the look on the guy's face and decided to go for broke. "I got a new mom now and she's great... even though she doesn't let me kill anyone... well... unless they try to hurt the family... then she's okay with it."

Phil sat back for a second, then started to take some notes... trying to buy himself some time to get his brain working. Thankfully Juan gave him the time he needed. "So, is that why Dr. Hayes sent you to see me, to try and work out your... anger management problems?"

Juan almost fell off the couch laughing so hard. When he finally could talk again, he looked up at the confused doctor and almost lost it again. "Doc... I moved past "anger management problems" before I was out of diapers."

Phil's jaw hit the floor, but he recovered real quick and leaned forward. "Okay, then why do you think Dr. Hayes sent you to me?"

Juan sat up and leaned in closer to the doctor with a very serious look on his face. "Well, according to the books I've read, I think I qualify as being Psychotic, Sociopathic, Psychopathic, Multiple Personality Disorder, Schizophrenic, and obsessive compulsive, but that's only when it comes to weapons."

Juan grinned at the look on the doctor's face when he got done and leaned back in the sofa. 'This is what mom wanted and so far I haven't had to lie... this is great!' He thought to himself, as the doc did his best impression of a fish with his mouth opening and closing really quick. Juan was almost positive he broke the man, but he surprised the little guy.

"Ummm... okay... why don't we start with that last one?" Phil's mind was running a million miles an hour and the only thing he could think of was that Dr. Dan had set him up. No kid could be THAT screwed up. "You say you're obsessed with weapons. What do you mean?"

Juan sighed and then stood up. "Well, it would be better if I just showed you." He then reached behind his back and pulled out a huge hand cannon of a pistol, locked back the slide and dropped the clip out. He then put it on the table and did the same thing for the next three guns he retrieved from their hiding places. Dr. Phil's eyes got wider as he pulled out each gun. Then came the six knives, the expandable tactical baton, the brass knuckles, and then he took off his boots and showed the doctor the hidden blades in his boots that extend when he turns his foot just so.

Phil couldn't think of what to say. The way in which the kid handled the weapons; it was obvious that he knew how to use each and every one of them, but... but he was only a little kid. At least that's what his brain kept screaming, even though his eyes were telling him that this was not just a kid but a well trained killer.

"Excuse me, Dr. Jensen, but there is an urgent incoming phone call for Juan. I'm sorry to break this up, but... Juan, I think you need to take this, it's from Secret Service Agent Jenkins." Daileass's voice came over the speakers.

Juan sighed as he started to pick up his weapons. "It's okay Daile... I think the doc's taken as much as he can right now. I'll take it in my room. Tell whoever it is I'll be there in a few minutes."

A few levels above them Janet had fallen out of her chair laughing, as did almost everyone else that was seated. Logan was barely consciences as he held onto the side of the chair. Tears were rolling down his face as he struggled to breathe. Out of every computer terminal, a tray popped open with a CD labeled "Dr. Phil meets Juan."

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Billy and Will were finding it rather amusing, but at the same time, rather annoying. "Everywhere in the city that Billy and Will went, they found it amusing that people were going out of their way to avoid them like the plague. They even saw one older couple cross the street to stay as far away as possible.

They were on a supply run to get more clothes for the new kids coming into the base. They were able to get most of the stuff they needed from Target, but some things they just couldn't get there. Neither of the boys could still believe that Will's former Martial Arts Master had literally bought the department store chain. Ronnie had gone absolutely nuts when he found out that Target had an entire distribution center that was stocked with nothing but what their Master thought they might need. However, there was one thing that the Master over looked...Medical supplies.

The two boys were holding hands and walking towards the largest pharmacy in town. Bill still couldn't get over the fact that he WAS walking. He still got tired easy, but this little stroll wasn't gonna bother him none. Plus, Janet had said he needed to do as much walking as he could to get his leg muscles built up again.

They were just entering the pharmacy when they heard a commotion and Will got ran into by a boy about their age. Will fell down, with the boy on top of him, and Will's training took over. He continued to roll with the boy until Will was on top of the boy, his pistol out, and pointed at the kid's face.

The kid screamed and Will immediately pulled the gun back and jumped off the kid. Billy, in the mean time, had pulled his gun out and was watching everyone around them to see what was going on. To say that both the boys were a bit jumpy after what happened on Saturday would be a bit of an understatement.

"What the..." Will said at the same time that a loud voice coming up from the back yelled out, "stop that kid!"

The kid that Will had been run over by started to try and scramble away. But Will was too fast for him and grabbed his arm and held him down while Billy put himself between Will, the kid, and the guy that ran up from the back.

"Just hold on for a second, and let's figure out what the hell's going on here." Billy said with an air of authority that belied his twelve years of age.

"That kid's a thief!" The guy said, pointing towards the boy on the floor who was starting to cry. "I want his ass thrown in jail."

"Now hold on just a moment!" Billy said while looking at Will, and getting a nod in return. They knew each other so well that most of the time they didn't even need to talk. Not that it would have mattered because they could talk to each other in their heads if they needed to.

Billy walked up to the guy and pulled him to the back, after holstering his gun. Will, for his part, lifted the kid up to his feet and moved him outside where they could talk.

Once they got outside, Will sat the boy down and sat next to him. "What's your name?" Will asked.

"Dale." The boy answered softly.

"Okay, Dale, my name's Will. Why don't you tell me what happened?"

Dale looked up at Will with tears in his eyes. "Why would you care, I'll be going to jail and... and then my mom's gonna die." Dale lost it, putting his head in his hands and sobbing.

Will looked over to where Dale dropped the bag he was carrying and saw about ten different bottles of medication and over the counter drugs.

Will put his arm over Dale's shoulders and felt the boy stiffen, but then Dale turned into Will and started to cry into his chest.

"What's wrong with your mom?" Will asked gently, and Dale looked up into his eyes. All Dale saw was caring and concern.

"She... she has cancer." Dale said, and broke down again. He stiffened when they both heard the sounds of sirens coming close.

Will looked down at the frightened boy in his arms and pulled his head up so he could look him in the eye. "I need you to trust me. I won't let you go to jail and when we're done here, I need you to take me to your mother. Okay?"

Dale stared into his eyes for a few moments and then softly nodded. Will smiled, patted him on the arm, and then got up as the first of the police cars got there.

As the officer got out of his car, Will put his right hand up in the air and slowly reached behind him to pull out his wallet. The cop watched him closely with his hand on his holstered pistol. The police officer relaxed when he saw the boy pull out a wallet and flip it open. "Officer, My name is Captain William Casey of the Clan Short Special Forces Division. As per Article four, section A and B of the Clan Short Charter, I am taking charge of this situation and would appreciate any help you and your fellow officers can give me." Will spoke with as much authority as his cracking voice would allow.

The officer stood there for a second staring at Will. He then nodded his head. "Of course, Sir; however, I will need to call this in so that my superiors know what is going on."

Will smiled and looked at his name badge, "Of course, Officer Kimball. Thank you for your help."

Will was smiling as he turned back and walked back over to where Dale was sitting and staring at him with a shocked look. Will was about to say something when Billy came out of the store, followed by the man that was chasing Dale. Will called Billy over and they went a few feet away from everyone else as another cop got there and the man went over to talk to the officers.

"So what happened, Billy?" Will asked as he threw his arm around the slightly older boy.

"Well, according to the guy over there, the kid came in to pick up the medication for his mother. When the guy started to ring it up, the kid bolted for the front door and you know what happened from there. But the really interesting part came when I chatted with one of the ladies that works here. It seems that the kid's mother is dying of cancer. She's just over seventy years old and had been the foster mother for the kid since he was like four. Hell, if what the lady told me is right, she's fostered over two hundred kids since she was younger and has eight right now. Anyways, the kids have been doing everything they can to stay with the lady and help her out; but with the medical expenses and everything else, she can't afford her medication. She's had to choose between food for the kids and her medication. She chose the food, but I guess this kid thought it should have been the meds."

Will stood there for a second to absorb what Billy had told him. He then did something that he had never done before. Since he found out he could read other people's minds, he had never gone into the mind of someone who hadn't invited him in. Now Will looked over at Dale and reached into the kid's mind, and what he found sort of surprised him. While he was worried about going to jail and being arrested, the thing that scared him the most was what his mother would think about what he did, and the fact that she wouldn't be getting her medication. He didn't really care what happened to him; he was more worried about the woman who he called mom. With that in mind, Will came up with a plan.

Twenty minutes later, Dale was still sitting on the bench where Will had left him, watching Will, Billy, the pharmacist, and the police officers talk. It got heated a few times, but for the last five minutes, they were talking quietly. Finally, he watched as Will picked up the bottles of medication that Dale had

dropped when he ran into him, and he and Billy walked over to Dale. The Pharmacist walked back into the store and the police officers walked back to their cars. Dale couldn't figure out what was going on.

"Well, Dale, you ready to go home?" Will asked with a big smile on his face.

"Huh?" Was all Dale could really say. Both Will and Billy grinned really big.

"We got everything worked out. But I think you need to take us to your house so we can give your mom her medication." Billy said as he held out his hand for Dale. "By the way, the name's Billy."

"But... but... What happened?" He asked, taking Billy hand and letting the boy pull him to his feet.

"Why don't we wait till we get to your house so we only have to explain it once, but long story short, the cost of your mother's medication is now being covered by Clan Short Special Forces Division... which we both happen to be members of." Will said with a grin as he threw his arm over the boys shoulder and they started walking. It only took them about ten minutes, for Dale to lead them to his house. Dale led them to a rather large house that looked like it could use a bit of fixing up, but it wasn't too bad. Dale led them into the house, and both Will and Billy marveled at the sheer love that could be felt in this place.

"MOOOOM!" Dale shouted out as soon as he shut the door, and to Will and Bill it sounded like a herd of elephants were coming to welcome him home.

"DALE!" Came an older woman's voice, and soon Will and Bill were right in the middle of a crying and sobbing group of kids and then a woman walked out with a cane. As soon as the woman came into view, Dale broke from the others and ran into her arms. No one, including Will or Bill, had dry eyes when everything calmed down. From what they could make out amidst the sobbing, someone named Mrs. Whittaker was on her way over to take the kids. Somehow, word of what happened at the pharmacy had reached her and she was coming to remove the kids, because obviously, Dale's mother couldn't take care of them any longer.

Once everyone started to calm down, Dale introduced his two saviors. "Mom, this is Will and Billy, they're from that Clan Short group that got attacked on Saturday."

The elderly woman looked at Will and Bill as if she just noticed they were there. "Oh my, I'm sorry, how rude of me... please... please come in and sit down. Would you like something to drink?" She asked as she shushed the other out of the way and motioned for them to follow her.

"No, thank you, Mrs..." Will trailed off.

"Marshall, but please... call me Wilma."

"Okay, Wilma, it doesn't sound like we have much time from what we've heard about Mrs. Whittaker. Why don't we all sit down and try to figure out what we can do."

They watched as her smile faded, and the boys saw that she had to fight back tears, but she quickly got herself under control and led them into the living room. Once they were seated, she made the round of introductions, and the two boys met all the kids she was currently fostering. The two oldest were twin

girls, Sarah and Samantha, sixteen,,and then there was Kelly who was fifteen, Jamel and Doug who were both thirteen, Dale who was twelve, Kenny who was eight, and Jenny who was the cutest little five year old girl that either boy had ever seen.

Once the introductions were made, Will got right down to business. "Okay, can I assume that none of you kids want to leave your mom?" For the next minute, Will could barely hear anything as the kids were very loud in their wishes that they wanted to stay with their mom.

Will couldn't help but laugh. "I guess that's a yes. Okay, hold on just one second and I'll get someone here who can make it happen." Will pulled out one of the communicators that he'd been given and opened it up. "Hey Daileass, you there?"

"No, I thought I'd take a vacation to Hawaii today... of course I'm here," came the voice from over the comm. Both Will and Billy broke up laughing.

"Okay, I guess that was kinda stupid to ask, but we need a favor. Can you ask Logan to send someone who's really familiar with the Safe Haven Act to where we're at?"

"Sure thing bro, I'll have him send someone ASAP. Anything else?" Daileass asked?

"Yeah... just to be on the safe side, can you have a strike team standing by just in case things get out of hand here. I doubt it will, but you never want to be too careful." Will said, hoping he wasn't making the people here too nervous.

"I'll do one better... Khan, Thor, Tyr, and Fluffy just walked into the control room... I'll have them hang out just in case you need them."

Both Billy and Will broke up laughing. "Well damn Dael, I don't think we'll need that much firepower, but it'll be nice to know their ready in case we do."

They heard Daileass laugh, and then come back over. "No problem, Captain, and by the way, Todd should be there any minute."

"Thanks Dael... Talk to you later." Will said, and flipped the communicator shut just as Todd beamed in. Everyone but Will and Billy jumped when Todd showed up, but quickly settled back down.

"What's up, Will? Logan said you needed me," Todd asked as he walked over and saluted.

Will motioned for him to take a seat and gave Todd the quick version of what they found out and what was needed.

Todd was smiling by the end of Will's little explanation. "Okay, now I just need to ask a few questions. Please understand that what I am asking is needed for me to do what I need to do to make sure you all stay here." Todd made eye contact with each one of the kids and then settled on Wilma. When she nodded, he started his questions.

"Let me make sure I understand a few things. Every child here wishes to stay here with Wilma? And Wilma, you would like for them to stay here under your care?" Todd got nods from everyone, except Wilma. He raised an eyebrow at her reluctance and waited for her to explain.

"While I would love for them to stay here, I... I'm just not sure it's wise." She was interrupted by all the kids voicing their objections, but when she held up her hand, they all stopped.

"Kids, you know I love each and every one of you, but we need to face reality here. My cancer is getting worse and without being able to get the medical attention I need, I won't be around for much longer anyways." She said, as she wiped away a few tears.

Before anyone else could say anything, Todd broke in. "Wilma, I understand that you have been giving up your medication so you could support your kids. Don't you have insurance or anything like that?"

"Well I do, but it doesn't cover everything and with the cutbacks that DSS has had, I can't afford everything for the kids anymore. What money I had in savings went to make sure they had everything they needed."

Todd had pulled out his PADD and was working on it the entire time she was talking; he looked up when she was finished. "I know this is personal, but how much do you get from DSS per child a month?"

"Well between everything, it's a little over four hundred a month per child." Todd looked up at her when she said that, then looked over at Will.

"Sir, I think there's more going on here than what we know so far. According to the DSS reports in this area, she should be getting over six hundred per child, per month." Todd stated, and then went back to work on his PADD. There was silence for a few moments before Will spoke up.

"Wilma, this is what we are offering... Todd, let me know if I'm wrong on anything." After getting a nod from Todd, Will went on. "Clan Short Special Forces will give you a stipend of eight thousand dollars a month, that's one thousand per child for as long as they are living here. We're also picking up all the family's medical costs from now on. However, we would ask that you come to our hospital if possible, seeing as it has better medical equipment than any Earth based hospital. I think that would be best for everyone. We would also require monthly visits by Federation Youth Services just to make sure everything is going okay. Does that sound okay with you?"

Wilma was sitting there with her mouth open, but finally she was able to speak again. "That... That sounds great, but... but they're going to take the kids away from me anyways, so I guess it really doesn't matter."

Will's smile got a whole lot bigger. "I guess I forgot to mention that if you agree to this, you would be adopting all of them and nothing your local DSS can do will be able to stop that."

It took a minute for that to sink in, but the second Wilma nodded her agreement, all hell broke loose as she was attacked by eight kids who were hugging her and each other and crying.

They were still going strong when the door bell rang. Billy was sure that they didn't hear it over all their tears, so he got up and opened the door. Standing there was a scowling older lady with two police

officers behind her. Billy couldn't help but grin as he noticed one of the officers was the one that Will had talked to first at the pharmacy.

As soon as Billy opened the door enough, the woman just shoved right past him and walked into the living room. As soon as she walked in, the room fell quiet. In a shrill voice she demanded, "What are you kids doing... I told you all to be packed by the time I got here."

Will took an immediate dislike to the woman and walked up to her. He held out his hand as he spoke to her. "Mrs. Whittaker?" She looked down at his hand, scowled more and just nodded, never accepting his hand. "My name is Captain William Casey of the Clan Short Special Forces Division. I think you should be made aware of the fact that your authority here has just been superseded by mine, and Clan Short of Vulcan will be handling this matter from here."

Her scowl deepened as she looked down on the boy in front of her. "Look kid, I don't care who you think you are; these kids are mine and they're leaving with me. If you have a problem with that, I'm sure these fine officers wouldn't mind throwing your ass in jail with the little brat over there." She said as she pointed over at Dale.

That's when Todd spoke up. "Actually Mrs. Whittaker, as of five minutes ago, these eight children have been adopted by Wilma Marshall pursuant to Article 134 of the Safe Haven act. They have been taken away from your loving care due to violations of article eighty-one, section one of the same Safe Haven Act. Officers, if you would be so kind as to place her under arrest until such time as we can get trained telepaths here to determine the depth of her guilt and any others that are involved."

Both of the police officers moved to the DSS woman and before she knew what was going on, had her in cuffs, moving her out of the room. Before they got outside, she was screaming at them and all the kids in the house..

Once she was gone, Will looked over at Todd who was grinning. "Mind telling us what just happened?"

"Sure, while you guys were talking, I had Daileass hack into her computers. It turns out, she's been skimming off the top about two hundred dollars per child under her 'care' for the last ten years. All told, she stole several hundred thousand dollars from the children of this city. I've already contacted the main Clan and they said they would take care of it."

There was stunned silence for several seconds before Will turned to Wilma. "Well, Mrs. Marshall, it looks like things are looking up for you. Someone will return in a few days to give you everything you need. If you need to contact us before they get here, just call this number," he said, handing her a card, "and someone will be able to help you. But for now, we really need to get going. I know everything will work out for you and YOUR children."

Five minutes later, the three Unit boys beamed back to Camp Bam Bam after many rounds of hugs and tears.

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Jesse looked over at his brother lying in the bed next to him. Ever since they got back from the hotel, where the kids here rescued them, the two brothers had to stay in these beds to help their butts heal. They thought Jesse was sleeping, but he wasn't really and he overheard them talking about everything that was wrong with them. He knew his brother James wouldn't have lived much longer, something about them being torn up inside and bleeding bad. All Jesse really knew, was how painful what their dad had done was and hoped he never had to deal with that again.

Thankfully, the people brought him and his brother here, and were fixing them up. He wasn't sure where they were, or what was going to happen to them, but for now at least; they were warm, had full stomachs, and weren't hurting. That's something that hadn't happened in a very long time.

"Jess?" His brother said from the next bed, almost like he was afraid he wouldn't get an answer.

"Yeah bro... I'm here." Jess said just as softly. He didn't know where they were either and didn't know if someone was listening in.

"Was... was it all just a dream?" James' voice quivered with fear.

"No, it wasn't a dream." They heard a voice say, and both boys jumped a bit and cowered in fear.

"It's okay, I ain't gonna hurt ya none." The voice said as a boy, somewhat smaller than they were stood up out of a chair they hadn't noticed before. Both boys immediately calmed down. They weren't really scared of other kids.

"Where... where are we?" Jesse asked, after a moment of gathering his courage. He was never allowed to speak unless spoken too before, but he knew the people earlier said they would be safe. He wanted to believe that, oh how he wanted to believe.

"Well, right now, you're in our little clinic, in what we call Camp Bam Bam, but if you are both feeling up to it I can show you to rooms you can use." As he was talking, the young boy came closer to Jesse and James allowing them to see him more clearly now. He had longish blond hair and really bright blue eyes. He was only about four and half feet tall, but carried himself with a confidence the two older boys could feel. He wore a white lab coat, but it didn't look like one the doctors would wear, as it had a picture of an explosion on the front chest. "By the way, my name's Jory. I'm here to help get you guys settled in and answer any questions I can."

The boys just looked at him not really knowing what to do or think. They just laid there looking up at Jory. Jory finally walked over to the table in the room, turned and looked back at the boys. "Okay, how about this. There are some clothes here for you two to wear. They're a couple of my brother Will's jumpsuits, but I think they should fit you. He's your age and just as tall and lanky. He even gave you guys a pair of boxers each... not that he needs them. Billy usually doesn't let him wear underwear no more, says it just gets in the way." Jory laughed and knew by the looks on the twins' faces, they had no idea what he was talking about.

"Anyways, why don't you boys get dressed and then meet me outside in the waiting room, from there, I'll show you around and to a room you guys can have for however long you stay here. I'll also show you the most important area in the base.... the kitchens." Jory laughed again, and this time he at least got a small hint of a giggle out of the two boys, but then he saw Jesse's face fall.

"But... umm... Jory... we're not allowed... to wear clothes." It was at that moment, that Jory really understood the depths of psychological torture these two boys were made to live with. Just like everyone else in his immediate family, his telepathic powers have been getting stronger, but unlike his brothers, Jory also had a bit of empathy. When Jesse spoke so softly, it took Jory's enhanced hearing to hear him. The waves of terror were flowing off the boys like they were sure they were about to be beat to death. But it was his telepathy that really got him seeing red.

The images that flashed through both of the boy's minds of what their punishment would be for wearing clothes almost made Jory sick to his stomach. He had seen some terrible things in the time since he left the lab, and heard about, and even shared some of Juan's memories of what he went through. But, the monster that these two boys called "dad," Jory found fit right in with Juan's old masters. It took all of his self control to not let his face twist in anger and disgust, but he knew these two boys would need a lot of help. Chang was right, these two boys would probably only feel somewhat safe around someone younger than they were. It would be a long time until they would be able to trust any adult.

He slowly walked over to Jesse's bed and motioned for James to join them. The other brother slowly slipped out of bed and quickly got onto the bed his brother was on and snuggled right up to him. Jory gently sat on the bed next to the two boys and put his hand on top of Jesse's. "I give you my word... NO ONE will hurt you here. Not while I'm around anyways." Jory put as much emphasis and feeling into it as he could, to try and make the boys understand just how serious he was.

James spoke up for the first time, but again Jory had to rely on his enhanced hearing to be able to hear the boy as he spoke so softly. "But... but what can you do?"

Jory half grinned at that question and slowly reached around to his back and under his shirt. He pulled out the Glock 9mm pistol he kept in the holster in the small of his back. He dropped the clip out and locked the slide back, so there was no chance it could be fired and then handed it to the two wide eyed boys.

Jesse gently took the gun like he was afraid it would bite him, but the longer he looked at it, the child like curiosity came out and all two soon he and his brother were lost looking over the highly polished piece of metal that Jory had given them. Soon both boys were asking questions about the gun and Jory was answering just as quickly as they could ask. He pulled one of the bullets out of the magazine and passed it to the boys so they could see it. They were soaking up the information as fast as Jory could give it to them.

"Okay guys, let's hold off on any more for now, why don't you get dressed and we can go get some food. Then if you want, I can show you to the firing range. Adam, my oldest brother, and the commander of the base, requires anyone who wants to carry a gun to be certified in both gun use and more importantly gun safety. If you want, I can set that up, since I happen to be one of the instructors, and then you can carry your own. Does that sound good to you?"

Both boys nodded quickly and jumped up to get dressed. Jory had no real intention of giving these boys live firearms anytime soon, but he knew it would help them feel safe, so he was going to work something out. Probably give them a small pistol with blank rounds. It's not like they'd need live fire rounds inside the base.

The boys were quiet as Jory led them out of the waiting room and into the hallway. Camp Bam Bam had only been "open" for two days so far, but they already had just under a thousand kids staying here, and just over three hundred adults. All the kids they met, recognized Jory, not because he had met them; but because he was wearing his fatigues and green beret. They knew he was one of the leaders of this place and because of that, many of them stopped and thanked Jory for the help he and his brothers had given them. Jesse and James didn't really know what to think.

Both boys stopped dead in their tracks when they got to the dining hall. IT was huge, with over three hundred kids walking around or sitting down and eating. It was set up cafeteria style, and you went along and picked out what you wanted. But it was the smells that hit the boys that stopped them dead. Neither boy could ever remember smelling something so good.

They went through the line and were shocked to see kids in the back cooking up the food and helping serve people. They saw boys and girls of all ages, sizes, shapes and colors. It was truly, a sight neither boy ever thought they would see. They were sitting there chatting away with Jory and a few of the other kids when both boys suddenly went still and quiet. Jory looked around and finally saw what got the boys scared.

Dave had just walked out of the kitchen area with a huge tray and was making his way towards the boys table. "It's okay guys, he's a good one and remember I said nothing would happen to you while I'm around. Okay?"

Neither of the boys said anything, but they both slowly nodded their heads. Jesse and James both made themselves as small as possible and cowered into Jory. If the situation wasn't what it was, it might have made Jory laugh. Here were two boys, both bigger than he was, trying to hide behind him.

Dave saw what was happening and slowed down. He had a questioning look on his face, but Jory's smile told him it was going to be okay, if only Jory really knew what would happen.

"Hey there guys, how's it going?" Dave asked, and Jory felt both boys start to shake in fear. He patted their hands and tried to reassure them it would be okay.

"Not too bad... I see you made some of your world famous "Welcome to the Unit" banana splits." Jory was hoping the thought of such a treat would calm the boys down.

"Of course I do... So, who are these two new young ones?" Dave asked, as he set the tray down on the table, as he stood back up, all hell broke loose.

Jesse was sure that Dave was going to try and hurt them like every other adult always had and he couldn't let his brother get that close to dying again. Before he even knew what he was doing, he grabbed for the gun that was right in front of him, the gun that Jory carried on the small of his back. He remembered Jory showing them how the safety worked and with a quick flick of his thumb, he flipped down the trigger, and before even Jory could move, he raised the gun and pulled the trigger in one fluid motion.

Jesse was unprepared for the kick the pistol had, and it flew up and hit him in the forehead. Dave in the mean time had a stunned look on his face and pulled his hand away from his chest: looking down he saw it was covered in blood.

## Chapter 05

From the Previous Chapter:

When the Children Cry.

As Delta's voice softly faded, a new picture came onto the screen; that of over five hundred people. - a picture which included the entire family that he and his had been included into - a picture of the entirety of the family called Clan Short. Gasps could be heard as slowly, almost painfully, one hundred and fourteen members of that family started to fade from the picture. Everyone was crying hard, as those one hundred and fourteen who were mostly children under fifteen and who had been lost to their family, slowly faded until they were barely visible.

They may have faded in the picture, but Adam and all there knew they would never fade from their hearts.

It took Adam a few minutes to gain control as he stared at the picture, but finally he nodded to himself, making a solemn vow once again as he had a million times these last few days:

"They may be gone, but they will never be forgotten; Never!"

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Adam smiled slightly as he felt Logan's arm wrap around his shoulder and started to turn him slightly towards the bridge. 'It was all worth it... It all worked. Dammit, I can't believe it all worked out,' he thought to himself as he was walking across the bridge. When he reached the top of the bridge, he turned around and looked one last time at the resting place of his family. He smiled as he saw the outline of one hundred and fourteen people standing just off to the side of the caskets. As one, they saluted to Adam and he saluted back. No tears in his eyes this time; he knew they wouldn't want that.

They held the salute for a few moments and then dropped it as they started to fade. Adam held his till they were gone and then let his hand drop. He turned back to Logan and pulled him into a hug. "Come on, love, let's get out of here." With smiles on their faces, and peace in their hearts, both the boys walked over the bridge.

Neither said anything as they made it back to the fire house. They had just barely gotten in the doors when Adam turned to Logan and started to sway a bit. "Ummm... Love... I think I need to sit down for a second..." and that was all it took. The emotional strain of the last week, topped off with not having slept for the last three days, had finally caught up with him, and Adam collapsed.

Jonas and Harry had been walking quietly, hand in hand, in front of them the whole way back. When they heard what Adam said, they both spun around and saw Adam's eyes roll up into his head. As one, they darted to Adam's side, and together with Logan, they helped him to the ground.

"Migod, what's wrong!?" Harry exclaimed.

"I... I think he just collapsed." Logan had his head on Adam's neck and sighed with relief when he felt a strong pulse. Logan looked around and didn't see any of the medical personnel around, so he made a snap decision. "Can you guys help me get him back to the base and into bed? He hasn't slept since Saturday night. I think he just needs to sleep."

Along with Chang, Amur Khan ran in with a few others, many having felt Adam's collapse. Chang got there just in time to hear what Logan said. Logan saw Chang bend down and start to check Adam out. Khan got a funny look on his face and spun back towards the way they came, and stood there listening for a moment. Finally he nodded and turned back to see what else was going on there.

All eyes were on Chang as he ran through his check on Adam. Finally he looked up to Logan and smiled a small smile. "He should be fine. You may wish to take him back to your room and let him get some much deserved sleep."

Jonas met eyes with Harry first and then Logan. "We've got it covered, bro," he said with a smile at Chang, who nodded solemnly.

"Thanks," Logan said and the three of them picked up Adam. Once the three of them got Adam off the ground, Logan called out to Daileass, who as always was monitoring what was going on. "Daileass... could you transport us right to our room?" The next they knew, they were all standing in Adam and Logan's room.

Jonas and Harry helped Logan get Adam into the bed they shared and then stood back. Logan looked over his shoulder at them; "You guys think you could help me get him out of his uniform?"

They both just nodded and they moved to help him. Between the three of them, it didn't take them long to get Adam's uniform shirt off and then came the undershirt. "What the Hell...?" came from Jonas as Harry's face also registered the shock of the scars crisscrossing and disfiguring Adam's back and chest.

Logan was confused for a second until he realized what they were talking about. Logan was so used to how Adam looked that he didn't even notice all the scars anymore. He realized that neither Jonas nor Harry were there that morning, so they hadn't seen what happened earlier; he took a deep breath before he started to explain. "While Adam was in the lab, they used to hurt him just so they could see how fast he'd heal. This is the result of that. The worst part is, while Adam's might be the worst I've seen; there are a LOT of kids here now who have scars similar. The problem is, they didn't grow up in a lab; they grew up with their parents or other adults that were supposed to care about them." Logan would have gone on, but he was trying to control his anger.

"We've seen a little of that," Harry said slowly. "Little Jondo...."

Logan simply nodded, then smiled. "Yeah, that's right... you guys were the ones that found Jimmy."

They both nodded and stepped back as Logan started working on getting Adam's pants off. Once Adam was down to his boxers, Logan tucked him in and took the uniform off to the hamper. Logan then looked at Jonas and Harry and smiled. "Thank guys. I need to check in on a few things, and he's gonna sleep for a while. You guys wanna tag along and I'll give you a tour?"

"Sounds good" said Jonas; Harry smiled.

"You think they'll be okay, Joe?" Janet asked as the last of the Unit members got back to the fire house. It had been about thirty minutes since Adam had been taken back to the base to get some sleep, and both Janet and Joe were watching the kids like hawks, trying to make sure they were okay. More than once they overheard the kids talking about Adam's collapse.

"I sure hope so. I think this was just what they needed, though. That was really something that Adam put together," Joe said looking around at all the kids from his wheelchair; some were smiling gently, others were drying tears.

All Janet could do was nod to what Joe said, then look down at the hand she held in hers as Joe squeezed it comfortingly. Janet knew she had to be the rock for all her boys, but she also knew that she needed Joe to be her rock. She sometimes wondered who Joe had to lean on.

They watched together as the members of the Unit talked amongst themselves, some still crying on others' shoulders. Janet was debating with herself as to whether or not she should go talk to some of them when they all heard something that stopped everyone dead in their tracks - a very loud cougar scream. All eyes shot towards the little stage where Amur Khan, Kartik, and Vishnu were standing. Slung over Khan's back was a large sword that Janet knew, but couldn't place where she'd seen it before. Everyone waited as Khan stood there, simply looking over the crowd.

"I know that many of you are wondering what happened to Adam." He said in his normal soft growling voice. Janet still couldn't get over how someone so big could have such a small voice... at least when he wanted it to be small.

"I'm up here to let you know what is going on right now. Adam was taken back to the complex to get some sleep. He hasn't slept since Saturday night, and it finally got to him. As much as he may not like people to know this, he is still human... mostly." That got a few chuckles from everyone there.

"Now, there is something else I wanted to say. I know that what happened to us isn't fair. We got kicked in the balls... and we got kicked hard. But you know what? We all got up and we all kept going. I know a lot of you would like to take time right now, and relax, but... we can't. I don't know how many of you actually realize what's really happened lately. What kind of shit we've gotten ourselves into. So... let me explain it real clear." He took a deep breath, and that's when Janet noticed the camera crew in the back of the room. 'That explains a few things.' she thought to herself, Khan was playing as much to the camera as he was to the rest of the people here.

"Everyone here remembers how much bigger the complex was when we got back to it Monday morning, right?" Many people nodded their heads, and a few mummings of agreement were heard. "Well... It's just about full."

Janet's jaw hit the floor, as well as many other people. Most people couldn't believe what Khan just said, and it took a moment for Khan to get everyone to calm down. No one could believe it. "As of 15:30 Mountain Standard Time, today, the population of Camp Bam Bam is 4,466." Again, the place just about exploded.

Once it quieted down again, Khan nodded to himself and started talking again. "What a lot of people don't know is that we threw down a gauntlet. We said no more to kids being abused, no more to kids being used and then thrown away. When we joined the Clan, we became their fist. We're the ones who will see the hottest action, the worst fighting. Like the rest of the Clan, we're going to see far more of the most screwed up... the most physically, mentally and sexually abused kids; and this is because we're going to be getting calls from all over the world and from the Federation of Planets. This is what we did Saturday... this is the message we sent."

Khan pointed to where all the pictures had been lined up after the funeral was over. "They became the faces of those that said no more. They became the ones that people will think about when they hear about kids being hurt... and THOSE were the first of us that will fall trying to save others. Trust me... there will be more of our brothers and sisters that die to save and protect others. I know it, and I hope all of you do too. I can't speak for everyone, but I can say that I would be damned proud if I gave my life so that someone else could live and be free of abuse ."

Khan's voice had risen, but now he let it drop back into his low, almost purring cadence. "We will have a lot of help to do this, but most of the work will fall on us. We need to help all the kids that we have brought to our base learn to live again. Learn to be children again. We also have to go out, find, and rescue those that need it. We've been given a job to do that no child should ever have to endure , and I sure as hell hope we're up to the challenge, cause it's not us that will suffer if we're not... it's all those kids out there that are praying for a miracle. Can you dig deep inside yourselves, and BE that miracle for them? Can you put yourselves on the line day and night, 24/7, no matter what else may be going on... to try and save someone you don't even know?"

To Janet's complete surprise, a slow roar started growing ever louder and overtook the entire fire station as one voice coming from every child present shook the building.

No hesitation, no second thought, no doubt could be heard in that voice, in the one word echoing across the area.

Every time she thought she couldn't be prouder of her children than she already was, they went and did something else that proved her mistaken, as they were doing now with one word coming from each and every throat, no matter how old or young they were.

"YES!!!!!!!!!!!"

As she turned with teary eyes to look at Joe, she could tell that it had affected him the same way, as evidenced by matching tears running down his face as well.

Khan beamed as he looked out at his brothers and sisters. No, they weren't blood related, but it didn't matter; these were his family. "Then I guess we got some work to do."

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As soon as Jory got back from the firehouse, he set off for his room, and an issue he know he needed to deal with. As soon as he got into the common room that he shared with his brothers, he heard the

thumping music. He couldn't help but grin as he recognized one of his favorite songs... "Battery" by Metallica, from the S&M Album.

He walked into his room, and saw the two boys laughing and dancing around. Jumping from one bed to another, and back again. It was good to see them acting like kids, and he couldn't keep the grin off his face. 'This is how carefree kids should be able to act all the time.'

Unfortunately, it didn't last, as Jessie managed to catch him out of the corner of his eye. He yelped in fear, and quickly ran over shutting the music off. Tears were falling down his face, as he hung his head. "I'm... I'm sorry, Jory. It... it won't happen again."

Both boys were trembling in fear, and Jory once again wished he could bring their father back to life, just so he could kill him. "It's okay, guys., he said as he walked slowly over to where the boys were. He could see them both stiffen in fear as he got closer, and knew that both of them were worried about getting hurt.

"Guys, it's just me. I promised you I wouldn't ever hurt you, and I NEVER break my word. Okay?" He got fearful nods from both boys, so he did the only thing he could think of. "However, you did stop one of my favorite songs in the middle, so I think we need to start the song over again... It needs to be a bit louder this time. I also think it's time to teach you boys something all boys need to know how to do... it's called a pillow fight." Jory grinned as he hit play, cranked the volume as high as it would go, and then, walking over to the bed, he grabbed a couple of pillows, tossed them to Jesse and James... and then attacked them.

Twenty minutes later, three exhausted boys hit the bed, and this time none of them got back up. Jory grinned as he heard the two brothers laughing at the mess they caused. Daileass had kept the three boys supplied with feather pillows, and right now, there were feathers all over the place. In some areas, Jory was sure they were at least a foot thick.

"Okay guys, you got me." Jory got out in between his own laughter. "But it wasn't fair, you two big kids ganging up on someone two years younger."

The twins just erupted in laughter again as Jory tried to pout. It didn't last very long though. Finally though, Jory knew he had to bring this to an end. There was something important they had to do. "Okay... it's time to get up and clean up. don't worry about the room, I'll take care of that, but we're gonna have guests in the main room soon, and I know one of them really wants to see you guys." Both boys looked fearful again, so Jory moved over to sit between them.

"I know it's hard for you guys to feel safe, and not scared, but please trust me. Nothing bad is going to happen to either of you. The person who really wants to see you is Mary."

"Mary?!?!" James asked in a near shout. "You mean she's okay?"

"Yup... your little sister is doing great. she's been staying with a couple good friends of mine, and is really happy, but she wants to see her big brothers."

Jesse and James looked at each other, then both jumped off the bed, and ran into the bathroom. Jory couldn't help but laugh as he heard the boys racing through a shower. A few minutes later, they both

ran out of the bathroom stark naked, and ran around trying to find clothes to wear. Finally, the three of them left the room.

Jory made both boys sit on either side of him on the couch, and took one hand in each of his. The timing was perfect because they just got sat down, and the door to the room opened up, and a little five year old whirlwind came charging into the room, hell bent on finding her brothers.

All three of them were crying and hugging, and Jory sat right in the middle of it all. He was glad to see that both Dave and Jack, who brought the little girl here, came in quietly, and quickly sat down in the chairs furthest away from where they were seated. Once the three kids calmed down enough, Jory pulled the little girl into his lap, and once again took both of the twins' hands. Just in time too, as they then realized that two adults were there.

Both of the twins tried to run, but Jory held them in their seats, as Mary looked around wondering what was going on. "J's... what's wrong?" She asked, looking at one, then the other. "They's okay. Really. they's been lookin' after me since we's got here."

"But... but... he hates me... he's gotta," Jesse squeaked out.

"Who?" Mary asked, obviously not knowing what was going on.

"That one," He quietly said, and barely lifted his hand and pointed at Dave. "I...I shot him."

Dave, making sure his voice was as gentle, kind, and soft as he could make it, told him, "Jesse, it's okay. I know why you did it, and protecting your brother is a very good thing to do."

"You mean... you're not mad at me... really?" Jesse said, not really believing what he was hearing.

"No, I'm not mad at you. It hurt a bit, but I would have done the same thing. See... I had a twin brother myself, so I know why you did what you did. You were trying to protect your brother the only way you could think of."

"You... you had a twin?" Both boys asked, in that all too familiar, yet rather freaky same voice that many twins can do.

"Yes, I did; his name was Daniel. He died when we were just a bit older then you two are now. We lived in foster care, and had always been together, until about a year before he died." Dave paused for a second, trying to control his own emotions.

"He died in a fire at the foster home he lived in. But I felt it. You two know what I mean, right?" Both boys nodded, and Dave kept going. "I felt him as he burned, and I knew the second he died. I wanted to die too. It was like a part of myself had been ripped out of me... and... and I didn't think could live without him." Dave reached up and wiped away the tears that were flowing down his face, at the same time that Jack placed his arm over Dave's shoulder and pulled him in tight.

Both boys were also crying, but they were nodding as well. "We know what you mean." Jesse said.

"We could always feel what was happening to each other." James spoke softly, finishing what his brother had started. And that's when Jory felt it.

He knew that both Jesse and James were telepathic; most twins are, but Jory knew that neither one of them had any training at all, and had probably never used it before except with each other.

Now, however, both boys' minds stretched out, and Jory could "feel" them as they read both Dave and Jack, trying to find out if these two were safe, and if what Dave had said was true. Jory knew that these two would have to be taught how to use their abilities, but right now, he wasn't going to say anything to them about it.

Everyone was silent for almost two full minutes before the boys got all the answers they needed, and then conferred with each other. Jory knew what was going to happen, because he was 'listening in,' so when the boys tried to move, he didn't stop them this time.

Slowly both boys moved up to the men, Jesse moving to Dave, and James to Jack. Slowly, very slowly, both men slipped down to their knees so they could be on eye level to the small boys. Jesse and James stopped about three feet away, and when Jack and Dave opened their arms, both boys ran into their arms, both of them erupting in tears one more time.

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After Logan, Jonas, and Harry left Adam sleeping, Jonas and Harry followed Logan to the command center. When they got there, Logan escorted them into his office and was just about to sit down, when a knock came on the door, followed by a young boy of about eleven walking into the room. He saluted and then handed Logan a few sheets of paper. Logan thanked him and started to read what he had been given. Jonas and Harry were silent as they waited to see what Logan was given. After about five minutes of reading, Logan softly whistled.

He handed one of the papers to Jonas; with Harry leaning over so he could read it as well.

\*\*\*Internal Polling Summary Report\*\*\*

Requests for help Directed to Camp Bam Bam: 14,954

Interventions by Camp Bam Bam Personnel: 6,428

Children removed by Camp Bam Bam Personnel: 2,874

Children brought to Camp Bam Bam by Staff Personnel: 1,479

Operational Intake Centers: 437

Requests for help at intake centers: 26,479

Requests handled by Local Authorities: 18,947

Requests Handled by National Government: 6,137

Request for assistance from Local Authorities: 1,395

Children Processed Into Camp Bam Bam: 2,874

Adult Staff Processed into Camp Bam Bam: 981

Total Population of Camp Bam Bam as of 15:30 Oct. 27, 2004: 4,466

"Holy crap!" Harry said. "You've got that many people here?"

"I guess we do." Logan said rubbing his forehead. "That does present a rather large problem, though. We can only hold five thousand people here comfortably. I mean we could hold up to six and a half thousand... but that would be really cramped. I think we need to find another site... Quickly."

"And from the looks of this, probably more than one," Jonas mused. "Is that just from four days....." He let the thought dwindle off.

"Yeah..." Logan breathed out. "Oh well... we'll deal with that later. You guys want to take a tour now?"

"Sure," said Jonas and Harry.

Logan got up and headed for the door, Jonas and Harry followed behind as they went out into the command center. "Okay, here's our command center. As you can probably tell this was designed by kids, and for kids." He laughed a bit as he went and sat in one of the chairs. Pushing one of the buttons on the arm rest, he showed them how the arm rest would unfold, exposing a drink holder and a small storage compartment. Pressing another button opened up the drink holder, and they watched as a Jolt Cola was pushed up and set into the holder. He then pressed another button and a small bag of Frito corn chips popped up into the compartment.

Jonas laughed -- "Perfect!" he said with a grin.

Logan stood up smiling. "Well, obviously you can guess here is where we do most of everything important. Now... what would you like to see first, the kitchens, the living quarters, or the recreation deck?"

"Whatever you think is best," Harry said, as Jonas simultaneously said "rec deck."

Logan laughed. "Okay... Rec Deck it is." He then led them over to the elevators. Once inside, he pushed a button for the seventh deck and the doors closed. "Okay, in this place we have seven decks, as we call them, or levels. The entire bottom deck is the rec deck. If you think about the Pyramids of Ancient Egypt, you'll get an idea of how this place is set up. Yes, we're inside a mountain, but it's a pyramid carved out inside of it. Which means, the deck you came into on, the first deck, is the smallest of all of them." Logan stopped to take a breath, and both Jonas and Harry jumped in.

"We're inside a mountain?" Jonas asked. Harry had been looking around as they arrived, and said, "That was the \*smallest\* deck?"

Logan looked at them for a moment, then hit the stop button on the elevator. He then hit the button for the top deck, and they went back up. "Yeah... we're inside a mountain. And yes, that was the smallest deck. The command center is set against the back wall, with a straight line hallway to the hanger deck. From there, it leads to the outside. The walk should give you a good idea how big the top deck is." He finished just as the elevator doors opened up back onto the command center.

From there, he led them out of the doors and the three of them got salutes from the kids who were acting as the guard on the command center doors. "The guards really are not all that necessary, as it takes both a retinal print and a palm print scan to get in there. Not to mention, Dailess is always watching, but... the guards act as a way of keeping honest people honest and making sure people don't start banging on the doors if something is wrong.

They kept walking down the hall, Logan pointing out where the doors led; most of them to storage or offices. Then they came to a set of open blast doors with hundreds of people milling about, some in Unit uniforms, but most not. "This is where the bulk of the processing takes place. Over there, you can see the lines where the kids are waiting to get their info set into the system. The next line is for the required physicals that everyone needs. And the third line is where they get their 'money cards'."

"Money cards?" Jonas asked.

"Yeah... that was actually Jory's idea. Most kids want to have money. So what we did was set up a system where every kid gets an 'allowance.' How it works is like this. Most of the kids, when they get here, don't have anything or very little. So, we make sure they have a few sets of clothes, toiletries, etc. It's everything that they absolutely need. Plus, they get five hundred credits on their cards. Then, if they take a 'job' here, such as cleaning staff, or working in the kitchens, life guards, and things like that, they earn credits that go onto their cards. They also get credits if they do well in school; keep their rooms clean, things like that. Chores like most people would have." Logan paused as he took out his card, and showed them a plastic ATM style card with his name, rank, serial number, and the Unit Logo on it. He handed it to Jonas who looked it over, then handed it to Harry. "We provide them with everything they need; however, if they want something more, like more clothes, or candy, music CDs, computer programs, things like that, they need to buy them. Oh yeah, every kid that enrolls in school gets their own laptop, built by some of the tech geeks we have here."

"O-o-o-kay," Harry said. Thinking of their families' houses, he asked, "How did you guys afford all this?"

Logan laughed a bit. "Well, Dr. Marcus, I'll explain who he was later; he started us out with about 15 million. Then when we found this place, Juan found the 'vault.' See, long story short, this place was originally a gold mine bought by the US government to be a fallout shelter if needed. When they sold it, they sold it to Joe's Grandfather, who was sure that the Cold War was going to turn VERY hot. So he sunk all his money into this place, so he and his family would have a place to go. He also converted all his money into valuables. We estimate that he had roughly fifty million in the vaults. Now, with that being said, when we first got here, there were only four levels to this base. A kid named Levi and his friends, decided to re-model and you have this. Now, as far as the money goes, well it was tight for a bit, but then we became part of the clan. You may not know this, but every Federation planet pays a certain percentage of their Gross Domestic Product to the Clan. Now imagine, that's planets, not just nations. Last year, the US GDP was around fourteen thousand BILLION dollars."

"Say what!" Jonas exclaimed. "They get how much?"

Logan laughed. "Yeah, they get that much. They can afford to send some of it our way. Not to mention, we've done some good investing with the money we had and we currently hold large blocks of stock in a few corporations; as well as an entire Target Distribution Center."

"A Target Distribution Center?!" Harry asked.

"Yup." He chuckled then turned to head to the front of the bay. "Come on, I'll show you the outside, and the reason this place is so well hidden." He led them to a massive set of doors that had two "guards" stationed there. They saluted in him, which he returned, then went over to the console on the wall. He placed his palm against the shiny plate and then typed in a password. A few seconds later, an alarm sounded and a rumbling came from deep in the mountain. Slowly the massive doors started to slide apart. "We haven't tested this yet, but we think we could probably fit ten tractor trailers side by side through this door if we needed to."

Jonas and Harry were wide-eyed. Quietly, they followed Logan out. When he got out about five hundred feet, he turned and let them look at where they came from. "As you can see, unless you know it's there, you wouldn't be able to find it."

They looked around. To all appearances, they were standing in a typical Western canyon. Scrub grass grew sparsely on the canyon floor; a few trees clung to the cliff sides.

As they were looking around, behind them, Will and Billy walked up to the group, both of them wearing their flight suits.

"Hey Logan, just wanted to let you know what's going on." Will said. "I'm gonna be taking out one of the helicopters to do his test flight with rudder pedals."

Jonas and Harry looked a little lost, so Billy jumped in to explain. "I was stuck in a wheel chair until a couple days ago, and always had to use a modified control system for the rudders. Now that I can walk again, I have to learn how to use the pedals. I got it done on the simulator, but now it's time to do it for real," he said with a grin.

"Yeah, and after I'm done with this, Sarah and Chris will be doing their final simulator time with the jets. Then we need to find someone that will allow us to use jets, and I can then certify the three of them."

Logan laughed, "Good luck with that. Well you guys have fun." He got a smile on his face as he turned from them and led Harry and Jonas back inside.

"Excuse me a minute, guys," Logan said as they passed by his office. "I need to make a fast call." Moments later, he came back out of his office and led them to the elevators.

Once they were heading down, Logan turned to the pair. "Okay, just in case you're here sometime by yourself; spaced every five hundred feet along the wall will be a computer terminal with a map on it. Dailess is hooked up to every single one of them, and all you have to do is ask for where you want to go. He'll show you on the map how to get there. Also, every person here has a transponder so we know where they are at all times. For residents, it's implanted right below the skin; for non residents, it's

their security card. With those, we can find anyone anytime. It also helps keep people from areas they shouldn't be in."

Just as the elevator stopped and before the doors opened, Logan hit the stop button. "Two more things real quick. First, this isn't actually the lowest level. There is one more below this, but it's shared by Dailess's computer core and server farms; as well as our biggest armory. Both of them have top level clearance to get into. The last thing is this. There are going to be a LOT of kids down here. Most of them have been rescued over the last few days. I'm sure you can figure out what I mean by that. Some of them need to be treated with kid gloves, and some need some damn hard discipline. We've already had six fights that security needed to break up. And a few others where older kids thought they could push younger Unit members around. Those didn't go so well for the bullies," Logan said with a smile as the doors opened onto controlled chaos... they hoped.

Jonas and Harry nodded, thinking they knew what Logan was saying. But they were not really prepared for what they saw. When the doors opened, they found themselves looking at a full sized running track with a regulation length soccer (or football if you're from Europe) field in the middle of it. On the field were two groups of kids playing soccer. Also, on the far wall was a huge pirate-ship-shaped jungle gym that had a whole lot of little kids playing in and around it; as well as some older kids. Many people were walking around the outside of the track, and many more were going in and out of the doors to one end. "This is pretty self explanatory as to what goes on here, and in case you're wondering, yes, they can play American football there too, and baseball if we do some work. If you'll follow me, I'll show you the rest of this level. This is only about a quarter of it." With that, Logan led them to the main doors .

When they passed through the doors, they came to a long hallway. "Okay, what do you want to see first? The doors on the right go to the locker room and then into the Olympic sized swimming pool. The doors on the left is the twenty four lane bowling alley, and on the far end, which links to the locker room as well, are the basketball courts."

Harry was goggle eyed. "Holy shit!" he said. "How...?"

Logan couldn't help but laugh a little. "You know how many people have said that when I brought them through here? I'll tell you what actually happened, not what I told them. It was that kid named Levi and a horde of techbots from Ark. Somehow, they had this all done in two days. But, anyways... If you wanna take a look around down here we can, or I can take you up to the next level."

Jonas set off jogging toward the basketball courts, effectively answering that question.

Logan looked over to Harry, and shrugged. "Well, I guess that answers that." Logan and Harry quickly followed. By the time they got there, Jonas was already involved in a pick-up game on one of the five full sized courts, so the two boys leaned up against the wall and watched Jonas.

"So you're nearly full already?" Harry asked.

"Yeah..." Logan responded with a sigh. "None of us really expected to grow this quick. I've been having the chipmunks working on other suitable locations for us to build, but... well, we may have to keep some of the kids housed elsewhere for a time. Not really sure what else to do. I know tomorrow

morning before we go to a party, we're going to be having a high level staff meeting; hopefully we can figure something out by then."

"Ouch! How are you doing for help -- especially the kind that can deal with rescued kids?" Harry asked.

"Well, we're not actually doing too badly. There have been a lot of adults who have called to try and help. Most of them we have actually been able to use. Some of them, we found out, were only coming here to try and get close to abused kids. Those... well... no one will have to worry about them anymore." Logan said with a grin. "I REALLY love the telepaths we have access to."

"I thought we couldn't have non-consenting telepathic scans without some reason to suspect?" Jonas asked.

"Well... They are told that they will be screened to make sure they are acceptable. And everyone one of them agreed to it... so."

"So that was consent, even though they didn't realize there'd be a telepathic scan involved?" Harry asked.

"Sort of... once they're here, they are told it's telepathic. If they refuse at that point, they are suspect, and then we can do it anyways. And as far as those that came here for their own perversions... well, Vulcan justice gets served."

Harry's smile was positively feral: "A fate richly deserved!" he said. "I remember some of the guys' stories."

"Yup... some of them, well... let's just say some get added to Bubba's harem, if you know what I mean. The others, well let's just say they're taken out of circulation... permanent like."

"Oh, by the way, before I forget. I signed the orders to have Todd transferred to you guys. Just send him back if he gets to be too much."

"Oh, cool." Harry said, then paused. "Listen," he said, "could you use someone who has been a bit of a user? -- not a bad guy, really, but he's very self-centered and ended up hurting two people badly."

"Classmate of ours -- he has a suspended sentence, Clan justice that requires a week of helping people who have been victimized by users -- to give him an idea of what he could have caused."

Logan started to nod deep in thought when Daileass's voice came over his com. "Logan, I thought you should know... Adam is starting to wake up."

Logan looked startled for a second. "What? I figured he wouldn't have woken up for hours yet." He started for the door, while looking over his shoulder. "JONAS... WE Gotta go!" He didn't bother waiting as he took off at a jog to the elevator

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‘Well this isn’t what I was expecting.’ Adam thought to himself as he stood there looking off the cliff down onto a great grasslands with a huge forest in the distance. Right below him stood a massive castle backing right up to the cliff he was standing on. Off in the distance, a blood red moon was just coming up looking huge in the sky. ‘You know, just once I would like to have the good dreams be as real as this.’ He thought with a chuckle. But as with everything lately, his good mood didn’t last long as a piano started to play in the distance.

He knew why music often met him in his dreams. Back when he was in the lab, Joe taught him to love music. "Often times, music can tell us things that simple words cannot. They can convey emotions better than anything else, and open up brand new worlds that we never knew existed inside ourselves." Since that day, Adam had listened to as much different music as he possibly could, and even taught himself to play the guitar. It was no real surprise to him to find out that all of his brothers felt the same way, and every one of them learned how to play something... even Juan. He knew, though, just from the start of this song, that it would be an emotional one and he wasn’t disappointed.

Within the glow of the red moon, he started to see things. Images that made his blood run cold. He watched as Billy got shot by his father while throwing himself over Ronnie, shielding his little brother with his own body. He saw Emily as a small girl screaming in pain as a man lay on top of her, taking away her innocence. Many different things flashed across the moon like a video screen; it was almost too fast for his brain to register, but he knew every single person in those images. Then came the haunting voice of a young boy as he started to sing.

In my dreams, children sing, a song of love for every boy and girl  
The sky is blue and fields are green and laughter is the language of the world  
Then I wake and all I see is a world full of people in need

Tell me why (why) does it have to be like this?  
Tell me why (why) is there something I have missed?  
Tell me why (why) cos I don't understand.  
When so many need somebody we don't give a helping hand.  
Tell me why?

Adam tried to look away but couldn’t tear his eyes away as even more kids got hurt. Some he knew, some he didn’t. He couldn’t help but echo the voice in the song as he fell to his knees... TELL ME WHY?

Then it happened to him; suddenly it was his voice singing, asking a question he had asked many times. This time, though, he had an answer. He didn’t like the answer, but he had it. In a flash, his time in the lab flew across the screen and he felt deep in his soul, everything that happened to him all over again. Even the things he had forced himself to forget. The question came again.

Every day I ask myself what will I have to do to be a man?  
Do I have to stand and fight to prove to everybody who I am?  
Is that what my life is for, to waste in a world full of war?

The song continued but all he heard was the child's voice, and his, "TELL ME WHY?" The images flew undaunted by the tears that flew down his face. Now it had kids he didn't know. They were kids as young as he was and younger, as they fought to protect their families and their homes. Children sold to others as slaves, like nothing more than cattle. Kids forced to turn to a life of crime simply so they could eat. Kids... all of them kids.

How many times had he wished he could have been a "normal" boy growing up in a normal house, going to school, with nothing more to worry about than getting pimples... or finding a girlfriend... or how he would do in the next sporting event. Simple things he had always dreamed about, but never able to have. Did the kids in the moon want the same thing? No, he realized all they would really want is enough food at night so they could go to bed feeling full. All they would wish for was to not be in pain, to not cry themselves to sleep. No, they didn't wish for much, but it was too much to ask for.

"Is it really?" Adam was on his feet and spun around in a flash. Standing there, just a few feet behind him was a figure wearing a hooded cloak. The person couldn't have been much taller than Adam, but somehow it seemed so much bigger.

"Is that really too much to ask?" it said again, referring to the thoughts that Adam had moments earlier. It took a step towards Adam while hands slowly came up, and pulled back the hood. Adam stumbled back a few feet and almost fell off the edge. Standing there in front of him was a person whose face was constantly changing. First it was Adam's, then Logan's, then Alvin's, then... They flew by fast, but Adam knew every single face there. Not all of them were people that Adam had meet, yet somehow he knew every single one of them.

"You ask if you have to stand and fight... to prove who you are. But you forget that is what you were made for." Adam stood there wide eyed as the shifting figure settled on one face for a few moments: the captain of Bam Bam, Dennis North.

"It's not fair, Adam, you know that, but then again no one ever said life was fair. You taught me that. But, you also taught me to grab what life handed me and make the best of it. I didn't die because of something you did, but something you taught me. Life isn't fair, but we have to make the best of it we can. The best we can do is to love. There is NOTHING in this life that can't be overcome with love. THAT is why I died." Then the faces started to change again. Faster than the eye could see, but Adam knew them all.

This time when it talked, it had the voices of hundreds. "You're on the edge, Adam; you're close to giving it all up. You don't think you can fight any more. You don't think you can handle any more. But if you don't, who will?"

"I... I can't..." Adam voice trailed off as tears fell again. The weight of everything bearing down on him was crushing him. He didn't know how much more he could take.

He dropped his eyes for a second but felt something force him to look back up; this time it was to stare into the eyes of Sammy Campbell. "We need you, Adam. We need you to help those that we can't. But you're not alone. You're never alone. You have your family. They want to help but you keep them away. You don't let them get close to you. What are you afraid of?"

"I... I'm afraid to... I'm afraid I'll lose more." Adam said quietly, tears flowing freely down his face.

"You can't do it all alone. They WANT to help you. We WANTED to help you and you know what... we died. But it was OUR choice... not yours. Are you going to tell everyone who is still alive, that they can NOT do what they busted their asses to do? Are you going to tell them that they will not be allowed to be the best they could be, and to not live their lives the way they want to? Are you going to make that decision for them?" Sammy said, with a bit of anger in his voice. Adam ducked his head low and before he could say anything else, a new voice met his ears.

"Come on, Adam... would you have done any less? Wouldn't you have gladly given up your life so that others could live?" This time it was young Mark Little. The little boy was standing there holding onto a small bear... Adam could barely make out the Disney world logo on it. "You know... you once told us that it is easy to die for a cause you believe in. And you know what? You're right. It is easy. But you... you inspire people to do something so much harder. You inspire them to LIVE for what they believe in. I am so damned proud to have been a part of that. You know I asked... I asked everyone. There is not a single person who regrets that they gave their lives. Of course, all of wish it hadn't had to happen, but not a single one of us would change it if we could. And by GOD... don't you dare disgrace our sacrifice by having your own regrets. So many more would have died had... had things been different. You may not believe that now, but you will soon enough."

The face started changing again and this time the voice that came from it was that of many. "Our time is over, but the time of Redemption is at hand. This world is at a place where it can go many ways. It can go the way of purity and righteousness, or the way of evil and destruction. It is time to take the fight to the enemy, and win your way into a better way of life. Go now, go now and fight. It is what you were made for. It is what you are... it is you."

Adam woke in his bed, feeling relaxed and at peace. Peace like he had not felt in many days. He was shocked when he looked at the clock and saw he had only slept for about an hour. Then he began to cry.

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Logan led Jonas and Harry off the elevator and went immediately to the room he shared with Adam. Walking into the main room, all three boys could hear weeping coming from the bedroom. Logan took off and by the time the other two boys got there, Logan had Adam wrapped up in his arms and was slowly rocking him. "Adam.... Love... What's wrong?"

"I... I'm... I'm not to blame..." Adam barely choked out.

"Of course you're not, babe." Logan soothingly said. "None of what happened is your fault."

"I... I know that now. They... told me so." Adam said, still with tears in his eyes, but as he looked up, they could see he was smiling. He reached over to the bedside table and grabbed a tissue. After wiping his eyes and blowing his nose, he looked up first to Logan, then to Jonas and Harry. Logan sat back with a little bit of shock; the other two boys not knowing what had just happened, but Logan saw.

With a smile on his face, Logan said softly, "I see that fire back in your eyes. It's been too long since I've seen that."

Adam gave his patented half smile and looked his lover right in the eyes. "Mark Little told me something. Something that I really needed." He laughed again. "The little shit gave me the kick in the ass I think I needed." Logan looked at him, waiting for him to finish, as Adam looked off into nowhere. "And I quote. 'You know... you once told us that it is easy to die for a cause you believe in. And you know what? You're right. It is easy. But you... you inspire people to do something so much harder. You inspire them to LIVE for what they believe in. I am so damned proud to have been a part of that. You know I asked... I asked everyone. There is not a single person who regrets that they gave their lives. Of course, all of us wish it hadn't had to happen, but not a single one of us would change it if we could. And by GOD... don't you dare disgrace our sacrifice by having your own regrets...'"

Logan couldn't help but laugh. "You know.. that sounds about like him. But you know what else... he's right."

"Yeah... I know he's right. And you know what else... I've got a lot of work to do. Hey guys," he said looking at Jonas and Harry, "let me grab a quick shower, then we can chat." Adam gave Logan another hug, then almost literally bounced out of the room. Logan smiled as he watched Adam go, then pointed to a couple seats for Jonas and Harry. Logan was just about to say something when loud music started to come from the bathroom. Logan almost fell onto the floor as he started to laugh. It only took Jonas and Harry a second to figure out what the song was, and they started to laugh too. All too soon, Adam's voice could be heard coming from the bathroom as he sang along with the Shrek soundtrack's version of the song, 'Livin' La Vida Loca.'

None of the three boys could do anything but laugh as the song played and Adam sang. However, by the time the song ended, Adam came walking out of the bathroom with just a towel wrapped around his waist and a big grin on his face.

Logan walked over, wrapped his arms around him and they shared a deep long kiss.

Harry looked at Jonas. Jonas looked back and grinned. After about twenty seconds, he finally cleared his throat. "Uh, guys...."

Logan tried to back off, but Adam wouldn't let him. They continued for about another five seconds before Adam let the kiss end. "Sorry guys," he said to Jonas and Harry, "but it's been too long since I got to do that."

"I take it enhancement allows you to hold your breath longer," Harry said with a grin.

Adam was about to say something but Logan butted in. "Ohhhh... you have no idea... nor will you... he's mine." Everyone laughed at that one.

Adam turned serious as he turned fully towards Jonas and Harry. "So, you wanna clue me in on what you guys need?" He laughed a bit, "I am getting better at this whole telepathy thing...."

"So, then you know what it is we want already?" Harry said with a grin.

"Yes I do..." Adam grinned back..."but, you and Jonas, with BBQ sauce lying on the beach together, is NOT something I really wanted to know about..." Adam said in completely dead panned voice.

"What!" Jonas shouted. Adam, Logan, and Harry just laughed at him.

Logan didn't miss a beat. "Umm... Adam... that was you and me... not Jonas and Harry."

Harry said, "Um -- getting away from BBQ sauce for a minute, we have a guy who really \*needs\* to learn what it is to be used by someone else -- and he's been sentenced to a week helping out at a Clan Facility. Think you can help?"

"With the BBQ sauce, or with this kid?" Logan asked still grinning.

Adam turned to Logan. "What is it with you and BBQ sauce?!?!"

"I don't think you want me to answer that while there are people around," Logan said with a mischievous grin.

Jonas grinned, sending out a thought to Peter, and held out his hand. A second later, a bottle of barbecue sauce was sitting in it. "Here, will this help?" he asked, holding it out to Logan.

Logan grinned and turned to Adam who also had a big grin on his face. He took the bottle and put it on their night stand. "We'll use that tonight. Now... what's the full story with this kid? And what can we do to help?"

"Okay," Jonas explained, "what we have is a guy who was simply using both his girlfriend and one of our Clan brothers for sex, with no real thought for them but just for getting his rocks off. And on last Friday night, he ended up hurting Pen physically -- potentially quite badly. That put him in court and he accepted Clan justice. His sentence includes helping out for a week at a Clan facility and learning what it means to people when they get used."

"Well... first things first... we better keep him away from Juan," Adam said while going over to his desk and pulling out the keyboard.

Logan just snorted. "Yeah... keep him away from Juan." After seeing the questioning look from Jonas and Harry, Logan explained. "Juan still hasn't really gotten a hold of the idea that there might be punishments that don't deserve death."

"More like he doesn't care," Adam said with a chuckle. "Most of the time I agree with him, but since sentence was already handed down.... let's see what we can do."

"Well, death is just a bit extreme -- he didn't intend to hurt Pen, he just didn't care," Harry said, thinking Adam and Logan were pulling their legs.

Adam shook his head while Logan turned slightly towards them. "Well, as Adam said, we'll play it your way, but... we'll still keep him away from Juan. I mean Juan may not intend to hurt him... he just wouldn't care...."

Jonas chuckled. "I see your point!" he said.

"So... you basically don't want him to get hurt, but you want him to be taught a lesson?" Adam said.

"Exactly!" Jonas said.

"Right... okay... here's what I got to offer."

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"So... what do you guys think?" Adam asked after outlining the plan he had just come up with. Before anyone could say anything, Daileass's voice came over the speakers. "Hey boss man, got a message for you."

Adam smiled as he looked up slightly. "Yeah? Well... get on with it."

"Okay... I am paraphrasing here but... 'Them boys are Maine boys and dammit they belong with us.'" It was obvious that Adam and Logan had no idea what he meant.

"Wha..?" Jonas asked. Harry however caught it. "Brandon and Andy, right?" he asked Daileass.

"Yup... now the question... do you know who asked about them?" Daileass responded with a bit of humor in his voice.

Harry thought a moment. "From the tone of voice... Dougie?" he asked.

"Nope." The disembodied voice giggled.

Harry scratched his chin. Jonas said, "Had to be Bobby, then!"

"DING DING DING... we got a winner!!!!!" Daileass laughed while Adam rolled his eyes.

"Okay... this is my turn to play the uninformed one," Adam said while looking at Jonas and Harry.

"Okay, you need to know what your guys were doing last night," Harry explained. "It seems that Mikey engineered a visit between the Unholy Trinity with their father and our new Sheriff. In the course of that, they ended up walking around Farmington with Deputy Thomas, and they intervened to rescue two boys we know, sort of, that were being abused by their grandfather -- which we weren't aware of until the Trinity met up with them."

"Kevin called for backup and medical help," Harry continued, "and Alvin sent out the other Terrors with Chang and Bryce Turner. They brought Brandon and Andy back here to your place for treatment."

"Yup... you guys wanna watch the video?" Daileass's voice came from everywhere as always... and Adam just nodded.

Roughly eight minutes later, the video ended. Adam looked at Logan, who nodded. Turning to Jonas and Harry, Adam asked. "You wanna take them with you, or should I have them make ready and we can beam them to Bobby as soon as they're ready?"

"We'll take them back with us," Jonas said with a smile. He touched his comm badge to call Skipper and Bobby.

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Adam smiled up to Logan as soon as Jonas and Harry left to take care of the Jessup brothers. "You know something... I didn't think it was possible, but now I know I was wrong."

"What do you mean?" Logan asked as he sat on the bed next to Adam .

"I didn't think it was possible to love you anymore than I did... but I do." Adam said as he got lost in Logan's beautiful blue eyes.

Logan melted into Adam as they started to kiss. They both needed this time with each other, and no one was going to deny them what was theirs. No one, except the person knocking on the door.

Adam sighed and was about to tell the person to go away when Logan saw his eyes refocus for a split second and then he was up and moving. Logan groaned in frustration, but he knew what that look meant. Something was going on that got Adam pissed.

"Okay... spill it." Adam said as he opened the door to let Amur Khan, Chang, Jory, Juan, Billy, Ronnie, and Will in. Logan knew this had to be something big for all the immediate family to be there. The only ones missing were Janet and Joe. Logan wasn't sure if that was good or bad.

As soon as everyone was there, Khan handed Adam something wrapped in crushed velvet. Logan knew by the shape that it was a sword. Adam wordlessly unwrapped the sword and then drew it from the scabbard. The ring of the blade being drawn took Logan's breath away. Just looking at the blade, he knew it was used for only one thing. Taking just a moment to admire the blade, Adam rammed it back into the scabbard.

"Okay, I can guess, I'm supposed to use this, but on who and why?" Adam asked as he looked around at the people standing there.

"None of us were there; however, the Patriarch of Clan Evans was there and the judgment came from him. He then gave him over to us to deal with. It might be easiest if you just took it from my memories as he showed me what has transpired," Khan said, as he sat down in one of the chairs in the room. Adam nodded, and got his normal far off look. Logan took that moment to look around at his brothers.

From the restless bouncing that Juan was doing, Logan knew he was ready for action. Jory was standing there looking a bit anxious. Even Chang was looking a bit apprehensive. For Chang to show any emotion, Logan knew it had to be very serious. Will and Bill were standing there almost at attention, as if they were waiting for orders they knew were coming.

'You need to see this, Love.' Logan heard Adam's voice in his head, and then it was as if he was watching a movie play in his head. Adam was definitely getting better at his telepathy.

Those thoughts quickly left Logan as he watched what Adam was sending him. Now he knew what was going on, and he understood the way his brothers were acting. The information that Jason was able to get, as well as the BBC reporter being held prisoner until Adam dealt with him, slapped him back to the reality of the last few days. And now, Adam was directly responsible for the punishment of the person who was a large part of the planning of the attack that had killed so many.

It took Logan a few moments to collect himself; as he came back to the present he saw that no one had moved, save for Adam. His lover was pacing back and forth, and Logan knew he was lost deep in thought. It was well known that when Adam was pacing, everyone just had to wait and let him figure out what he wanted to do. Logan did see that Adam's knuckles were white as he gripped the hilt of the sword.

Finally Juan couldn't hold back any longer. "What's there to think about, Adam, the fucker dies."

Adam whirled around so fast that everyone took a step back. "I will not kill in cold blood. That is not what or who I am," Adam said in a very soft but firm voice.

"Fine... I got no problem killing in cold blood. Hell... I'd do it happily," Juan responded; Logan knew the worst part was that he was dead serious.

Adam moved over and stood in front of his younger brother, placed his hands on the boy's shoulders and looks him in the eyes. "I know you would, Juan, but how do you think Mom would feel about that?"

Juan blinked for a second, then deflated. "Yeah... you're right. So what are you going to do?"

"I don't know yet. I know why this sword was given to me, and I haven't decided that I won't use it yet. I... I just don't know yet." He stared off for a moment and his eyes glazed over. Logan looked to where Adam was looking and saw a picture taken less the two weeks ago... a picture of the entire Unit standing in front of the helicopters. "But I will NOT let them be disgraced." He said no more after that for a few moments while he stared at the picture.

Finally he turned to everyone else. "I want all of you in full uniform in the command center and ready to go in thirty minutes. Please ask Generals Bryce, Casey, and Hayes, as well as Col. Hathaway, if they would join us." Without another word, Adam strode from the room.

Logan was only slightly surprised at the formal way he addressed Janet, Joe, Jack and Dave, but knew why. Adam was doing this one hundred percent official. No one was going to be able to second guess that he did everything by the book. Unfortunately, there is no book for what they had to do.

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Precisely thirty minutes later, Adam strode into the command center, nodding to the assembled party. He gave a brief look around and, once satisfied that everyone else was doing what they needed to, he walked over to the group.

With barely a smile, Adam walked up to Jory, reached out, and straightened one of his lapels. Turning to the rest, he looked them over; all of them passing his inspection. Looking at the adults, he quietly asked, "You all have been briefed?"

Silent nods were his answer, and he replied with his own. Turning around, he lifted his head to look into the air. "Dailess, when you're ready, could you please transport us?"

"Yes sir." The next thing they knew, they were all standing on the transporter deck of a starship. Standing in front of them were four people: Jason Evans, Mike Reynolds, Vishnu, and Kartik.

With barely a nod, and no emotion showing on his face, Jason spoke. "Please follow me."

No words were shared as the entire group made their way through the halls of the ship. Adam was very pleased with all his guys. Being that it was the first time that any of them had been on a starship, he knew they were working real hard to not gawk at everything as they passed.

After many twists and turns, and rides through turbo lifts, they finally found themselves entering the brig area. With a simple nod to the Vulcan security person standing behind the desk by Jason, they were let into the room where the cells were held. Matching in formation, Adam moved down the hallway till they stood outside of one cell, the only cell that had an occupant.

"Who the hell are you?!?! I told those pointy eared bastards I wanted my lawyer. You better get..." The man was standing near the front of his cell and started to yell as soon as the group came into view. Suddenly though, the man's mouth slammed shut so hard that one of his teeth chipped.

Mike looked over at Jason who simply shook his head. 'Wasn't me' Mike heard in his head.

"When I give you permission to speak, you may... until then you will not." Adam spoke in a very soft but dangerous tone.

Chang raised his eyebrow in surprise; the rest wanted to say something but everyone kept their mouths shut.

"Now... I will give you the chance to try and convince me to kill you quickly instead of giving you to my brothers who want to tear you limb from limb," Adam said coldly.

"You cocky sonofabitch," Peterson responded as soon as he could speak again, "You can't do fuck to me! Hell, you couldn't even save your sorry little bender boyfriends! My only regret is I didn't kill all of you little...."

Jason's eyes blazed blue, but before he could do anything he felt something building from Adam - something that made his eyes open wider in shock as well as make him grow extremely concerned.

"WHY YOU..." Adam said softly with so much venom dripping from his voice. Suddenly Adam started to literally lift off the floor. Janet gasped and Joe started forward till everyone in the room, save for Chang and Jason, hit their knees screaming in pain, Adam violently pulling as much energy as he could from his brothers. Chang stumbled slightly and grabbed the wall for support.

Jason felt the power radiating from Adam and saw it literally impacting everyone around him before stretching out further as if seeking more minds to control. "Oh, fuck sakes... not again!" Jason cried out as he too lifted from the floor. A bright blue aura of power spilled from his eyes to envelop himself as he latched onto Adam's form. The aura then enveloped the enraged teen as well.

Jason did two things very quickly: First, he took immediate control of Adam's physical nervous system, for one 'little' punch from this highly annoyed teen would likely have killed him. Second, he started to form a mental shield around them both in order to sever the links being formed, as well as the attack now being made on the screaming prisoner. Adam was doing everything he could to literally rip the man's mind asunder.

The first action was a complete success... the second, however...

'Chang!' Jason sent quickly as the blue glow around both himself and Adam grew mottled and yet brighter, 'Please stop feeding him your power! Take your brothers and the rest and link them away from him! He's going to rip you all apart soon! PLEASE, Mind-Brother, please!'

At the same instant, Jason also sent to Mike Reynolds, 'Uncle Mike! Grab the blade! Kill that fuckwit - he's the focus for the pain you're feeling! Quick, Captain,' he cried, using Mike's old army rank, 'do as I command, or you're all going to die!'

Mike staggered to his feet and lurched for the floating boys. He seized the replica S'harien and brought it down in a tightly controlled arc to split Mr. Peterson's head in two. He knew an order from a 'senior' officer when he heard one.

Chang was nonplussed at first, but, fighting through the pain of his 'abilities' being pulled from him by his older brother, he saw what Jason was referring to.

He could 'see' the threads of what could only be called power flowing from himself and the rest of them and linking with Adam.

He reached out himself and pulled his own power back. It was a struggle, but he managed it - then he reached out with it to start pulling all those other threads away and into himself instead.

As each of his brothers were released from Adam's controlling grip, they stopped crying out.

Well, all but Juan.

"I'm gonna rip you a new asshole, asshole!" He screamed furiously before Chang pulled his little brother into his arms and absently kissed him. "It's okay Juan... Just stay back. You can't touch him right now." Juan relaxed slightly.

Jason felt Adam's control over the rest fall away and was then able to focus everything on the mind he was now holding together. 'Adam,' he sent quickly to the still furious teenage Commander. 'Adam - listen to me. He's dead, Adam. He's dead. Pull back, bro...'

"HE'S NOT DEAD TILL I SAY HE'S DEAD!" Adam screamed, fighting Jason with everything he had. He was not going to let someone else steal this from him.

'Yes he is, bro. Let God deal with him now. Please, Adam - you don't know what this is doing to you. You have to stop NOW,' Jason tried again.

Adam screamed in rage and pulled even more power from inside of him; he was not going to let someone take this from him. This fucker was his. His scream of rage turned into a scream of pain as he kept pulling power from inside to fight what Jason was doing to him. No one was going to stop him.

Jason knew deep down that it was break or bust. He didn't want to, but he had to try: he pulled rank.

"Commander Casey, you will stand down NOW. That is an order, Commander!" he yelled aloud.

Adam's eyes darted to stare into Jason's glowing ones for an instant, and the power he was wielding paused in its motion, and it was all Jason needed.

He shut Adam's mind down in that brief second and then floated back to the floor, Adam held close.

"Thanks, Chang, I... oh... great! A two for one special," Jason muttered with a weary grin as he looked at Chang.

The Asian boy's eyes were glowing.

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Everyone that was present in the brig were quiet as they carried Adam's now sleeping body to a close by lounge area. Once they were all in there, Jason took Chang aside and the two of them sat talking while everyone else quietly thought about what had just happened.

"Where are we?" Chang asked curiously as he looked around what seemed a Japanese garden.

"Your mind," Jason replied with a giggle.

"Interesting," Chang smiled briefly. "A nice ordered place."

"Tell me 'bout it... you need more fun, dude!" Jason giggled again as he moved to hug the twelve year old serious faced boy.

Chang smiled again, just as briefly, while enjoying the hug. "What do you wish to explain to me, Jason?" he asked finally as Jason made two chairs appear. He sat down and devoted his attention to Jason entirely.

Jason smiled as well, "Okay. First, you and Adam are now Ka'Inri - Mind Walkers. Or, to use Sammy's name for us, N-Gens. You are the first I've seen who made the trip over to your Next Gen state almost perfectly, bro. That's why your eyes were glowing like mine can. You've a very ordered and logical mind."

"Thank you," Chang nodded.

"Don't mention it," Jason giggled. "I've just got to say what I see, bro. You've got a mind most Vulcans would be proud of owning! Now then," he said more seriously, "Let's get down to business. You're an N-Gen, but that is just a loose title really. You are not a telepath, empath, pre-cog nor telekinetic. You are simply you and how your powers develop from here is up to you. Nath', Vicky and I will give you the basics later, and Sammy can, or even the Trinity and Jamie and Jacob Dodds. However, where you take it is up to you. Your choices and focus will set the path that your mind 'walks'."

"Like a child who learns to read and write is then able to write a story that is unique to him or herself? Each person starts with the same, then 'writes' his own story?" Chang asked curiously.

Jason nodded, "Precisely. I like that; yes, you 'write' your own abilities. There are no real limits, bro, only natural laws. You can do what you set your mind to do as long as it is logically possible and you have the power to pull it off."

Chang looked around again briefly as he nodded. "What made me different from Adam? My control?"

"Yes. You already had your mind laid out in 'rooms' in a way, bro. So when you pulled your power back from Adam and helped your brothers do the same, your abilities started to push themselves beyond normal limits. However, unlike when I did it and when Adam just did it, the 'rooms' you already had inside became 'real rooms' in your mind. Here, look at mine," Jason said as he projected an image in between themselves.

"That is a lot of rooms," Chang said, his voice impressed.

Jason grinned, "The more you use and focus and train your powers, the more rooms appear. Each room deals with different things. Technically, I could 'turn off' or 'cast sleep' over about one hundred people at once, as well as do a number of other things. Mostly though, I'm into TP - Telepathy. I can use empathy well, and am now building up my TK, but my focus has always been on TP. You can choose one, or all. It's all fluid, and each of us are different."

"We have our strengths and weaknesses. Yes, I understand. Juan is a better shot than I am, while I can out-duel all my brothers. I understand, Jason," Chang nodded thoughtfully. Then he asked, "What was happening to Adam's mind? You sounded frightened for him."

Jason sighed, "He was pushing himself well beyond safe limits, and he had no 'rooms' in his head to deal with the power his mind was able to draw on. He, like you, had the ability to become N-Gen, just not the mind to handle it. Like a Jet engine in a Ford car. The car COULD go at 300 mph, but you'd end up riding an engine while the body of the car was blown away. Same for us. Once I managed to get past his rage, I was able to shut his mind down, or he'd have torn his mind to shreds."

"Thank you," Chang said sincerely, before asking, "Will he be okay?"

"Yes, and so will you. I've completed your head already, and I'm still working on Adam's. Like I said, you had already done most of the work already. Adam's I'm doing from scratch."

"You are in Adam's mind right now, even when you're talking to me?" Chang asked, again impressed.

"A shadow of me is, yes. My main thoughts are here with you, but I've set a few 'rooms' in my own head to deal with upgrading Adam. Once done, that 'shadow' will come back and I'll 'know' what happened in there. Don't worry, the shadows we make have our skills and abilities and act like we would. Adam is asleep, even in his head right now; so I'm not having a talk there too. I think you need to calm him down first; he's plenty pissed at me at the moment!"

"I have no doubts about that, brother," Chang smiled again, and Jason laughed. He could sense this serious boy's tightly controlled amusement clearly.

Chang then asked, "I can develop in any direction, you said?"

"Yup. I think I know already where YOU are going to focus on. TK with YOUR fighting style would KICK ARSE!" Jason giggled. "And in Adam's case, he'll be a better telepath than before - it might even allow him more control once he learns how! He'd be able to store his 'rage' in one 'room' so he don't flip his lid that way again. I can help there as well - Vulcan training is a must, I think, for us N-Gens. Our minds are, in a way, very much like a Vulcan's. They have 'levels' in their heads, while we have 'rooms'. We'll chat more about that tomorrow. After this adventure, you both need sleep... and you need cuddles with my Klingon brother, Kor!"

Chang blushed briefly before pulling his control back up quickly. "He is very... reserved."

Jason nearly laughed, that word coming from Chang. However, he knew what the boy really meant. "He'd been a slave to the Orions as well as to others. He'd been forced to fight death matches to earn food for him and others or to simply stay alive. He was also raped over and over again, bro... his owner used to celebrate each of Kor's victories by 'having' him."

A tear trickled from Chang's eyes and Jason reached over to wipe it away tenderly. "Shhh, he'll be okay, now. Joel Short, the new kid? He did a Vulcan thing with him just before I met you here earlier. He Shared with Korris and a group of others. Kor's going to be tearful when you two cuddle up tonight, so he's going to need you to be strong. He don't like being in need of anything, as you likely know already, but he knows he needs to open up to you tonight. If you can... cry with him. You'll finish what we Dragon guys started and complete what Joel was finishing. Your love will save him now, brother."

Chang wiped at the tears falling thickly from his eyes and said softly, "I think I can do that." He looked back up and into Jason's eyes, "Thank you, brother."

"No. Thank you, bro. I feared Kor would never be able to give himself over to love. You proved me wrong. For that, I will always be in your debt, and will always love you too. Now, come. We should get back out to the real world, and then I'll let you hop into Adam's mind to explain stuff to him. Once you're done, I'll wake him up the rest of the way," Jason giggled as he stood.

Once Chang had got to his feet, Jason took his hand. "Oh," Jason added quickly before the room faded, "out there, outside our minds, it's only been about a minute's worth of time. Our minds speak quicker than we can when we talk normally. Just so you are not too confused!"

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Adam spun, the sword in his hand flashing brightly, as he blocked yet another blow aimed at him. He didn't know how much longer he could withstand the attacks coming at him. No matter how hard he fought, he couldn't get a good shot in on his opponent. Then he felt it, the rage building inside of him: fueling his muscles, fueling his fighting. They were fighting so fast that Adam didn't even know who he was fighting: he didn't have time to look at the face, only the body and the sword.

Sparks danced as yet another flurry of sword blows came down. Adam wasn't quick enough to block them all, and he felt blood flowing down his chest from a cut right above his left nipple. He screamed out as the rage demanded that more blood be spilled. The worst part is the rage didn't care whose it was.

"CONTROL, ADAM!!! YOU MUST HAVE CONTROL!" The figure screamed at him. Funny, it was his voice. The rage in him grew... overflowing and seeping out.

Flipping back, Adam tried to get some distance between himself and his attacker. It didn't help; the second he landed, he was on the defensive again.

"Come on, Adam, focus. You're better than this, but your emotions are hindering you. Gain your control and FIGHT ME!" Again it was his voice, but it also triggered a memory. Suddenly he wasn't fighting anymore, but standing in front of his Samurai Master.

"You do well in your studies, young one, but there is one test you must yet face. You must face yourself; you must face your own anger. Anger over what has happened to you and what will happen to you. Until you can best that part of you, you will never be what you are destined to be." He didn't understand what his master had meant by that, but as he flipped back from another attack he suddenly understood.

He landed and looked up in time to see the face of his attacker. He found he was looking at himself. However, it was so contorted with rage and hatred Adam could barely recognize it. That's when he figured things out. It wasn't this other person who was talking to him. It was himself. He took a moment to take a deep breath and center himself. The other figure screamed in rage as peace settled over Adam's soul. And they fought.

It was like night and day. Now that Adam had let his emotions go, he was the one taking ground, not giving it. He was the one drawing blood; he was the one pushing this other person back. They fought and fought hours seemed to go by but Adam never tired.

Finally, he saw his other self make a mistake. A simple mistake made in anger and frustration, but it was all he needed. He stepped inside his other self's guard and with a quick thrust shoved his sword deep into the chest of his darker self. Like fog on the wind, his other self evaporated and floated away. It was over.

"Well fought, brother." Chang said and Adam spun around to face him, but quickly lowered his sword. "Now that you have faced your final demon, now that you have taken full control of yourself... Now I can finish your training."

Adam looked a little confused especially when Chang waved his hand and two chairs simply appeared. "What's going on?" He asked as Chang sat down; a moment later Adam sat as well.

"At once, that is very easy to explain and very difficult to understand. As far as what just happened in here, you have faced your final test. Master never completed your training because you held too much anger inside. You have always let your emotions control you... that was sometimes good and sometimes bad. I am not saying you need to be emotionless, quite the opposite. You have taken the first step in learning to focus your emotions and use them to power yourself."

"No one has yet to figure out what all we can do, right?" Chang asked, and Adam simply nodded. "Well, that's not entirely accurate. Master Takomora figured it out shortly before he left a few months ago. He tested his theory out on me and he was right... as always. Our bodies are capable of so much more than we ever thought possible. We simply lacked the fuel for them. At least, that is what we thought."

Adam nodded; this was something that he and his brothers had secretly talked about ever since they came together. Not even Logan knew about this theory. "Well, I know what the fuel is: our emotions. If we can control our emotions, if we can funnel them into ourselves, then we can do things we would never have thought about before. However, that has NOTHING to do with what just happened between you and Jason."

Adam felt the rage build inside of him at just the mention of that name. It all came back to him, Jason blocking his retribution on the person who was responsible for so many of his family dying. "ADAM!" Chang said in a loud commanding voice. A tone Adam had never heard Chang use and it shocked him back to the here and now.

"You WILL calm down and you WILL control yourself." Chang was now sitting forward in his chair and staring at Adam with eyes that burned a bright blue. Adam sat back with a shocked look on his face.

"Whhhaa." He muttered.

Chang's eyes never wavered from Adam's as he spoke in a very soft voice. "What Jason did this evening was to save your mind and to save all of your brothers' lives. You had tapped into power that you were not able to handle. Had you continued with your little temper tantrum, your mind would have overloaded and simply shut down... you would have DIED."

Adam sat back in shock. Chang would never lie, would never mislead him. If Chang said it, Adam knew it was true.

"But... but." Adam tried but Chang shut him down with just a look.

"Adam, you are the eldest, you are the strongest and you are the leader: but you MUST learn the extent of your own abilities or it will kill you. Jason has helped you by setting up your mind so you can con-

trol these powers; but it is up to you to figure out how to use them. Only you can do that. And you must." Chang sat back, letting the fire in his eyes die out.

"I have seen in my dreams that a time soon comes where you will face the hardest test of your life. Failure means a price worse than death will be paid. You must be prepared and you must fight. Fate has given you a task and you must not fail. Fate doesn't care about fair, or nice or even happiness. Fate only cares about one thing... what must happen. You know we will all help you, but when the time comes; it is you who will make the difference." Chang showed one of his rare smiles. "The worst part is you will probably not even know it when the time comes... but you will afterwards. Come now, the others are worried and there is much to do. But first, Jason asked me to explain a few things." With that, Chang went over everything Jason explained to him about being N-Gen.

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Jason looked on nervously as Adam's eyes opened. His nervousness grew as Adam stood and walked towards him, and Adam's face was completely unreadable.

Jason was on a hair-trigger ready to shut the older teen down physically, should he make a move that would hurt him.

Adam came to a stop less than a foot away, and looked down at Jason's nervous face.

"You okay?" Jason asked, his voice wary, yet Adam could sense a strength there. A strength and a nervousness born of a desire to not want to have to use any powers against brothers again.

"Yes," Adam said as he slowly moved his arms to wrap Jason in a warm hug. "Chang explained everything. Thank you, little brother," he finished with a whisper before kissing Jason's cheek.

Jason returned his hug joyfully, and he relaxed his mind.

"Chang said you'd be teaching us the basics later?" Adam asked after a good long hug. He pulled back enough so that he and Jason could see each other's faces.

"Yeah. Tomorrow some time. I've implanted the 'real' basics in there already, so you won't end up hurting anyone before you learn the rest," Jason replied with a small grin. "I just have to say the same to you as I told Chang - don't try doing too much more than you've already done before until we have taught you."

Adam nodded thoughtfully, "There's a reason, I take it?"

Jason nodded, "Me, Nath' and Vic had to learn most of this stuff ourselves, but we did have Vulcans helping with a lot too. We found we could do untold damage with our minds - well, that's a given for all with mind powers, but it's so effortless for us N-Gens. I just don't want to hand you a strange new 'gun' without giving you the first 'required' lessons first. Does that make sense?"

Adam nodded again, this time with complete understanding, "Gotchya. We'll talk tomorrow, then. Anything else for tonight?"

Jason giggled, then looked between Adam and Logan, who had walked up to stand with them. "No sex. I mean it!" he added quickly as Adam flushed and opened his mouth to protest.

Logan was beet red, and his mother was laughing softly behind him. "Why not?" he whispered to Jason furiously, his cheeks flaming.

"Cos I've scanned you, Logan." Jason grinned at him, "You can be N-Gen too. If Adam and you do 'it' tonight BEFORE I train Adam, he COULD lose control at... well, at the 'special moment'? If he did, he'd likely start changing your mind into N-Gen. He don't know how to do that, and it would be a bit... well... it would fuck you up totally... and not in the good way, either!"

Adam was trying not to laugh at the faces Logan was pulling, but he did manage to ask, "Did you and Nathan have to abstain when this happened to you too?"

"No, but that's 'cos we were both made N-Gen together," Jason replied impishly. "Sorry, but one, you need to relax your mind tonight. You gave it one hell of a workout earlier, bro. And two, I don't have time to train you and Chang both tonight - too much to do. But anyhow, I think a nice relaxing night for you both is a better thing after everything that's happened this day. You'll be 'up' for it better tomorrow - trust me," he finished with a wicked giggle.

Logan, his face still doing an impressive imitation of a tomato, looked at Adam and grinned. "Oh, boy! Okay, deal, Jace... as long as you PROMISE we'll BOTH be up for it tomorrow!" he giggled, not taking his eyes from Adam's.

Now it was Adam's turn to blush.

Author's Notes:

Hey guys, I don't know what you all think about everything that's happened, but I would love your input.

There is a lot of things that happened here, and I would love to here what you guys think.

Things are happening quickly to many members of the Unit, and things don't look like they are slowing down. Wonder when they will get some time to relax.

## Chapter 06

Chang watched as Koth and Korris beamed in and looked on calmly as Juan suddenly pounced the smaller Klingon. He smiled to himself as Korris grabbed both small boys and went to town on their ribs, making them both squeal out loudly.

So loud, in fact, that Adam poked his head around the corridor leading to the quarters and raised an eyebrow at them before disappearing again, this time with a grin on his face.

"Gerroff, Kor!" Koth managed to splutter as he tried fending off his brother's tickling fingers.

Korris grinned wolfishly before licking his lips, "But I want to tenderize you both!"

Juan rolled away quickly, sprang to his feet and ran off; Chang saw that he was putting all his effort into doing so quickly. "Have to catch me first!"

Korris laughed and released his brother. "Go find your cuddly boyfriend, bro. See you tomorrow."

Koth grinned up at his brother as he managed to get back to his feet, "Love you too, Kor! Night!" He then sped off in the direction Juan had vanished.

Korris was watching him go when he felt a pair of arms circle his waist from behind. He stiffened briefly.

"Sorry," Chang said quickly as he stepped back, his eyes filled with concern.

Korris turned, and Chang saw that his eyes were haunted, "S'okay. I just don't like people doing th...that from behind me. Not anymore," he finished with a whisper. Then, "At least, not 'til earlier on. J...Joel did...."

"Jason said," Chang interrupted softly as he gently took the Klingon's hand and started towards his own quarters.

They walked without a word, Chang leading the way while Korris simply had his eyes fixed on their linked hands. The Klingon only looked up as Chang released his hand and closed a door behind them. Korris' face softened as a smile grew. "Your room does this every time," he whispered, "it makes me feel calm."

Chang looked over at the boy he had grown very fond of lately and smiled. "I am glad. I often find that I need some calming influences to let go of many of the problems I have encountered during any given day."

He looked out over his room, pleased that it could bring solace to someone else as much as it had to him. In the far corner was a stand displaying a full set of Samurai armor; next to it a stand displaying the Daisho that he was given by his master. He had explained to Korris that a Daisho was a set of swords, a Katana and a wakizashi. The two swords together, freely given by another Samurai, was a mark of high honor and respect.

In the other corner stood the table that held his bonsai tree. Again he had explained to Korris the significance of such a tree: to help maintain one's balance while making sure the tree was kept trimmed to a certain design, yet not overdoing it and killing the tree.

In another corner was Chang's Smithing forge. Very few people were allowed to even see his forge, let alone be close enough to touch it. The forge was Chang's most prized possession. It took him years before he was adept enough to be able to create something using his forge and it was his greatest source of pride. The ability to be able to craft a Katana is something that very few people were ever taught, and even fewer could actually do.

The main centerpiece of the room was a rather large waterfall dribbling down over many small rocks to fill a small pool at the base. Around the waterfall were several cushions for one to either sit on or kneel on. Chang would often meditate at the foot of the waterfall.

Korris moved woodenly over to stand holding the Daisho and reverently placed his Bat'leth and both Mek'leth at the foot of the stand. He laid a hand briefly on the two samurai swords for a moment before turning to look at Chang.

Chang's heart nearly broke at the completely lost little boy that was standing in the place of the Korris he had grown so close to over the last three days. Jason had been right - Korris was feeling that old pain again, and it was as fresh as the day it had originally happened, whatever it was. Chang did not even think about it; he just opened his arms towards the Klingon and braced himself as Korris ran into those arms and started bawling out loudly. Chang's new abilities allowed him to pick up on what was being radiated from this distraught alien - shame. The shame of a warrior dishonored and abused and unable to either avenge nor take his own life.

"I have been there before, my 'Musha,' I know what you are going through. But you must understand, you are not responsible for what happened." Chang said softly as he kept a firm grip on Korris.

"I am, though," Korris wept into Chang's chest. "I'm Klingon, I'm a son of Kahless, I'm... I... I should have stopped him! I should have! I *could* have... but... he... I..."

Chang slowly led Korris over to the bed and sat down, pulling the still crying boy down with him. He took a deep breath and decided to just take Jason at his word - that Korris had to talk about this. Which meant that he too would have to talk about his own pain with Korris.

Somehow, the associated shame of that did not seem as bad - this was Korris, and Chang wanted him to know. But could a Klingon's pride bend enough to open up with him?

"Tell me, Musha," Chang whispered as he rubbed Korris' back softly and gently.

Korris tensed and began to shake his head, but Chang spoke quickly, "Jason said that you needed to talk about it, and I trust Jason."

"That interfering little..." Korris began angrily as he dashed his tears away furiously, but then a slow, sad smile crept onto his face. "He... he's right. Huh, he's always right 'bout this stuff. Okay... but this is hard for me, Qu'raki..."

"Would it help you if I told you my story first?" Chang asked as he felt his own emotions threatening to break free.

Korris looked again into Chang's miles-deep brown eyes, and saw nothing but love and caring there - and a shame equal to his own. He nodded slowly. "If... if you want to - please, if you could," he trembled as he held Chang more firmly. Somehow, he knew that this would be as bad as his own story, and he had loved this boy since the minute he'd laid eyes on him a month or so ago. "I'll be here for you, as you are for me," he whispered, kissing Chang's cheek quickly.

Chang nodded, then focused his emotions and blocked them out. After thinking about it for a second, he realized that what he was doing, what he was about to do, would actually be the wrong way to do it. For the first time in many years, Chang brought down all the emotional controls he so rigorously kept. He would not... COULD not do this with many people.

"The first time it happened, I had reached the maturation level of a eight year old. I am not sure if you know this, but I am actually only eight standard years old. My aging had been enhanced when I was very young. What many people do not know is that the human body grows the way it does for a reason. When the doctors accelerated our aging process, is the time when many of us died. A child's body is meant to age at a certain pace, and increasing that pace is not only very damaging to the body, but also extremely painful."

"The four of us that were born in the labs, as well as all the cats, went through this. From what I have read, only the twelve cats and the four of us survived. They started with over four hundred children."

"As I said, the first time happened when I was equivalent to eight years old. I had just come back from a training session with Master Takamora, and was putting my equipment away when I started to feel strange. It only took me a moment to realize that a drug had been introduced into the air supply and I was being sedated." Even though Chang was trying not to cry, the tears started to flow down his face.

"When I woke, I was on my bed, my hands were bound, and I was naked. Looking around the room, I saw it was empty, but I also saw that people were watching from the other side of the one-way mirror that made up one of my walls. They didn't realize that with a bit of effort, all of us can see into the thermal visual range. So while they did not know that I knew they were there, I did know." He took a moment to calm himself, and let his eyes drift to the waterfall. The soothing sounds of water slowly falling over the rocks helped calm his mind enough to keep going.

"When they came in, I did not know why they would be naked as well. I did not understand what was going on. When I asked, they simply laughed and informed me, yet again, that I was nothing more than property for them to do with as they pleased. I still did not know what was going to happen, but knew at that point it probably was not going to be good."

"When they started to touch me, I figured out that something was going on differently than had happened in the past. Before that point, if they had to touch my penis, it was simply to move it out of the way, or to hold it while they inserted a catheter. However, this was different... much different."

"I was informed that this was going to be a new piece of my training that would happen every night until such time as they were satisfied that I had learned to use both my oral and anal cavities 'properly.' It was at that point that I started to use the meditation techniques that Master Takamora taught me on how

to block pain, and how to relax myself as much as possible. I had used those techniques many times for the different tests they had performed in the past."

"However, they would not even grant me that little bit of escape. As soon as they saw what I was doing, one of them gave me an injection in the arm. Within two minutes, I could no longer concentrate enough to mentally escape."

"I...I know what it feels like to be violated..." Chang trailed off as his normal emotionless exterior broke and he started to sob.

Korris also began to weep with Chang, and pulled Chang's head in closer to hold against his own chest protectively. He didn't say a word, but simply held him tightly as Chang regained the use of his voice.

"This... this happened every night for three months. It was only recently that I learned that the reason it ended was because Master Takamora had learned what had happened, and put a stop to it, permanently. From what I have been told, the reason it stopped was because Master Takamora made it very clear what would happen if anyone did it again."

"From the moment I was rescued, I made a vow that I would never let anyone go through what I did if I could do anything about it. Master helped me get over the mental issues it caused by helping me turn the pain into courage to help others. I believe you are well on your way to being able to do that as well." Chang squeezed him close to himself, and allowed Korris to hold him as he cried.

After both boys had finished weeping together, Korris began to speak, and his own voice was as filled with pain as Chang's had been. "I'd watched as my little brother was violated and unmanned, then I'd been taken away on a ship to the Orions' base. I never saw him again 'till I was rescued by Dad - Captain Dafydd Evans. At first, I was just one of a bunch of slaves that the Orions were holding. I came to the attention of the master of the base when I'd killed an Orion with my bare hands for trying to rape a girl in the same cell as me."

"I thought he would kill me when I was dragged out and into his office, but he handed me my father's old Bat'leth and took me to an arena. That was the first of many, many fights I was made to take part in."

Korris remained silent for a moment, before he continued, "I was easily the best fighter taking part at first. It was exhilarating, everything a warrior should be doing. The clash of blades and wills. And for each victory, I was rewarded - usually food that I could share with the other slaves."

"Then, one fight went nasty. I was cut badly and in such a way that my loincloth was ripped away. Here," Korris said as he moved the leather vest he wore away from his side and lowered the right side of his pants. A long scar ran down his side from just under his ribs and on down his thigh. "I won the fight, but was naked and bleeding half to death."

"My 'master'," he spat the word with venom, "he took me to his room to heal me up, but... he had been 'turned on' by the way I'd ended up, and... he... I was too weak that time to stop him... I'd lost too much blood. Yet after each fight since, each and every time, I was taken to his room... The second time I nearly killed my master, but the guards... I was clubbed into submission and they... they all..."

He trailed off again as great heaving sobs started ripping up from deep within him.

Chang couldn't speak right then, so he sent Korris all his love and support through a squeezing hug. He hoped that Korris would get the message, and from the small, sad smile that briefly touched the young boy's face, he knew his message had been received. Chang then reached up and brushed the tears away from Korris' eyes as the Klingon continued, "They all used me, and I was thrown back into my cell."

"The next day I was brought to my master's office again, and this time a small Rigellian boy was there as well. I was chained to a wall and made to witness them beat and torture that kid for over an hour. Then they assaulted him over and over. I was screaming at them to stop, but they didn't. They k... they killed him only after they could no longer revive him. Then I was told that, if I did not do as told, no matter what it was, then they would do the same again to another child, then another and another."

"They made me a whore... and I couldn't stop it! I dared not! But I should have found a way! I should have!" Korris began to yell, frustration and shame echoing around the room as he raged and sobbed, yet held in Chang's unbelievably strong arms. He could no more have escaped than if he had been chained with titanium. He stopped struggling and just wept for a moment longer, his face now held against Chang's chest as Chang ran his fingers soothingly through his hair.

"I should have found a way," Korris whispered hollowly, "I'm a Klingon; I should have broken free and saved them all, and not just given in... but I... I failed... I failed them... I did everything those perverts wanted... I..."

"You have not failed, my Musha," Chang whispered to him. "You did exactly as your honor demanded. You may not be able to see it now, but you have never lost your honor. Every time that you allowed yourself to be used so that someone else wasn't, you not only held your honor, but you strengthened it. I do not know if you follow the Christian God, but in their holy text it says 'Greater love hath no man than he who would lay down his life for a friend.'"

He continued softly, "I heard those words during a funeral, and although you are not dead, you laid down your own life to protect others. Where is the shame in that? Where is the dishonor in that act?"

Korris pulled back slowly to regard Chang. "I've heard those words, but... I should have found a way..." he repeated slowly, but this time, the self recrimination seemed to be less as he thought on what Chang had said. "I..." he tried again, then sighed slowly and started weeping again. This time, however, the tears were different. "Jace tried telling me, but I didn't hear him. I... it hurts, Chang. It hurts." He wrapped his arms around the Asian boy and pulled him in tightly, and together they wept again.

"Will I... how can I enjoy being... they took so much from me; from us both. Can we ever... I mean..." Korris whispered, and this time a fear was in his voice. A fear and a regretful longing. "I... I love you, Chang. I want to be with you, but... can either of us...?"

It took them many minutes until either one of them could do anything, but finally it was Chang that separated himself from the hurting Klingon. He quickly went into the bathroom, and came out with tissues that he handed to Korris. After they both wiped their eyes and blew their noses, Chang reached his hand out for Korris. When he took it, Chang pulled him to his feet and embraced him again.

Again, after another moment, Korris pulled away and kissed Chang's lips tenderly. He then started to look around at the room. It seemed different now, as if he truly belonged here and was not just a wel-

comed visitor. It very nearly seemed like this was his room as well as Chang's. He walked over to the Forge and reached to run a hand over the tools, but stopped. "Sorry," he murmured over his shoulder, "I nearly forgot."

Chang smiled as he walked over and stood very near to Korris. He surprised the boy when he said, in perfect Klingon. "There is no issue, love... what is mine is also yours."

Korris' eyes widened. He looked long into Chang's own eyes before he also replied in Klingon, "Do you know what that means to my people?"

Chang's head tilted slightly to the side as he smiled, "No. I said something wrong?"

Korris smiled, and whispered, "No, you did not. You offered to be my life-mate." Korris' eyes then filled with emotion... and hope. "I won't take it as a promise from you, for you did not know, so..."

Chang stopped Korris from saying anything else by placing a finger on his lips. "I may not have known, but now that I do, I will say again... If you would accept all I have, all I am, then what is mine is also yours."

Korris, without taking his eyes from the Asian boy's, reached to his belt and withdrew a small dagger. He traced it over his right palm, bringing a small flow of dark purple blood to the surface. Hesitantly, he held the blade out to Chang.

Chang took the blade, and with his own eyes locked with the Klingon's, cut his own right palm.

They joined their hands and their blood mingled.

In Klingon, Korris said, "My blood is on your hands, my spirit in your eyes. What I am is yours, and all I have is thine."

Chang responded likewise in Klingon. "From this moment on, we are of two bodies but one heart. Two sharpened edges of the same blade. From now till we meet again in the Mists, I am yours and no other's."

Korris released his partner's hand and pulled into his arms yet again. Then, he did something that was the bravest he'd ever done. He twisted around and allowed Chang to cuddle him from behind. He kept one of his hands on Chang's linked hands at his stomach and just stood there, trembling yet smiling. "I love you," he whispered eventually as his trembles subsided.

Once Chang felt the trembling subside, he leaned in and whispered in Korris' ear. "It has been said for many thousands of years that bravery and courage is not the absence of fear, yet what one does in the face of that fear."

"I will face my fear, I will let it pass around me and over me. And when I look back up, only I shall remain," Korris whispered as he agreed.

"'Dune'?" Chang whispered with a smile.

Korris grinned slightly and nodded. "Wisdom is found in many places," he said with a slight giggle as he moved slowly towards the cabinet by the Forge, pulling Chang with him in that cuddle against his back. "You're making me feel safe," he said by way of explanation as Chang gave a slight giggle. He then turned his head and smiled at his life-mate, "I make this vow - I will never hide my heart behind my honor and pride in private with you. For you, I will leave my heart forever unprotected."

Chang smiled wider. "And I make this vow - I will never hide my emotions from you, and you shall see me ever as I am now; my soul naked before you."

They kissed briefly, then giggled together. Korris turned back, and peacefully reached to open the cabinet. Inside were blades and swords of various makes and types. He gasped, however, when his eyes fell on one in particular - a trillpa'morov.

"You have made a Vulcan Combat-Sword?" he breathed in awe as he gently lifted it down and held it reverently in his hands.

Chang nodded. "There is one thing that you have yet to learn about me. There is only one living soul who knows what you are about to hear." He paused as he walked over and ran his hand over the cabinet holding his most prized possessions.

Korris moved behind Chang now and held him from behind. Chang smiled as he leaned back into his mate. "One thing that very few people know is that Master Takamora is more than three thousand years old. He has traveled many times with Sarek, and was taught by Sarek himself on the crafting of Vulcan blades. He was also taught the Vulcan martial arts."

After a moment of silence, Chang continued. "Master Takamora is also a strong telepath. When I was only four years old, he dumped a very large amount of his own personal knowledge into me. For the last four years, I have taken the knowledge and turned it into my own."

Korris, one arm still loosely around Chang's waist, raised the Vulcan sword up so they could both look at it. "He sounds nice. Was he a father to you?"

"Yes," Chang nodded as he ran a hand over the sword Korris was holding as he pressed himself back even further into Korris' embrace.

"You made this well, Qu'raki," Korris whispered after a moment, moving the blade slowly back and forth. "Did you or your Master Takamora test it to ascertain its standard?"

"What do you mean?"

"A trillpa'morov is made, forged, and folded in such a way that a phaser blast would be channeled up the length of the blade and out of the tip. The matrix of the metal, if this is Vulcan metal, would allow for that after a true forging," Korris explained.

Chang's face grew interested. "It is Vulcan metal. I was not aware of that fact;, however. Nor, it would seem, was my Master. How strong a blast?"

"Up to level three. Levels two and one would destroy it of course, but rarely on a battlefield would you face that level of fire. It would overheat a phaser way too fast, obviously. We could test this, if you are willing," Korris offered before kissing Chang's neck softly.

Chang nearly melted at the kiss, but said with hesitation, "Would it harm the blade if it is not forged true? It is my first attempt, and I am proud of how it turned out."

"No," Korris assured him as he moved away and picked up his wrist phaser from the bed where it had been laid earlier as they had cuddled. "I shall use the stun setting. On normal metal, that would only heat it slightly. You might get a mark on your ceiling though, but we can paint that over," he giggled as he looked up at the plain ceiling.

Chang nodded his assent and watched as Korris held the blade so that it was pointed directly up and aimed his phaser at the base of the blade.

Chang gasped with pleasure and awe as the energy from the phaser rippled up and out of the tip of the blade and giggled at the small scorch mark on the ceiling. "I think it is forged true."

"Well done! Oh, wow!" Korris was beside himself with awe and joy. "You're a master smith! This is unbelievable! Your first, you said?"

Chang nodded with a grin. Korris put the blade back in the cabinet and ran a hand over the hilt one last time before turning to pull his mate into his arms. "You are amazing," he whispered, his eyes once again leaking tears, but these were not tears that Chang wished to take away from Korris.

"There is something else I would like to show you." Chang said as he moved out of his lover's embrace. He walked over to another cabinet that sat near the forge. This one was very large, stretching all the way to the twenty-five-foot-tall ceiling and being at least five feet deep. He used his keys to open up the lock that secured the doors, then opened the doors only enough so he could reach his hand in.

When he pulled his hand out, it was holding a single ingot of a metal that gleamed almost reddish. He turned around and walked back to Korris who was looking at him with a bit of confusion. "Do you know what metal this is?" he asked while handing the ingot to his love.

Korris recognized the symbol that had been cast into the ingot, and the weight and feel of the metal confirmed his suspicions. "This is the metal used in the forging of Mek'leth and Bat'leth blades," he trembled reverently. "How came you by this?" he asked softly as he stared at Chang with joy.

Instead of answering the question, he simply stepped back to his cabinet and reached in one other time. "I crafted this about three months ago, but I would not dare dishonor the blade by actually using it." When he turned around, he presented Korris with a large case hand carved with a rich maple color to it.

Chang held the case as Korris gently opened the lid and gasped. "A Bat'leth," he whispered as he took the weapon out. He moved back and checked around him to make sure nothing was within the reach of the blade, then he started to flow the blade around his body. He moved from stance to stance in the form of Mok'bara, and the whistle of the blade as it cut the air was as music.

Chang watched wide eyed as he witnessed a true Bat'leth Warrior make the fruit of his labor sing out for the first time.

Korris came to the end of the forms and replaced the blade in the case, "It is perfectly balanced. If you wish it, Qu'raki, I will teach you how to fight with both Mek'leth and Bat'leth. You have mastered the forging and you deserve to wield this beauty and the 'young brothers' that come with it."

"I would be honored. However, before that time comes, I think it is I who will help teach you a thing or two. From what you have said, you still wield your father's blade. You have shown your skill to be great with the blade, but from what I understand, there is one last trial you must perform before you are truly of the Order of the Bat'leth. I believe, my love, it is time for you to craft your own blade."

Korris looked down at the ingot he had laid on the bed, then back up at Chang. With his heart in his eyes, he nodded, "Only if you will honor me by crafting it with me. But not tonight - we cannot start the forging without finishing it. I have to be in Orlando with my brother tomorrow at 9 o'clock EST. Seven, here. We have to start training Travis and Gabriel and their sons. We gave our word, but after... oh, you don't know what this means to me," he started to sob as Chang rushed into his arms. "My brother and I managed to get hold of one ingot seven months ago and from that my brother made his own Mek'leth. He had been using our father's up to that point, but like me, he wanted his own. Since my family is outcast and dishonored in the Empire, we could not get a hold of more... I... thank you...."

Chang held the sobbing boy for many moments, just holding him and letting the boy cry. When Korris started to calm down, Chang lifted his head so that their eyes met; after a brief moment of just looking into his love's eyes, he softly whispered, "When the time is right, my love, I would be honored to assist you. Whenever you would like to do it, I will be ready."

"How about now?" came a voice from the doorway. They turned and saw a little ginger-haired boy smiling at them.

Korris began to blush badly and a fear came to his eyes. "How much have you heard, Doctor?" he asked quickly, holding Chang tightly, for he sensed his life-mate tensing up quickly.

"I already knew and have done so for longer than you know," the Doctor said seriously as he moved quickly to hug them both around the waist. Looking up into the two taller boys' eyes, he continued, "Joel will know of all this - do not ask me how, for I am not allowed to tell you how he will come by this knowledge yet - and he will meld with me at MY first meeting with him, which is in YOUR future. There are things that Time wants and wanted me to know. This is one of them. I give you Time, Korris; I give you Time, Chang. Forge the sword and temper each other. You can take as long as needed for this Time lasts as long as I say it will."

Chang's eyes softened and he nodded at the Doctor. "My thanks," he whispered.

Korris picked up the now happily smiling boy and kissed his cheek. "Thank you, Doc," he smiled, before putting the Doctor back on his own feet. He took Chang's hand and they went towards the Forge. Once there, Korris grinned and removed Chang's top, then stripped himself out of his own. "Our bravery is to be tested as we forge and no protective garments are to be worn above the waist."

"You mean I don't get a show?" the Doctor giggled from the door. He laughed harder at the quelling looks he had from both older boys and winked, "Kidding. I'll be 'around' if needed. Just call my name." He then Folded and vanished from sight.

"Who was that, in any case?" Chang asked curiously. "Another Mikyvis?"

"No," Korris smiled. "THE Doctor."

Chang's eyes widened. "The Last of the Time Lords? From that TV show?"

"The very same," Korris said with a kiss. "The very same."

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"I think I like guns," Koth grinned as he handed the last weapon to Juan after they had finished cleaning them. They had been using Juan's personal firing range in his quarters for the last hour and Juan had been teaching his boyfriend all about the 'big booms' that he liked to make.

"Cool!" Juan giggled, then his stomach rumbled loudly.

"THE BEAST!" Koth sniggered as he started to tickle Juan's belly. "Quick! Call for Chang! It must be removed!"

"Ahhh!" Juan giggled as he turned to scoot out of the room. "Evil Klingon trying to molest me!!!" he mock cried as he ran down the corridor, Koth sprinting after him.

Both were in hysterics by the time they reached the canteen, and were panting and grinning happily at each other. They silenced quickly, however, when they saw a dozen smaller children seated in one corner, looking lost and alone and very frightened. Koth and Juan shared a look before heading over.

As they got to the group, they found Jory in amongst them and holding a tiny three-year-old girl on his lap. She was sucking her thumb and her eyes seemed far away and haunted. "Hey guys," Jory said softly, then addressed the others, "this is my brother Juan and his boyfriend Koth. They're cool too."

Koth sat down slowly and smiled around at the others while Juan looked at his brother, an unasked question in his eyes.

'They were all having nightmares,' Jory sent to his brother mentally, 'and this is their first night in a strange place. They were all rescued from an orphanage where their basta... 'caretakers' had been....'

'I get it,' Juan sent back, his face livid with sudden rage. His eyes flashed briefly yellow but Koth's hand taking his that second helped him keep control over 'Juan-2' - but he could feel the screams of fury and blood lust desire in the back of his mind.

Koth had missed what had been passed between the two Unit brothers but he had a good idea what the problem was in any case. "I think a pajama party, complete with cocoa and ice-cream and cookies and

a big nest in the middle of the room, is what's needed. How does that sound, guys?" he asked with a soft smile.

Some of the slightly older kids in the group started to giggle, and the oldest, a seven-year-old, nodded his head. "I think we'd like that, Sir... ahh... what happened to your head, sir? You had an accident?"

Koth looked puzzled for a moment, but then it clicked. "You've not seen any aliens before?" he asked quietly.

The boy shook his head. "No sir; we weren't allowed to see telly, an' Mr. S...Simpson always said that aliens are bad... are you bad?" he asked fearfully as he twigged at why Koth had asked that.

"No," Koth shook his head. "I think Mr. Simpson said things that weren't true. I'm a Klingon. I am a part of the Family that the kids here at Camp Bam Bam are a part of... like their cousin? I'm therefore your cousin too, 'cos you are a part of this Family now."

The boy nodded his head and moved closer to Koth. Bravely, he held out his hand to shake with Koth. "I'm George. I'm the oldest, and I look after the others," he said.

"Pleased to meet you, George," Koth said as well, shaking the boy's hand. "Now then, if you are their 'big brother' then you can help me get the stuff ready for the party. That sound okay?"

George nodded his head quickly. "Yes sir, it does," he answered.

"I'm Koth. I'm not old enough to be a 'sir', yet," the Klingon giggled at the boy, and the boy started to giggle back as well. "What about the others? Who's the oldest?" he asked the rest of the kids.

A girl and two other boys raised their hands. "We're all seven as well, Mr. Koth," the girl said seriously. "I'm Trish. This is Barny..."

"Barnabas!" Barny hissed.

"Barny..." Trish continued, glaring at Barny, "and this is Lukas," she completed, pointing at the last boy. He waved shyly.

"Sweet! You three can help me and George while my boyfriend and his brother can help the rest of you guys get the blankets and pillows ready for the nest," Koth giggled as he watched Barny poke Trish in the ribs. "I'm thinking you two are brother and sister."

"Twins, and she's always picking on my name!" Barny answered miserably. "She don't like being called 'Tristina', but I don't like being called 'Barny'... just 'cos she wants a shorter name...."

"I'm the oldest," she protested, poking him back.

"I don't care!" Barny retorted, but said no more as George stepped between them.

"Come on, guys. We don't have to fight no more. Let's get the ice-cream!" he said, and Koth immediately saw why he was the leader of the group. Even if he were not the eldest of them all, he had that potential and ability found only in a few - leadership.

The Klingon and the four seven-year-olds turned and ran into the Kitchen and started heating milk, getting out ice-cream, and all the other 'fun' things they could think of - with the assistance of the kitchen staff, of course. The kitchen was always open, for there was always someone awake in the Camp and food was as important as air to the vast majority of the kids - no surprise there really.

Meanwhile, Juan and Jory had contacted Daileass and pillows and blankets and many sets of pajamas had been beamed into the room. The two Genesis boys made short work of rearranging the tables and chairs to make a space dead center in the canteen, while the younger kids stripped off their clothes and pulled the pillows and blankets into the space they had made.

"Not getting into the PJs?" Juan asked them curiously.

"We's not allowed to sleep in clothes," a five year old girl answered. "We'd get into trouble and stuff by Mr. Simpson...."

Juan glanced again at Jory and Jory said softly, "Mr. Simpson is a bad man and he won't be coming near you ever again, Lizbeth."

"You's sure?" she asked with a tremble.

"Yes," Jory answered as he went over to the untouched pile of pajamas and selected a pretty pink pair with Minnie Mouse on the chest of the top. "Come over here Lizbeth, and I'll help you get ready."

Juan found himself surrounded by many of the others, suddenly, as they were all asking him to help them choose which pair to wear and then to get dressed. Juan had never had as much fun with clothes before in his life, for the kids and rug rats were hysterically funny as they tried to pick and choose. One boy was in a top only for a good ten minutes, for there was no point in Juan putting a pair of bottoms on him until the kid settled on the top he liked the best.

Within another ten minutes, the 'kitchen-raiders' and the 'nest-builders' had reunited at the nearest table and were snacking on hot chocolate, ice-cream, cookies, a few plates of jelly and peanut butter sandwiches, and a few other variations of the above mixed together.

Koth was in a bright green pair of pajamas with a huge yellow Tweetie-bird on the front and he was giggling at Juan, who had been conned by Lizbeth into a bright purple pair, complete with 'The Power-puff Girls' emblazoned on the front.

In point of fact, Daileass was laughing so badly that Koth was sure the AI would bust a processor or something.

Juan was trying to play offended, but in truth, he was having too much fun. Lizbeth was cuddled into his side and she was feeding him her 'creations', and the smile on her face made it worth it to be dressed as he was.

Jory had not escaped unscathed either, for he was in a 'Pink Ranger' Power Ranger set of PJs, but the kids that had picked it for him were also so pleased at being able to 'help' that he didn't have the heart to refuse them. Good fun is good fun, after all, and he just went with the flow. "Why'd you escape, though?" he asked Koth, who was grinning at them both.

"Cos Lucy picked this for me, didn't you, little imp?" he asked the three-year-old girl on his lap.

She nodded her head as she spooned more ice-cream into her mouth - and all over her clean, or once clean, PJs.

"Did you get a diaper for her?" Trist asked softly as she edged closer to Juan.

Juan nodded, and pointed at Koth, "When Koth got changed he dressed her. He's looked after little babies and toddlers at his home in Wales."

"Where's that?" she asked curiously.

"In the United Kingdom. It's over the sea, a long way away from here," Juan answered as he handed the plate of cookies Trist was pointing at to her.

"Oh, where that nice Queen lives? The lady I saw at the big funeral we went to after lunch?" Trist asked quickly. "Is she really a grandma to everyone like... uh... like... um... what's that boy's name 'gain?"

"Samuel, or Sammy," Juan giggled. "Yes, she is. I haven't met her yet, but Koth raves about her. I think I'm going to like having her as my grandmother too. And so will you."

"Does that mean I'm a princess??" Trist asked excitedly, causing Barny to groan. "Shut up!" she hissed at him. "I am so a princess!"

"And your brother is a prince," Juan said softly yet firmly. He was beginning to see how his brothers saw him when he went off on a rage, now. Seeing these two fight and squabble made him appreciate his own big brothers more and more. He still grinned as he pulled Barny over to cuddle into his sister's side, "You can both ask her, and Koth has said that anyone who asks can get a crown."

The table had been listening and most of the older ones erupted in cheers... then started having the largest discussion on where their royal selves would live, how many dragons they would slay, and how many cookies and sweets they could eat for the rest of their lives.

Half an hour later, they were all in the nest and the lights had been dimmed. Juan, Jory, and Koth were telling a story between them, making it up as they went along. It was with supreme effort, that Juan kept out the worst of the gore his imagination wanted to put in, but he behaved himself. Once the story had come to its satisfying conclusion, they all curled up in a mass heap and tried to sleep.

As Koth was about to drift away, he felt a tiny hand shaking his shoulder. "Mista Koff... Mista Koff? You wake?" he heard in his ear. He turned over and released Juan, who was already fast asleep, and looked at the four year old who'd woken him.

"What's wrong, Ronny?" Koth whispered.

"These 'jamas; they sticking me in my bum. Does I hav'ta wear dem?" he asked, puppy dog eyes on full.

Koth smiled, "Not if you don't want to."

Ronny hesitated, "Can I keep da top on? I feel special... is dat 'kay, Mista Koff?"

"Sure is, sweety," Koth said as he pulled the little boy down and kissed him. He then watched as the kid stripped off his bottoms and threw them out of the nest. A second later, most of the other really young kids, those who did not ever remember wearing PJs to bed before, did the same with a load of giggles. "Okay, little ones. Let's go get some nice dreams, now."

"Love you, Mista Koff!" most of them whispered, "Night night!"

The new Bat'leth had cooled and Korris and Chang stopped singing the Ballad of Kahless once they completed the final verse. Korris raised the blade off its holder and sank to his knees. He drew his hand across one of the points and spread his blood over one half of the great weapon. Chang watched silently as his life-mate turned the blade over, but Korris did not apply his blood to the others half. Instead, the Klingon looked up, "Will you honor me and my blade with your own blood, Qu'raki?"

"I shall," Chang answered respectfully as he sank to his own knees and copied Korris.

The blade was then kissed by both boys and placed back onto its holder and they slammed together in a tight hug. They were exhausted and covered in sweat and soot from the forge. On trembling legs, they moved from the room into Chang's bathroom. Korris, his heart beating fast, gently stripped Chang completely. His eyes ran over Chang's body, which was fully exposed to him for the first time. He could not speak.

Chang, his own heart hammering just as fast, also stripped Korris. Unlike his own skin, Korris had many battle scars marring what would have been smooth flesh, but Chang saw them only as marks of honor. He raised his eyes and smiled at the Klingon before leading him into his shower.

With utmost respect, they washed each other, then dried each other before returning to the bedroom. Sleep was all they could really think of as they flopped onto the bed next to each other and let their still damp bodies dry in the warm room before getting under the covers.

A second after getting into the bed they were joined by a naked ten-year-old who giggled, "I did get a show after all, but fair's fair - I'm naked too!"

Chang smiled and Korris laughed as they pulled the little Time Lord closer and kissed him. "Thank you, Doctor," Chang said formally. "You were right - we did temper each other in the forging of the blade. Thank you for that 'time'."

"You're welcome," the boy smiled as Korris was busy kissing his right cheek over and over. "Now, I think you should sleep - and if your sappy boyfriend will stop kissing me, I'll restart time and let you both do so!"

Korris chuckled as he released the Doctor. "Thank you," was all he could say as the young-seeming Time Lord waved his hand and 'Folded' away.

Chang pulled himself close to Korris and looked into his lover's eyes. "I still feel I have to repay Joel for what he did for us. In helping you, he has helped me also."

"Hugs, cuddles and kisses... and cookies," Korris said again, repeating himself from when they had talked during the Forging.

"But I wish to give him the Vulcan sword I made," Chang said softly. "I just do not want him to think I'm paying him for a good deed. That would offend me if the role was reversed."

Korris thought for a moment. "I too wish to give him a gift from my heart... my father's old Bat'leth. I believe my father would be honored for Joel to look after it and keep it in honor. But... oh! It's his birthday tomorrow!" he spluttered, a huge grin on his face.

"Then we can both give him what we wish, and it shall not be seen as an insult to a good deed done out of love!" Chang exclaimed with joy and relief.

Korris smiled peacefully at his Asian lover, before pulling him closer and kissing him.

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Next Morning:

Chang walked towards the canteen hand in hand with Korris and the smallest of smiles was clearly visible on his calm face. Will gaped as he drew closer to them. "You're happy! You're smiling! Spill it - what's happened?" he asked in shock.

Chang raised an eyebrow, then allowed the smile to grow a little bigger. He pulled his brother over and hugged him between himself and Korris and said, "Korris and I have become life-mates by Klingon tradition - we are married."

Will looked like a poleaxed cow and Korris added, "We will be having a ceremony so all our brothers can rejoice with us."

"WOW! COOL!" Will managed after a long moment, then he hugged the stuffing out of Chang, then Korris.

"I think you cracked a rib," Korris said seriously as he rubbed his side.

"Opps! Sorry," Will blushed, then he bubbled, "Can I tell everyone?"

Chang nodded and watched as his brother zoomed off. Chang then reached into the bag he always carried with him and scanned Korris' ribs. "No breaks, just bruised. I will run a regenerator over your chest once we get to Orlando, unless you wish me to do so now?"

"No, Orlando will be fine," Korris smiled. "I've had worse."

They reached the canteen and entered only to find that those up with the dawn were spread out quietly around what looked like a bedroom explosion in the middle of the place. The kids sitting at the tables around the edge of the 'mess' were grinning happily at each other and giggling quietly.

"What on Earth?" Korris asked rhetorically. He then saw his brother's forehead sticking out from under one of the duvets. "Koth! What are you up to?" he asked loudly, causing the others there to 'shh' him quickly.

Koth popped his head out and blinked around blearily at everyone. "Did we oversleep? What time is it?" he asked with a yawn.

"It is 0530 hours," a fifteen year old girl giggled at him.

"Oh... better get a move on, then," he grinned as he threw the blankets away.

At first, everyone watching said 'awwww' in unison as they beheld the dozen or so little kids and munchkins sleeping peacefully half naked, but then they all burst out laughing at the sight of a purple clad, Powerpuff Girls emblazoned Juan and a bright pink clad, Power Ranger Jory asleep next to Koth.

Jory cracked open an eye, then sat up horrified. "Oh, shit," he sighed.

Juan cracked an eye open and looked around. He looked at his brothers and then those that were sitting in the canteen and in a very calm voice stated, "If I hear ANYTHING about this... people WILL get hurt. Is that understood?" With that, he simply stood up, and with as much dignity as someone dressed in Powerpuff Girls PJs could, he walked out of the room with Lizbeth on his hip, and both their clothes in his other hand.

Koth tried his best not to giggle as he got to his feet, "For the record - and I mean you and Draco too, Dailess! - That little girl with Juan PICKED... for the FIRST TIME IN HER LIFE she CHOSE something... she picked those pajamas for Juan. And the same for these two," he said, pointing at a little boy and girl, one four and one five and obviously little brother and big sister, "did the same for Jory. If I hear anyone tease my boyfriend... well, tease TOO much... then I'll make what Juan does seem like a day at the beach...." He picked up his Mek'leth and held it in his hand, "Clear?"

The assembled group and both AIs all chuckled their agreement and Koth grinned. "It was funny, though," he added as he pulled the blushing Jory up and pinched his cheeks. "You look soooo sweet in pink!"

Jory hugged Koth and muttered in his ear, "Be glad I love my brother, or I'd be putting a boom-box under your bed! And with me... a 'BOOM' Box takes on a whole new meaning."

"Well," Koth giggled, "the earth will move for us, then!"

Those watching smiled before moving over and helping the now awake little kids get up and get dressed. The entire group of children were almost hyper as they were telling these older teens all about the 'adventure' they had had that night with Jory, Juan, and Koth. By the time Juan had returned with Lizbeth, he was met by smiling faces, and one of the older teens came close to him. "Sorry if this is out of turn, sir, but: well done. I lost my little brother and sister years ago, and what you did for these..." said the teenage girl, and tears were in her eyes.

Juan smiled up at her and she smiled as well. He let her hug him and the little girl he was carrying briefly before his stomach rumbled. The teen chuckled at him and said, "I'll get you your breakfast - the little one's as well."

"Thanks," Juan grinned before making his way over to where Koth and Jory were seated with all the kids they had spent the night with. Korris and Chang joined them and they began to eat.

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"Ready to go?" Korris said as they left the Canteen thirty minutes later.

Juan and Koth nodded, then looked over at Chang. "What're you carrying?" Juan asked his elder brother.

"The Vulcan sword I crafted. It is for Joel, for his birthday and as a thank you for all he did for Korris and me," he answered softly.

Koth glanced between his brother and the Asian boy, then noticed Korris' hand. He reached and turned over Chang's right hand as well, and saw the final echoes of the cut that had been there. "Wow! Congratulations!" he bubbled happily.

"Thank you," Chang smiled as he gave Koth a one-armed hug.

"What am I missing?" Juan asked curiously.

Koth pulled him in for a strong hug and said, "Kor and Chang are married! I never thought you'd ever find someone, Kor," he bubbled out as he looked up into his brother's face.

"All thanks to Joel - he took the poison away," Korris smiled. "It allowed me to let Chang help me. It's why I'm giving Joel our father's old Bat'leth."

Koth looked at the two blades on his brother's back. "Where did you get the new... you made one??"

"Chang had the metal. He forged it with me," the older Klingon answered, his eyes locking with Chang's and shining with gratitude.

Juan was thinking hard during all of this. "If Joel's the reason my big brother is happy, then I want to get him something too. Can I give him one of my guns?" he asked Koth hopefully.

Koth pulled a face. "I can't see Joel using a gun. Sorry, Juan, but he took a lot, Xain said, to hold that sword yesterday. I'm sure a gun would freak him out. A blade he's okay with."

Juan reached up with both hands and pulled two long daggers from their holsters at his shoulders.

"These, then? I really like these, so it's from the heart. He helped you too, didn't he? You did start tellin' me, but..."

"I'll tell you everything later. Couldn't last night 'cos of the little ones," Koth said as he kissed Juan's cheek, making the boy blush. "Yes, I think those daggers would be great for Joel. I'm giving him my father's old Mek'leth blades. They're already in the Clan Compound, so I'll get them after."

"I am sorry to say this, but I have to make rounds this morning before we can go to Orlando. If you will all excuse me, I will meet you all in the main hanger bay in about forty-five minutes?"

When he got a nod from the other three boys, he leaned in and laid a heck of a kiss on Korris and walked off. Juan could not help but think he had a bit more bounce in his step. 'You know, maybe this love thing might be worth it,' he thought to himself as he looked at Koth.

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Dan was roused from his memories by the entry of four people all wearing scrubs, covered by lab coats. The first two were men, one woman, and a kid who was about thirteen. "Good morning, Daniel," the boy said, "my name is Chang. The three doctors with me are Andrew, Gordan, and Debra. They will be covering for me for the afternoon. Would it be acceptable to you if I filled them in on your condition?"

"Um, sure," Dan said, wondering why this kid was acting like a doctor.

"Thank you." Chang said, then turned to the other doctors. "Daniel..." Chang was interrupted by the boy in the bed.

"It's Dan, just Dan... please."

"As you wish. Dan was brought to us last night as a class three intervention. He is fourteen years old, and presented with obvious signs of malnutrition, as well as non-forced sexual activity with an adult male. We have tested him for sexually transmitted diseases and all of them have come back negative. Since his admittance, he has been on a constant IV therapy to help replenish both his energy and his electrolyte counts..." By this point Dan stopped really being able to understand what was being said, as it turned into nothing more than techno-babble as far as he was concerned. He was finally brought back into the conversion a few minutes later when Chang asked him if he was hungry.

'Do people in Hell want ice water?' ran through Dan's mind, as he realized, first, that he was hungry – just healthily hungry – not the cramping pangs of the last few days, and second, that he had to pee – bad. "Um, yeah!" he said. "But I really gotta ...." He tried to gesture with his left arm, and realized it was immobilized by an IV line.

"Of course... my apologies. You have been on fluid therapy since you have been brought in. It is only natural that you must urinate... and I am sure the need is rather great," Chang said with a small smile, which of course was like a huge grin from anyone else. "Gordan, if you would, please." The younger of the two male doctors nodded, stepped forward, and Chang pulled the curtain.

Once the curtain was pulled, Gordan deftly reached for an odd device looking like a clear plastic bottle attached to a funnel by a tube, flipped up Dan's hospital gown, and held the funnel in place. "Let 'er rip," he said; "You're aimed directly into the funnel." Dan gladly followed instructions; Gordan then called out "375 ml" and then flipped Dan's gown back down and opened the curtain.

Debra walked up and took Dan's hand, speaking softly she said, "I've ordered a meal for you. It's going to be very light – a little cereal with milk, toast, orange juice, and Jello. You can have more whenever you want; just tell the nurse on duty. We're not trying to short you on food. But you need to eat small amounts frequently for a couple of days, while your digestive system gets back up to speed. Just tell someone when you're hungry again, and you can have something more." Dan nodded; right now he didn't really care, he just wanted to eat.

"There's an abuse case next door, boy whose uncle beat him," Chang said, turning towards the doctors. "I would like you three to do a thorough physical exam of the boy and see if you can find anything I missed. Do not worry, I do not believe he will regain consciousness within the next few days. I wish to speak with Dan for a few moments alone."

"Certainly, Doctor Casey," Gordan said, and they filed out.

"You're a doctor?" Dan asked once they were alone.

"I am, I am also second in command of medical affairs here at Camp Bam Bam. The commander is my mother, Dr. Janet Hayes," Chang answered him. "However, I have something pressing that I wish to speak with you about. Bryan tells me you encountered Pablo. Would you like to talk about it?"

'Sure thing, tell him about wanting to kill myself,' Dan thought. Aloud he said, "Well, um...."

"Please do not feel as if that was an order," Chang said as he sat down on the side of the bed. "Your expressions tell me that you do not wish to speak about this right now. The reason I am asking is because I am aware of what it means when Pablo intervenes. It means it was a life or death situation."

Chang sat there for a few moments, until it was clear that Dan was not yet ready to talk. Of course, Chang could have simply looked into the boy's mind, but he would not do that unless he had reason to think the boy might hurt himself. He smiled softly as he stood up and spoke again, his soft voice calming Dan some.

"You do not need to talk to me, or to anyone else about what you have gone through. That is yours and yours alone. However, I would suggest that you not hide the truth of what you went through from yourself."

Chang paused and let what he already said sink in. "You will find that many people here have their own stories to tell. Many of them have been abused in one form or another. Some worse than others, but everyone shares one common thread. We are survivors." Chang purposefully emphasized the word 'we,' and was pleased to see that Dan did not miss it.

"If you are interested in sharing with me, I would be honored, but you are under no obligation to share your secrets with anyone... anyone but yourself, that is. There is no wisdom in running from your past, trust me; I had done that for a few years and it does not do any good. I have found you can not escape yourself." Chang added the last line with a smile, pleased that Dan seemed to at least be thinking about what he was saying.

"One other thing that you may wish to keep in mind. Camp Bam Bam is not your typical children's home, or anything of the sort. The adults here do not control what happens here. In this place, the adults are here simply to help guide us, but we make the decisions. If you wish, we run this place, and the adults answer to us. Many of the children who have been abused find comfort from that fact. Perhaps it will bring some solace to your soul."

Dan was saved from having to make any responses, as a harried looking nurse hurried in with his food tray. As soon as the food was set on the table and then positioned so Dan could reach it easily, Chang spoke to the nurse. "Please do not worry, I am currently working on getting some help with the more menial tasks. I am sure you would like to be able to take a break from having to do an orderly's work."

The nurse smiled tiredly, but nodded. "It would be nice, but we're managing."

Chang nodded and then let her know that Dan was on portion control, but could eat a meal whenever he was hungry for one.

"Please make sure he is looked after, as he is on bed rest until this evening at the earliest." Turning to look at Dan, he continued. "If you feel up to it, perhaps this evening we can get you up and walking around a bit. I have to leave now, but I will be back later on to check on you. Please remember what I said, you are now a member of our family, and we are all here to help."

Chang was rewarded with a small smile and a nod from Dan as he tore into his food.

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An hour later, Adam and Logan walked into the now normal looking canteen.

"I'll get the food, love," Logan whispered to Adam.

Adam nodded and just stood there, watching his friends, fellow soldiers, and brothers chat and eat happily. The pain of yesterday, of the past few days, was slowly being healed by their closeness to one another, yet he sighed.

Logan quickly selected what he wanted and what he thought Adam might like, and turned around. As he made his way back, he stopped dead as he watched Adam pause in place. It was as if someone had paused a DVD film. Then he flickered and was facing another direction.

"What the..." Logan breathed as he got to Adam. "What happened?"

"Who' happened," Adam laughed, and Logan gasped, for there was a peace and an understanding in his lover's eyes that had not been there since they had woken up.

"What do you mean?"

"You know that 'Doctor Who' show?" Adam giggled, as he sat down. "Oh, are you in for a surprise later today!"

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"Hey guys, thanks for coming," Jory said as he looked around at what was left of the strike team Demolition personnel. There was only five of them that survived the battle in Montana... four if you counted the fact that Kelly Carlson had been stationed in Orlando. Of course, there were only enough survivors to make four full teams anyways, so it worked out... in a way. Jory felt himself starting to choke up again as he thought about it. Only enough people survived to make four teams, when there had been eleven full teams.

He fought all his emotions back; he needed to be strong for these people. He could break down later. "As you all know, we've had to make some major adjustments to team assignments." They all nodded, and more than one had tears forming in their own eyes over it. This was not something that was going to heal right away. Jory felt he needed to do something to help them all out and wished, not for the first time, that he could put words together like Adam or Logan can.

"Look guys, I know it still hurts... Hell, it's gonna hurt for a long damned time, but we gotta keep going. What do you think everyone that died would think if we dropped the ball now? We got us a chance to help a lot of kids, and we gotta do it." He looked at the four there and they were nodding; he knew it would take more than what he just said, but that's the best he could do right now.

"Okay, so here's what we got." He handed out a sheet of paper to each. "This here is the new teams you guys are being assigned to. If there's any issues, let me know and we'll see what we can do."

Each of them looked over their papers and nodded; the most relieved-looking one was Keith Randolph. Jory knew that he wouldn't want to be separated from his brothers, and since none of the Tiny Terrors had died, there was no reason to split that team up. Of course, with Sean Patrick, their commander, taking the new assignment that Adam offered him, Jeremy Rose was placed in command. That made it so that Doug Crawford, at age twelve, was the oldest member of the team. Of course, Jory knew that age wasn't always a factor in how good someone was, or how well they could do.

He took a moment to look over his own sheet, and once again felt a pang of sadness at how many names were not there. Jory did have one thing to smile about though. It was that morning that the last of the Genesis kids had picked a last name. When they first got there, most of them didn't even have a first name, just a designation. Because of Adam's insistence, they all picked names for themselves. Then when Janet and Joe offered to adopt everyone, they then had to pick which last name they wanted. They finally all did.

**Strike Team Alpha:**

Commander: First Lt. Donnie Williams  
First Officer: Second Lt. Egan Hayes  
Intel Officer: Sgt. Danny Smith  
Med. Officer: Sgt. Katie Werner  
Demo. Officer: Corp. Mike Bowen  
Heavy Weapons: Corp. Damian Casey

**Strike Team Bravo:**

Commander: First Lt. Emily Larson  
First Officer: Second Lt. Rich Johnson  
Intel Officer: Sgt. Braxton Hayes  
Med. Officer: Sgt. Charlie Adams  
Demo. Officer: Corp. Ethan Casey  
Heavy Weapons: Corp. Brayden Casey

**Strike Team Charlie:**

Commander: First Lt. Austin Casey  
First Officer: Second Lt. Bryan Maxson  
Intel Officer: Sgt. Clare Hayes  
Med. Officer: Sgt. Becky Smith  
Demo. Officer: Corp. Malinda Casey  
Heavy Weapons: Corp. Evan Hayes

**Strike Team Foxtrot:**

Commander: First Lt. Jeremy Rose  
First Officer: Second Lt. Tyler Morse  
Intel Officer: Sgt. Kevin Randolph  
Med. Officer: Sgt. Doug Crawford  
Demo. Officer: Corp. Keith Randolph  
Heavy Weapons: Corp. Karl Randolph

Jory was watching to make sure no one had any problems with what they were assigned to, and was glad to see everyone was smiling and nodding as they read the team assignments. Keith did tear up when he saw that they broke with normal military tradition and kept the Tiny Terrors' original call sign... Foxtrot.

As Jory was watching his Demo. crew review their team assignments, movement out of the corner of his eye caught his attention. He turned, followed immediately by the others (he noted with satisfaction) to see someone beaming in -- someone not in uniform, carrying nothing, a teenager with dark, apparently Italian good looks. Ronnie, crossing the floor, intercepted him, and pointed over at him and his group.

The boy walked over to them, stepped up to Mike Bowen and asked, "Are you Capt. Jory Casey? Jonas told me to report to you."

He looked a little confused when everyone started to laugh. Finally Mike was able to get out; "Uhhh... no. That's Captain Casey right there." He pointed to Jory who was just grinning.

"Howdy," Jory said with a mile-wide smile.

The new guy's eyes widened as he looked down at Jory, who was roughly a foot shorter than him. "Um -- they told me to report to you when I got here," he said.

"Yup... Adam said you'd be coming. Basically I'm supposed to make sure you keep yourself out of trouble while you're here. First, why don't I introduce you around? This here is the Demolitions team within the Unit, me being their commanding officer." Jory got a huge grin on his face as he delivered his next line. "If it's a big boom, we did it." Which got a laugh out of everyone there.

Once the laughter died down, Jory went around and introduced everyone. "Okay, first we got Mike Bowen, Ethan Casey, Malinda Casey, and Keith Randolph. Guys, this here is Tony DiPuglia, he's here to help out over the next week or so."

Tony, looking a little shy now, greeted each of the boys with a smile and a wave, then a lingering look at Malinda. From the point of view of a straight guy, she probably deserved it: buxom with a relatively slender waist, sandy-blond hair and starry black eyes, and a warm, appreciative smile that was checking him out at the same time.

Jory thought fast. 'Hmm... either put an end to this quick, or use it for all it's worth.' Deciding, he asked, "Malinda, would you mind showing Tony around since we're done with the briefing?"

Malinda simply smiled and then nodded. 'This should be good' Jory thought to himself. "Okay guys, check over your gear and make sure it's in order. If you got any issues, either check with me or your strike team commander." Jory looked at each one, and when he got a nod from them he dismissed them.

After they all saluted, and he saluted back, Jory shot one other thing to Malinda. "When you're done, can you bring him to the munitions bay? I'll be in there going over things, and then I can give him his assignment."

"Sure thing, boss man," she shot back grinning, "but with this kinda stud, it might be a bit." She ran her hand over Tony's chest, and grinned as Jory just made a gagging noise and turned away. Laughing, he headed to the back bay. He couldn't help but laugh as he saw that across the room, the red-haired, newly promoted 2nd Lt. Bryan Maxson was placing a new pin bearing a devil's-head on a map studded with them, labeled "Pablito Sightings."

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Adam was lost in thought as he sat at his desk off the main control room. He still wasn't sure what to make about everything that had happened in the last 24 hours, but he knew he had to keep working on figuring it out. He was startled out of his own thoughts by a knock on the door and Logan walking in. Adam couldn't help but smile. No matter how bad things were, just seeing Logan made him feel better.

"Hey there, love," Adam said as he got up and walked over to embrace his boyfriend. After a kiss, Logan motioned for him to sit and Adam did as he was told.

"So, what's got you looking all perplexed this morning?" Logan asked as he sat down.

"Well, I just got a visit from our construction crew," Adam smiled a bit at the jest.

Logan quirked his eyebrows as he did not understand what Adam was talking about.

"Well, it seems some people can't leave well enough alone and felt we needed some more space...."

He was cut off when Logan laughed. "You mean Levi has added another level or three?"

"Not exactly." Adam spun the monitor around and it showed an almost exact replica of the base they were in now - except everything was backwards. Not really sure what to make of it, Logan looked to Adam with a questioning expression. After laughing a bit, Adam was able to get out, "The entrance is on the other side of the box canyon... another place the same size as this one, but that one is more geared towards military uses. It's got a larger helicopter bay, crew quarters on the main deck for the crews on duty, bolt holes all over the place for weapon caches, and of course, my favorite... a maze of secret tunnels. It holds slightly fewer people, only about four thousand... but...."

"But it will still help out here... how the hell do they do these things?" Logan asked in awe.

"I don't know, but I don't think I want to either."

"It's 'cause we're that darned good," Levi said as he popped in a few inches about Logan's lap and fell into him with an "UMPH!" He threw his arms around Logan and hugged him, then popped over to Adam and hugged him before he disappeared in a shower of giggles.

Both Adam and Logan laughed as the little imp disappeared, but before either could say anything, a knock came on the door, then Alvin stuck his head in. "Adam, we have some interesting visitors here who would like to meet you," Alvin said with a bit of a grin.

"Oh, this sounds interesting. What's up with them?" He asked sitting back in his chair.

"Well, I wouldn't want to ruin the surprise. How about I just show them in?" Alvin laughed as he opened the door wider. "Okay guys... come on in."

Through the door walked a man in his late twenties and three boys, a tall one in his early teens and two younger; looking to be about 8 and 11 respectively. The oldest and youngest boys had rich dark brown hair, the middle one sandy brown. "Thanks Alvin; hi Adam and Logan." the youngest one said cheekily.

"Hey guys," Adam said and motioned for them all to sit. "Welcome to Camp Bam Bam."

"Can I see your hair?" the middle one asked shyly.

Adam cocked his head to the side, not really knowing what the boy was talking about, but then it hit him. Not many people saw a kid with hair that went down to the middle of their back. Adam stood up and turned around so they could see his hair, pulled back in a pony tail, and now almost reaching his butt. Logan loved Adam's hair, and would not let him cut it.

"Kewl," the boy said. "Thanks."

"Maybe you better explain about why you were interested in his hair, Galen," the man said.

"Yes, please," Adam said as he sat back down.

"Ummm... you know about Joel?" Galen asked.

"What about him?" Adam asked.

"That he was in another universe and got brought here," the oldest boy said.

"Yeah."

"Well, we used to read stories on the Internet there -- stuff about these kids that got turned into a Vulcan clan and this boy who had been given enhanced abilities by a secret military establishment and escaped and rescued his brothers to form a Unit...." The oldest boy explained.

"And they had scenes of you and Logan necking and stuff!" The little boy added cheekily with a big grin.

"Wait a minute." Adam said, looking at Logan, who was blushing at the last comment, then back at their guests. "You mean to tell me that someone is WRITING about us in another universe?!?"

"There's some sick twisted bastard that has been writing about all of this?!?" Logan added, also shocked.

"Yep," the little boy grinned.

"This place looks a lot bigger than what was described in the story, though," the boy who had been addressed as Galen added thoughtfully.

"It is a bit bigger, I guess." Adam said distracted. "Now let's get back to this writer in another universe... this really bothers me. What do you know about this freak?"

"Well, Roland only had twelve chapters of the Unit up when we left -- we didn't know it was part of the Clan stuff, just that Logan's mom helped you escape Adam, and then you took refuge at Joe's grandfather's old mine that he'd converted to a fallout shelter," Kurt explained calmly.

"I wanna meet Juan!" the littlest boy added.

Adam, Logan, and Alvin just stared at the young boy trying to figure out if he was insane. Finally Adam shook his head. "So this Roland asshole is writing all about us. Maybe I should see if I can send Juan out to meet him."

"I'm not sure how you could work that," Kurt said pensively. "One minute we were waking up to a thunderstorm in our universe's Orlando, the next a shuttle craft was flying over and we were here in the CSU."

"CSU?" Alvin asked, confused.

"Oh, sorry," Galen interjected. "It's short for the Clan Short Universe among fans of the stories."

Adam threw up his hands in disgust. "FANS OF THE STORIES... what kind of sick perverted people actually read this shit?!?!" After a second, he actually blushed as he looked at the newcomers. "Ohh... sorry... I didn't really.. uhhh.. mean that."

"Hey, we're perfectly normal perverted teenagers, just like the rest of you," the oldest boy grinned. "Actually, reading about what you and the Clan went through and how you got out of it has helped a lot of kids realize that they don't have to feel alone, or like they're weird, or have to stay victims."

"Yes, and some adults too," Kurt added.

Logan was the first one to be able to respond. "You mean that reading all about us and the other Clan guys is helping kids in your universe deal with the shit we are dealing with?"

"Exactly," Galen said. "My life was an awful lot like Deacon's -- seeing what Multimapper wrote about him gave me hope when Mother was leaving me home alone all the time."

"Okay," Adam said with a small grin, "what I want to know is who Juan is helping out?"

"Um...aah," the oldest boy said. The littlest one piped up, "Any of us who wish we could just take a gun and shoot the bad guys that like to hurt people just for the sake of hurting, that's who!"

The oldest one looked at his little brother. "Marky, I never realized that's how you felt!" he said with a shocked expression.

"Just 'cause I'm a kid, doesn't mean I can't hurt and can't feel sympathy for other people that are hurting," Marky said hotly.

The man spoke up. "I'm Kurt Farnsworth and these three were my sister's sons; my nephews, until we got here. But they turned to me because they didn't have any caring in their lives -- their mothers and Scotty and Marky's father were not exactly examples of good parenting skills."

"You can say that again!" Scott said, as the other two made "oh, yeah!" gestures of agreement.

Logan saw Adam's eyes go distant and knew he was using his abilities for some reason, so he took up the conversation. "So then, I take it you guys are stuck here and the Clan made you members?"

"That's true," Kurt said. "Teri and Cory made me acting father to the boys; I'll be adopting them under Florida law since they have no other living relatives -- at least in \*this\* universe." He grinned. "And the boys joined the Clan -- filling one of their wildest dreams!"

"Yet your dreams go unfulfilled." Adam spoke in a rather flat emotionless voice, much like the one Chang or one of the Vulcans might use.

"Um, yeah," Kurt said with a hollow-eyed look. "I worked with developmentally disabled kids back in my home universe; I don't have any credentials here and I don't have any idea what will happen with me."

"You managed that facility for a while when they fired the incompetent staff, right?" Adam said challengingly.

"Yeah -- how did you know that?" Kurt said with a shocked expression.

"If you could do anything, now, what would you want to be?" Adam said, his eyes piercing Kurt's soul.

Kurt was saved from having to put words to an answer to that question when Daileass said, in a fruity mock-British butler voice, "Your guest is here, sah!" -- then spoiled the effect by giggling.

Adam couldn't help but giggle, fully ruining the mood. "That's SIRE to you, and send him in." He spoke looking up to the ceiling, then looked back to Kurt. "You know, I think we will be able to make a few interesting things happen now." He smiled just as the door opened, and a distinguished older gentleman came walking in flanked by two of the G-Cats, Thor and Tyr, both wearing their Class A uniforms, complete with weapons.

Adam and Logan both stood up and Adam came around the desk with his hand extended. "Mr. Grayson... Thank you very much for stopping by."

"Good to see you again, Adam, Logan. Pleased to meet you young gentlemen." Grayson smiled at Adam as if they shared a secret.

"Please, have a seat, would you like anything to drink?" Adam asked while directing the older man to his seat behind the desk.

"No thank you, those fine young gentlemen that escorted me in made sure I had everything I needed," he said as he sat down in Adam's chair. Adam then went around and made introductions of everyone that was there.

Once he was done with that, Adam took the seat next to Logan and took his hand. "I do believe that I have the perfect solution to what you and I discussed earlier. However, before we get into that, there is an unanswered question that I need to hear the answer to." Adam turned and looked at Kurt again. "Mr. Farnsworth, if you could do anything now, what would you want to be?"

"Oh god," Kurt said. "I love working with kids, but there's never any funding for that. And I've got these three to support now too, so I need to take that into account."

Adam smirked while Mr. Grayson leaned forward in his chair, folding his hands on top of the desk. "So, your wish would be to work with children?" He asked while making eye contact with Kurt.

"Yessir," Kurt answered, not sure where this was going. "But I don't have credentials here and I don't know how to explain to you what the story behind that is."

Richard smiled. "Oh, I'm quite well aware of your arrival in this universe. You might say that my sister and I were the first Clan rescues, in a way." He grinned.

"Besides..." Adam said while smiling, "you have all the credentials I need. You see, when you started to explain what happened to you and your boys, I did a mental scan of your memories... don't worry, I did not get into the personal stuff; I simply wanted to know how you really felt about kids and that you had a true desire to help children; not use them for your own personal wants. Since you came through my evaluation with flying colors, and I can guarantee you there is only one person I know of that has higher standards, that being Ambassador Sarek, I think we can do something to help you out. At the same time, you could be helping us out of a bind."

Kurt's expression was a mixture of hope, startlement, and curiosity. Grayson chuckled, turned to Adam, and said, "Title's being transferred as we speak, and the funding is in place. And I approve wholeheartedly of your choice."

Adam grinned, "Well that makes things much easier also, as far as the budget goes, The Unit is going to increase by roughly five times what you put in because a few other things have come up that you're not aware of. However, before Mr. Farnsworth goes into convulsions trying to figure out what we are talking about, why don't you fill him in on your side of things and then I will explain what has been added."

"That sounds wise," Grayson agreed. "Mr. Farnsworth, two years ago Wayne Industries took title to about a dozen surplus military bases, including one outside Syracuse, New York. It is located on the north side of the local airport, and we took it for its investment potential; aside from one outlying portion we made into a warehouse complex. The remainder: barracks, recreation facilities, and so on, have been mothballed for two years."

Kurt was totally lost by this point, so Adam took over. "Mr. Grayson, perhaps I should add a little back story to all of this, so that it would be more understandable." After getting a nod from the older man, Adam sat back in his chair and spoke from his heart.

"I am sure you are all aware of what happened last Saturday in Montana." After getting nods from the new guys there, he continued. "Due to a few things that were said shortly after the attack was over with, Clan Short made it very well known to all people in the world that we would not allow the abuse of children to be tolerated. We also made it clearly known that if the children were in need of help, all they had to do was call. I realized pretty quickly what was about to happen, and we have barely been able to keep up with demand, but basically, we ended up becoming the first and best hope some children have ever had."

He took a break to find a piece of paper on his desk. "Monday morning, the entire Unit fully mobilized to handle the incoming tidal wave of calls for help, and with the help of the rest of the Clans, a good

number of states and their agencies, and concerned citizens like Mr. Grayson, we have been able to keep up with something that was a lot bigger than even I thought it would be."

Handing the paper to Kurt, he continued while the man read it. "That is a report from this morning detailing the number of calls we have received, as well as the number of children that have had to find new housing, most of which are here. However, we're just about full."

"Wait a minute..." Kurt said in shock. "You're telling me that in less than four days you've received over seventeen THOUSAND calls for help?!?!? And... And you have over five and a half THOUSAND kids here?!?!?"

"That's exactly what I am telling you. This is where you and Mr. Grayson come in. See, he has the land and the buildings to house over three thousand children, but no one to run it. You want to work with kids. Now, understand you would be in charge over a staff that numbers well over five hundred, as well as the three thousand children. Also, as far as funding goes... well, Mr. Grayson has generously given a start up fund of twenty million dollars...."

Adam couldn't get anything else out as he watched Kurt's eyes roll up to the back of his head and he started to collapse. Thankfully there were four augmented children in the room, and between Adam, Alvin, Thor and Tyr, Kurt never hit the ground.

"And you guys," Alvin said, grinning at the three boys who had come with Kurt, "will be the Clan presence supervising that everything is done right." Scott and Galen had matching looks of wide-eyed open-mouthed shock at hearing that.

Logan came over and offered Adam the smelling salts he had just broken open and Adam waved it under Kurt's nose. A few seconds later, Kurt was being helped to sit in his seat and everyone else was grinning. "I take it that you need some time to figure this out?" Adam said with a cheeky grin.

Marky giggled. "I haven't seen Unk that shocked since he grabbed the electric fence!"

Logan laughed. "Are you going to tell him the rest of it, Adam?"

"There's more?!?!?" Kurt groaned.

"Well yeah. See, about thirty minutes ago I got a call from Admiral Morrow of Starfleet Command. He informed me that over the last three days they have had the Starfleet corps of engineers going through and retrofitting twenty-three sites scattered around the US and Canada that are being turned over to the Clan as we speak. Between those, the two we have right now, and the one Mr. Grayson has given us;, they can hold roughly forty-six thousand people. Those bases, currently being named Unit Base Alpha through Zeta, will all fall under the leadership of the Unit's "Director of Satellite Bases."

Adam took a moment to let all of that sink in, then looked Kurt right in the eyes. "The question I have for you is this... do you want to run one area, or do you want to oversee the operations of all of them?"

Kurt sat down abruptly.

## Author's Notes

Well guys... thats Chapter 6. I wonder how quick they're going to fill these new bases up.

SO what does everyone think about Chang's story, and Korris' for that matter? We also get to learn a little bit more about the mysterious Master Takamora. Isn't that interesting?

Please feel free to send me notes, or better yet, post them on the board.

Don't Juan and Jory look so swwwwweeeettttttt in Pink. Please don't tell him that I said that....

## Chapter 07

"So you think I did the right thing?" Adam asked, getting serious. "I mean assigning four of the cats to act as Joel's personal guard is not a problem, especially since it came out exactly WHO he is. But... Well...I don't know." It was shortly after the emergency meeting that had been called Thursday morning. The meeting which saw the end of Clan Short as they knew it. The meeting that Joel's parentage came to light. And now they had a lot more to deal with.

"Well, none of the cats had a problem... as a matter of fact, they seemed rather happy."

"Yeah, I know, I'm just wondering if they will be okay being split up like this." Adam said as he stood there thinking about what this would mean for his friends and brothers.

"Well, Vish and KT seem to be doing okay with Mike. I know Khan keeps in contact with them all the time, so they aren't really split up. Plus, they've been trained to deal with any situation... so I'm sure they can handle it."

"Yeah, you're right. Oh cool... There's Sammy." Adam said while waving his young friend over.

"Hey, guys... what did you think of all the new stuff going on?" Sammy asked with a grin as he hugged the boys.

"Well... let's just say things got a bit more interesting," Adam said with a grin. He really liked the younger boy.

"Oh yeah. Things are always interesting around here. Even more so since we showed up!" Sammy chuckled. "Anyways, Jace says you guys need the basics now that you're N-Gen. I figured I'd help out."

Adam grinned while looking at Chang. "I don't know... what do you think, Chang. I don't know if I really want him running around in my head."

"You know, you might be right there. That might be dangerous... For him," Chang said with a small smile, which for him was like rolling on the floor laughing.

"HEY!" Sammy said with indignation. "If you don't want me to do it... I'm sure Pablo can come and help."

"NO! That's okay... I'm sure you'll be fine." Adam said quickly, dreading the thought of Pablo around and the kind of mischief HE caused. "Not to mention having him near my mind... no, thank you."

Sammy just laughed as he motioned them over to a couple of seats. "Okay, let's make this quick. I'm just going to dump the stuff into your minds, then we can talk about it. Since it's happening in the mind, though, it'll go a lot quicker. You guys ready?"

It only took Sammy about five minutes in real time to do what needed to be done, but to all three boys, they were in their minds, talking about how their minds now worked, for over thirty minutes.

"Wow!" Adam said looking a little overwhelmed. "I never thought it could be like this."

"You've got a really strong mind, Adam... but then I guess you would have to." Sammy said as he once again pulled Adam into a hug.

"Yeah.. I need to... to deal with everything that's going on." As if on cue, they walked into the dining room where all his brothers were, including Jimmy and Kent. Adam was starting to wonder if things back in the Unit Complex might not be more sane than they were here. Just after they all got there, and sat down, Cory showed up... purple wings and all.

"DYLAN!!!! YOU ARE SOOOOO DEAD!!!!"

Cory was not amused. Everyone else was, however. Even Sammy had fallen off his chair and was rolling on the floor laughing at the purple winged fourteen year old.

"You know what?" Sean said as he wiped the tears of mirth from his eyes, "I think I love you even more now, hon!"

"He is certainly adorable this way," Sammy had to add, while still laughing hysterically.

Cory rolled his eyes. "Dylan, if I get my hands on you, I'm gonna seriously test Miah's theory about the longevity of a Mikyvis! Just wait, you guys, I'm *sure* he'll get you too!"

"Nah - you look best in 'em, Cor," Sammy giggled.

"Uh..." came a voice from the door. Everyone looked over, at the middle aged stranger that was standing in the doorway from Main CIC. Adam Casey stood slowly, his hand on his holstered gun, but Teri looked at him and smiled. Adam nodded seriously and sat again.

The man was looking at Cory's back, his face was a mask of complete bemusement. "I didn't know there were purple-winged Lo'Garn... ah, anyway, which of you fine lads is Cory Short?"

Before anyone could answer, one of the wings on Cory's back started waving madly.

This, of course, made the room burst out laughing yet again.

"Oh!" the man said, beginning to laugh himself. "So, you're not a weird Queen-Lo'Garn... okay! You're Cory?"

"I thought Tyler was the only queen besides Granma Lizzie here," Sammy giggled, and Tyler slapped him. "Hey! Just kiddin', Ty!"

"Yes, would you be interested in a Mikyvis....cheap?" Cory replied without paying attention to who he was talking to. "DYLAN! Just wait until I catch your scrawny butt!!!"

The man answered through his chuckles as he walked up to stand nearer to Cory, "Don't know what 'Mikyvis' are, but if they are anything like my grandson, I'll take a dozen. Anyway, there is something happening in the room with us, and I think we're about to need my grandson's big brother, who is also Kevin's Family Patriarch."

"If anyone finds that purple-haired pain in the butt, strangle him while you're holding him for me," Cory yelled as he turned to face his visitor. "Oh SHIT; you're *Admiral Trip Tucker*" he yelled, his eyes wide in shock.

"At your service - and please, either just Trip or uncle or something. I worked for a living," Trip laughed.

"Who?" Logan asked curiously.

Trip laughed, "Bit before your time, my boy. I AM over 80 years old, after all."

Cory was in full hero worship mode and stammered, "Logan, Trip Tucker was the first human Chief Engineer of the first human Starship! The NX-01 Enterprise!"

"Fantastic ship," Trip said softly, his eyes going distant. He then smiled again, "Can I kidnap you for a while, my boy? We really do need you, unless I'm off in my guess."

"Sure, sir," Cory smiled, his wings completely forgotten. "No pro... wait! You're JOEL'S grandfather???"

Trip laughed again as he guided the stunned teen from the room, asking as he went, "And where would we find Allen Thompson? Kitchen?"

As they left through one door, Jason entered through the other with the others. Admiral Morrow and the new Lieutenant, Gary, sat near to Teri while Jason pulled the giggling Dylan out from behind him. "Is it safe for this targeted kid to come out now?" Jason giggled.

Sean giggled, "As long as Cory's in hero worship mode, I think he's temporarily safe."

Dylan sniggered and went to sit near to the Doctor, while Oliver and Jessica climbed up onto Gary's lap quickly. Nathan and Jason found a place next to Sammy, and he looked over at the two kids on the other man's lap, then back at Jason and Nathan. He saw that their eyes were red, yet there were peaceful smiles on their faces.

Sammy let his love and concern go out and wrap around them both like a blanket, and ask without asking if the other boy was okay.

They both nodded, smiled, and nodded and Jason said, "Yeah, I'm okay now SamSam. That's Ollie and Jess' real Dad. It's okay, though," he added quickly as Sammy's face paled, "Gary is coming over to a new post with us in Wales, so we're all their Dads."

"I'm so glad Jace, for all of you," he said, looking first at Jason and then Nathan before turning to the rug rats on what was apparently their father's lap.

Nathan added, "It was hard at first, though - but Admiral Morrow must have guessed or something. He came to the rescue."

Sammy was puzzled at that. "I didn't feel anything," he murmured.

"No," Victoria said from over next to Jory, "I was blocking. I had to have Riti support me to stop the shitty feelings hurting everyone in the place. There's just too many strong Empaths here for me to block alone. I didn't think it was a good idea to spoil Jude and Joel's big day with that stuff."

Bryce nodded his head, "You got most of it, I caught the rest. If I hadn't, poor Riti woulda lost it."

"Diolch," Riti murmured from Jory's other side, showing off his new mastery of languages.

Jory, his face a picture at being seated between a naked bird boy and his equally naked girlfriend, managed a weak, "Huh?", not being able to understand what the 'bird boy' had just said.

"Means 'thank you'," Victoria sniggered quietly as she saw Jory try and look anywhere but at her.

"Yeah, that was a good idea Vic. I probably would have freaked if I had felt Jason when he learned about it and the others sure didn't need to feel that type of thing," Sammy said thinking it out. He then added, "Thanks too, Bryce: Vicky's right; it would have hurt a lot of the kids here."

"Why're you naked?" Jory asked, staring at the cheese sandwich and doing his best to not look at either Riti or Victoria.

"Me, 'cos I'm from a world where my race don't wear much, if anything," Riti said as he started on some peanuts in the bowl before him. "Vic, 'cos our little boy logically assumed that since Dad was 'nakie', then Mommy had to be as well...."

"S'right!" crowed out the equally naked Asher as he was floating over the table towards his parents and Jory. Eli was giggling and soon he was joined by the others, for one of the Mikyvis had put a pair of 'wings' on the small boy as he was 'flapping' his way over. He landed lightly on Jory's lap, promptly kissed the stunned boy's cheek sloppily, then snuggled in contentedly... and fell asleep a moment later.

The gang continued to pick at their food while chatting between each other, still waiting for Joel to make his appearance. Jude, meanwhile, had been called over by Adam and Logan, and had been presented with the Unit's gift to him. "Wow!" he breathed out as he opened the box Chang pushed over towards him. Inside was a full Unit uniform. "Thanks, guys! This... this is wonderful!"

Adam smiled, "You deserve it. I heard about what you and the rest did last night. Only the brave, get the right to that uniform. We're Clan now; and that makes you 'Unit'."

Jude just grinned widely before hugging each of them quickly. He then grabbed the uniform up quickly and pelted from the room to change.

The Doctor raised his mug of hot chocolate and saluted Adam. "That was well done, Adam. He loved reading about you in the Universe he came from - that just made his day," he said.

Adam's face hardened, and Logan winced. Logan turned to the Doctor and said, "Don't mention other Universes and those stories."

The Doctor tilted his head slightly, then smiled softly. "Adam," he said as he surrounded himself, Adam and Logan in a bubble of silence so that they could speak privately. "What happens in one place, echoes through eternity. They are not writing your story - YOU do that. They are given the dream, they write it, and your story remains for all time. Even if the enemy wins HERE, you will ALWAYS be remembered. My story is written. And, we have stories here about things happening in other 'places'. They are not sick - they are maintaining the fabric of reality. What came first: the word, or the thought behind the word?"

Adam thought about that for a second, then his face registered confusion. "Oh, well," he said eventually. "I pity this 'Roland' dude, then. Having JUAN in his head, and all..." He grinned then, and winked at the Doctor. "I'll have to talk to you later about this, 'cos you just confused the fuck out of me, but... okay, I'll let it slide for now."

The Doctor smiled and allowed the noise from the room to flood back into their awareness.

Adam then had another thought. He nudged Logan and pointed at the ginger haired boy and said, "This is 'Who' I wanted you to meet, love."

Logan faced the Doctor curiously. "Hello," he said. Then he asked Adam softly, "Uh... why?"

The Doctor sniggered and, still holding his mug in one hand, pressed the button on his 'watch' with the other. Logan's mouth dropped open as the Tardis thrummed into existence in the corner of the room, then vanished again. "Guess 'Who!'" the Doctor giggled with a wink.

"NO WAY!" came a cry from Logan and all his cloned-brothers simultaneously.

"Uncle Galli, you're silly!" Liam giggled from his perch on Allie.

"It's just like the show, Logan, way bigger inside than out - only this one talks," Sammy said grinning at his shocked friend.

From the Doctor's 'watch' came {Yes I talk. Pleased to meet you, Logan.}

"Uhhh.... same to you... Tardis..." Logan managed, his eyes wide as saucers.

"Yes, he tal... AAAARRRRRRGGGGHHHHH!!!!!" the Doctor screamed as a shimmering echo burst through the room, causing everyone to shiver violently. The reason for the yell became apparent to those nearest the Doctor, for his very hot chocolate was now all over his lap.

Kyle blinked and the Doctor's now boiling shorts vanished, leaving him hopping about half naked on his chair, upon which he had managed to jump, tears streaming from his eyes. He then Folded away.

"What the fuck was that?" Juan yelled as he jumped to his feet, guns appearing in his hands quickly. He was joined just as quickly by the rest of the Unit and Sammy's brothers. Sammy and Jason also jumped to their feet, but they did not have their weapons drawn - they knew already what that shimmer meant; having been in the one that had saved Cory's life. Even so, it didn't stop the worried looks on both their faces though.

Levi, while rubbing his head painfully, stuttered nervously, "Uncle Joel's changed something big again..."

Mikey appeared in the room and immediately started gathering Mikyvis under his wings. "I REALLY wish Cory would stop that; even *I* felt that one!!!"

"So what happened?" Teri asked as she looked around at the shocked and even frightened faces in the group in the room.

Mikey sighed and said, "Wait for the Doc, Mom."

They didn't have to wait long, for he soon Folded back in. The Doctor looked at the Mikyvis gathered under Mikey's wings and said as he moved to join them, "Kyle! Ty! You are on Joel watch. Levi? Bryce? You two are on Kevin watch. Dylan? You are on Standby! I don't want SHIT to happen to either of them!"

"What happened?" Levi ask fearfully as Mikey pulled the ginger Time Lord into his hug.

"Cory's trying to declare war on everything!" the Doctor spluttered, taking a clean pair of shorts that Tyler just created for him and slipped them on.

Sammy's yelled "WHAT? Why?!"

"Cos if anyone hurts Joel, Cory has promised to fuck over all creation," the Doctor exclaimed, "and the power of Ki'Melai made it DESTINY!!!"

"Joel has made it possible for Cory to destroy the UNIVERSE?!" Justy spluttered in complete shock.

"COOL!!!!!! Is he gonna invite us to the party?" Juan broke in, his face alight in a feral grin.

"Not cool with Joel involved, Juan: not cool at all!" Sammy said, looking even more worriedly at Jason now.

"Okay, Sammy, okay... we can skip the 'Joel getting hurt' part and go directly to the 'destroying the universe' bit... that sounds fun!" Jory added. He then mused to himself, "I'm going to need a shitload more C-4, ain't I?"

"It's not funny, guys. It's serious - dead serious," Sammy said, looking at the two boys from the Unit.

Juan looked confused for a second as he looked from Jory to Sammy to Adam, and then back to Sammy. "Why not? Personally, I think the ending of the Universe could be really funny."

"I don't, because we're not talking about a joke, here, but the real thing. It *could* end for real. Joel getting hurt is *NOT* an option, if it ever was!" Sammy said in no uncertain terms as he stared at the younger boy, his eyes flashing.

Juan started to look confused, and also started to get a bit annoyed. "Why? Don't get me wrong, I don't want him to get hurt anymore, but what makes *him* so special?"

Sammy looked at Juan for a long moment before saying "Because of everything Joel's been through, is why. He's been through more than you can imagine, and Cory I guess just said he wasn't to be hurt anymore or Cory'd end everything."

"Okay... Well... Since I don't know what Joel's been through I can't really say anything to that, but what makes what he's been through so much worse than what all of us have been through?" Juan motioned to include everyone in the room before he went on, "It doesn't make sense that Cory would do that for one, and not everyone else. What happened to the whole 'bad things have to happen so good things can'?"

"Juan," Sammy started, "his story isn't mine to tell, but I will say this: To say he's been through hell and I do mean *REAL* hell, is not even beginning to describe it. You had it easy, and so did I, and most everyone here, compared to what he lived in. You don't get it, though; it's not that Cory just swore to protect Joel - it's *JOEL* that made it different. Cor promises to protect everyone, but not everyone is Joel. The 'bad things happen' thing, well he's had his lifetimes' fill of them, and lets leave it at that."

"I HAD IT EASY?!?!?! You don't even know any of what I've been through! There are a shit load of us that had our 'lifetimes full of bad things' happen!" Juan may have been close to loosing it, but everyone that knew him knew he was keeping his cool... just - His eyes were still black.

Sammy's eyes blazed for a moment as he took a step towards Juan, then they died softly to his normal deep brown as he looked at Juan sadly. "Did you ever *KNOW*, and I mean deep down with every single part of your being *KNOW*, that there was no way out from your hell? Did you know that you would be tortured, hurt, unloved, and miserable until you finally died? Did you know that for every moment, every day, every second of your life; waking or asleep? Cause I'll tell you one thing I've found, no matter what had happened, every single kid who has told me anything has said that they could always hope that someday it would change. That someday those good things you talked about might happen or even could happen. Joel *KNEW* it never could. Joel *DIDN'T EVER* have *ANY* hope at all. *EVER*, Juan. Nothing, can you or anyone else say that?"

Juan's eyes dropped to the floor as he held back the tears. He turned to leave the room, one word softly following him... "Yes."

Koth got up to follow him, but then found he could not move. Nor could Juan, who looked up in anguish at what was stopping him.

"TIME SPEAKES!"

It was the Doctor. The ten year old seeming Time Lord was standing an inch from him and his eyes... his eyes blazed with the age of the very stars.

"There are only a handful in creation that have lived without hope. I am saddened to say that I now know two of them," the ageless boy stated firmly, his voice ringing throughout the room and echoing down Time. He gathered Juan to him and held him tight against his chest, and, after a moment, Juan's arms came up to hug the Doctor in return. The Doctor continued to speak, and his words echoed with an Authority that not even Mikey had ever dared use, "I never wish to hear such an argument again. All have suffered hell - each in his own way. El'Runi'm never lays a burden on a shoulder that cannot take it. Each has suffered only so much that they could bare - but in some cases, the pain and loneliness is so much that it almost feels beyond breaking point. Such a pair are Juan and Joel. In Juan's case, the pain caused a wound. That wound needs to be healed. In Joel's, it purified him... but weakened him. Juan will not be whole until he is healed and until he learns to lean on his Support, Koth. Joel will never be whole without his Strength, without Kevin. Let me ever hear a pissing match like this again, even one unintended and born out of love, and *I* shall Call 'The Endings' - that I swear. You are ALL brothers. SUPPORT one another."

He then raised Juan's face and looked into his hurting eyes, "I shall answer your question, Little Heart - You asked why Cory would do something for one and not the other? He would not. All are equal. He would say as much for you if you were to tell him all that I know you have been through. But, the difference in this case is that while Cory would swear to destroy the Universe to avenge *you*, he could not be empowered to accomplish that vow. You are not Ki'Melai, the Shaper. Joel is. He does not control his gift, but it acted when Cory made his vow of vengeance. If Joel suffers again at the hands of another, deliberately and with malice on their part, then Cory is empowered to bring the Ending. We, the High Races, do not know HOW that would happen, but it would... or could. Destiny is a mystery, Juan. Its power beyond what we can understand, never mind you, child of Earth. And the Shaper wields it. He is 'His' Shaper... he wields the power over Destiny that only El'Runi'm has until now."

The Doctor then walked the subdued boy back towards Sammy, and the Time Lord looked into Sammy's brown eyes, "You love Joel, and that is good. Don't stop, but don't think that he is the only one to have been through what he did. Don't protect him more than the others. Joel would not want that. He is an embodiment of Love that thinks of all others before himself. Honor that. Here," he smiled, passing the shaking Juan over and into Sammy's arms. "Love your brother, Heart of Gold."

Sammy, his eyes streaming tears of regret at unintentionally hurting Juan, wrapped his arms around the smaller boy. "I'm so sorry, Juan. I shouldn't have said that... I'm so sorry... I didn't know..." He then hugged the boy even tighter, and said raggedly through his tears, "I would never hurt you, Juan, please believe that, please. I... Juan, I love you so much." A bright blue glow infused the room as everyone there could feel him sending out the love he held for the younger boy to him. He wrapped the hurting child in that love and tried to show, in more than words ever could, just how important Juan was to him.

Juan still couldn't raise his eyes off the floor; he refused to let anyone see him cry if he could help it. He knew that Sammy hadn't meant to hurt him, but... but Juan had let slip something about himself he

had hoped to hide from everyone. He could tell that even Adam had been shocked to hear what Juan had said. He would deal with that later, because the pure love that was wrapped around him right now, sent to him by Sammy, was making it even harder to keep control. He needed to leave. "I. I know, Sammy," he said barely above a whisper. "I know you didn't mean to hurt me. I know you love me... but... but I gotta go." His voice cracked as he felt his control slipping. "Please... please let me go."

"Juan..." Sammy whispered.

The Doctor touched Sammy's cheek, "I'll take it from here, Sammy." Then he sent to Sammy's mind through his touch, *'He needs his pride.'*

The Doctor then gathered Juan under one arm and held out his hand for Koth. Once the Klingon had taken it, all three Folded away.

A second later, the Doctor returned and smiled, "They'll be back in shortly." He then gestured to Sammy as he sat down.

The noise in the room began to pick back up as Sammy walked over and sat down next to the small ginger Time Lord. He took the Doctor's hand and sent, *'Why'd he leave? What have I done?'*

*'Juan has very few things he treasures, apart from his weapons. His family, his new-found hope... and his pride. His pride was one of the few things he ever had that was truly his own. He doesn't like others to see him cry. Maybe he'll learn about the strength he can get by opening up that way, but each of us learns that at our own pace. It took me three millennia, so Juan has time,'* the Doctor responded.

'But...I hurt him, John. I hurt someone I care about a lot and I didn't mean too. You think it was a pissing contest that I put Joel above him, but I didn't mean it that way. I was only trying to get him to see what I could without telling him anything of Joel as it's not my place. I...they said Joel was unique in that only he never had hope or any dream of getting out. I didn't know,' Sammy said tears still falling. *'I didn't know.'*

*'Until Juan said it, neither did I. When he said it, knowledge filled my mind, Sammy. Things are dark for me here right now, so I was unaware he was that much like Joel. I know you did not mean it, and so does he, I promise you. It came out like a pissing contest, but it was not done out of malice. No-one here thinks that. Don't second guess yourself, please. You had the best intentions. Our Unit brothers don't really know much about the Shaper. To be fair, neither do you; but you know a lot more than them - enough to be rightfully afraid about what can happen. But here is something to lay those fears to rest somewhat - Joel is 'God's Shaper', to use the Human terms. HE is in control... so the question is - who do you trust?'* the Doctor smiled as he kissed Sammy's cheek.

\*I'll try, John, I just...it frightens me that I did that even without meaning to. Thank you for being here, and I do trust Joel with everything in me, and Him too,\* he sent back.

The Doctor grinned and kissed Sammy's nose. He then said aloud, "You have a big surprise coming shortly. Get ready to have a grin on your face, kiddo... oh, and eat a lot of fruit... you're going to need the energy!"

"Huh?" Sammy asked curiously.

"Wait and see..." the Doctor giggled.

Levi's giggles at Sammy's expression did not help any. "You'll like it, Sammy; my Friend says so!"

Sammy just shook his head and smiled as he said, "I suppose it won't do any good to give you my famous puppy dog eyes, will it?"

"Oh, sometimes... just not this time... you're going to have a purrrfect day..." then he folded away; laughing.

"I give up, all these great new powers and I can't find out anything; wonder if finding the Christmas presents will be any easier this year," Sammy said giggling.

Vishnu looked over at him from his plate of raw beef, and blushed slightly.

Sammy didn't notice....

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Juan and Koth cuddled for over an hour, and it was only their stomachs' rumbling that brought them to the point of wanting food.

"You feeling better?" Koth whispered as Juan sat up straighter.

Juan nodded mutely. "A little," he whispered, not taking Koth's gaze. "I'm hungry, let's eat... if there's anything left."

A flicker by the door made them both look over quickly. "There is. In fact, the party still hasn't started," the Doctor said with a soft smile. "You've only been here two minutes."

Koth smiled, and slowly, so did Juan. Juan got up and went towards the Doctor. Once he reached him, he hugged him tightly. After he pulled back, he looked into the Doctor's eyes and said hesitantly, "You know, don't you?"

"I do. Everything; now, at least," the Doctor nodded seriously as Koth joined them. "It's yours to tell, little one, not mine. Don't worry, sweetheart, it'll work out. Come on - I'm just as hungry as you... we old people like our food, you know!"

Juan giggled mutely, "How old are you?"

"Over a billion," came the giggled response as they opened the door and trooped out and back into the Dining Room.

Juan and Koth separated from the Doctor at the table, and they both moved to sit near to Adam again. As soon as they sat down, a group of adults, two children, and one teenager came into the room.

Everyone there eating became silent and turned to see Joel and Kevin grinning, with the others behind them. Apart from the Vulcans, they were all smiling. At first, most assumed that the real Birthday Party was about to start, but then Sarek started to speak. "Justin, can you start the recording, please?"

"On it, Grandpa," he said as he double tapped his communicator. "Go ahead, Patriarch."

The Vulcan raised his voice and stated clearly, "As of Earth Date 28th October 2004, Patriarch Cory and I do recognize the union between Sa'ren Joel Short of the Family of Sarek and Kevin Charles David Thompson of the Family 'Clan Short'. They are now Bonded according to the Laws and Traditions of Vulcan, and also recognized as such by the Laws of the United Federation of Planets."

Kevin and Joel began kissing yet again and both had happy tears rolling down their faces.

As everyone began to cheer, Sarek knelt down before both boys and placed his fingers on their faces. Joel and Kevin looked at him curiously at first, then their eyes widened in wonder. They quickly turned back to each other once Sarek's fingers broke contact with them and the wonder in their eyes increased.

"I... I can feel you," Kevin whispered softly as he raised his hand to Joel's cheek. "I can feel you..."

"I... is this a Bond-Link, Grandpa?" Joel asked softly, not taking his eyes from his life-mate's.

"It is," Sarek said as he stood. "Now, I believe, is the time for you to both eat and celebrate."

They were quickly grabbed by half a dozen pairs of hands and pulled quickly to their places at the tables. Cory smiled at them, then found the one he was now looking for seated with Adam, Logan, and Chang. He walked over quickly, "Jory, do you have a half hour or so to spare?"

Jory smiled up at him as the Patriarch came to a stop by his seat, "Sure, Cory. What's up?"

"I feel the need to make some loud booms and to launch some palm trees into orbit... again," Cory said seriously, and the look in his eyes told Jory more than words could.

"Not a problem," Jory said just as seriously. "Come on."

As they both left the room, Jory was heard calling Daileass on his communicator to beam over the 'special stock'.

Teri stood up, "Okay. Youngest first - help yourselves, guys, and Happy Birthday, Jude and Joel!" she smiled as she pointed at the groaning tables around the room and even those still inside the Kitchen.

Joel and Kevin decided that the mass stampede for food might be hazardous to their health, and so remained comfortably seated.

Within five minutes, however, everyone had their plates full and were spacing themselves out through the Dining Room and Rec. Room. Adam, Logan, and their brothers had managed to get a low table in an out-of-the-way corner of the Rec. Room, and had settled down to eat. Adam and Logan were mentally talking over what happened with Juan. Adam thought he knew almost everything about Juan, but

now it seemed he didn't know half of it. Juan still seemed to be very distant since the earlier incident, but Adam knew that now was not the time to confront him about it.

Korris looked up from next to Chang and waved, "Joel; over here, little bro!"

Joel and Kevin walked in, supporting an overflowing plate of food between them, and grinned. They trotted over to the group, and Joel asked, "Yeah, Korris?"

Korris looked around at the others, "It's cool for them to join us?"

Everyone nodded, even Juan, "Of course. We all have to thank you anyway, Joel. Sit, sit." Adam grinned at him.

It was lucky that Kevin had taken over holding the large plate, for Joel dropped to his butt instantly on hearing Adam say it. The little Vulcan's face looked pensive as he regarded Adam carefully.

Everyone was a bit quiet after seeing Joel sit so abruptly. Most weren't sure what was going on until Juan's soft voice was heard, "He didn't mean that as an order, Joel. He doesn't give orders unless we're into something military like." Joel looked at Juan, and saw something that he saw in very few others' eyes... true understanding. Juan didn't pity Joel, it wouldn't be right in Juan's mind, but he understood.

Joel nodded slowly before looking up at Adam's serious face. "Sorry, Adz... it sounded like an order."

"You do know you don't have to obey orders, don't you, Joel?" Koth asked from Juan's other side.

"Yeah, but my heart doesn't," Joel trembled as Kevin placed the plate of food down quickly and sat quickly to cuddle him. "If Cory ordered me, I'd obey and that's okay, 'cos Cor'd never tell me to do something unless he knew it was right. If others tell me stuff, though, then I just do it 'cos..." he trailed off as his eyes went far away. He whispered softly, "...'cos it's better to do something someone says, even if it hurts and hurts, 'cos if I disobeyed, it'd hurt so worse... I don't want to die..." he breathed so quietly that only the fact he was linked to Kevin allowed his new husband to know what he had said. The others had no problem, being enhanced or alien, or simply linked to another who was enhanced.

No one really knew what to say, other than Juan who was silently nodding. Finally Adam spoke, trying to let the tension die out. "Joel, the worst that would happen from one of us is a tickle attack... maybe a 'wet willy' or three. But nothing worse. Okay?"

Joel smiled then and his face lightened considerably. "I like tickles... but - what's a wet willy? Is that another name for the blow job Kevin's been thinking of giving me for the past ten minutes?"

Kevin started blushing to the point that all the others could see he was red.

No one could do anything other than fall over laughing. Logan was taking a drink of juice right then, but Joel got a shower from it.

Chang, who was actually smiling at the moment let out with one of his rare jokes, "Well, there's a 'wet Vulcan'; does that count?"

Joel blinked in shock at the sudden shower. "That wasn't quite the answer I was expecting," he stated quietly as he pulled his damp Vulcan robe off and dried his face with it. Underneath, he was still naked from the Naming Ceremony on Vulcan. Once he'd finished, he tossed the robe into the corner and glanced around at the others. "I'm thinking that wasn't a 'wet willy'... and going by Kevvy's protests in my head, I don't think it's a blow job either. So, what is it?" the now naked cherub asked curiously.

Will, who was seated right next to Joel, took one of his fingers, put it in his mouth, and then shoved it gently, in the little Vulcan's ear and wiggled it around. "That's a wet willy."

"EWWWWW!!!! EEEEWWWWW!!!!" Joel yelled as he fell over onto the still blushing Kevin's lap. "Urrgh! That's gross!!" he giggled as he used Kevin's hands to protect his ears.

Again, everyone at the table broke up laughing. It wasn't until Adam could get himself back under control that anyone said anything. "Joel... since it's your birthday, we got you a few things. Do you want them now, or later?"

Joel's eyes showed puzzlement as he sat up from Kevin's lap, "You got me things? Why?"

"Birthday presents, Sa'r," Kevin whispered to him with a smile. "Like this morning."

Joel's face took on a weird expression - something between the natural excitement of a child having the time of his life and worthlessness. Worthlessness started to win as he said softly, "You don't need to get me nuffin'. You're here and being nice to me and making me giggle and making me feel good. I don't deserve nuffin' more... I don't even deserve th..."

Kevin interrupted Joel in the easiest manner possible. He kissed him. Then: "You are MY boyfri... uh, husband!" he said with a giggle. "If I say you're worth a party and presents, then you ARE!"

Joel nodded sheepishly, then started blushing as he looked down at himself. "Keeevvv! You made it stand up again!"

Kevin looked down and giggled. "Later... presents, food... then 'play'..." he whispered with a wink.

Even Chang laughed that time; he couldn't hold it in anymore. Finally, Adam pushed a large wrapped box across to Joel. "Here you go... we hope you like it."

Joel smiled cutely as he accepted the box and placed it between himself and Will. He glanced up at Will and asked, "You wanna help me open it? It's fun when people help!"

Will giggled and nodded, "Sure!"

Together, they ripped off the paper, which Will balled up and threw it to bounce off Logan's head. Joel giggled as the ball came bouncing back at them and he opened the box.

His jaw dropped open and tears sprang to his eyes. "Clothes... you bought me clothes..." he whispered, gratitude clearly heard.

Will helped Joel pull the clothes out of the box, then held up the uniform top. "This is not just clothes," Adam said seriously, "This is a Uniform worn by the Unit, worn by only those that are family."

Joel blinked happily at him through his tears. "Thank you," he whispered again. "All of you."

When they got to the bottom of the box, Will pulled out a small pair of bright pink 'G-sting' underwear. In unison, all those from the Unit cried out, "JUAN!!!!"

Ronnie couldn't help but giggle out, "You told me you wanted those for Koth!!!"

"Oops! Sorry, Joel! Those are not for you!" Juan gasped, his face going scarlet as he snatched them from Will's hand and hid them in his pocket.

Koth was also blushing, but a strange grin was on his face as he regarded his blushing boyfriend. Over his shoulder, he said, "Not a fucking word, Korris. Not one!"

Joel just giggled as he pulled on the uniform shirt with Will's help, "Never mind, not my color... ummm... I better get a pair of boxers before I put the rest on..."

"You want mine?" Juan asked while standing up, reaching for his belt buckle. Janet quickly put her hands on his shoulders and pushed him back down. "No Juan, I'm sure Joel has his own." Adam and Logan could only shake their heads.

Joel smiled at them then called out, "BIG TED!"

"Yeah, Elf?" Sean called back.

"Is my 'giggle-boxers' still about from last night?"

"Umm... ah, yeah. Levi's got them on... hold on, he's on his way!"

Joel turned just in time to see Levi pop in, a pair of boxers on his head as a hat. "Here, Uncle Joel! I got them warmed up for you!" he said with a smile as he took them off his head.

"Thanks, Lil'mouse," Joel kissed Levi's cheek before the Mikyvis vanished again. He then slipped them on, this time with Kevin's help... not that Joel needed help, but... Kids!

Will was fighting to keep a straight face as he helped Joel into the rest of the uniform, for the little Vulcan was now so excited he could barely keep still. Once he was fully dressed in Unit style, he turned and ran around the low table to sit on Adam's lap and give him a large hug of thanks. "I love them! They're really comfy and don't itch and.... do I look nice in them??" He bubbled a mile a minute in between pecking kisses onto Adam's cheeks and forehead.

Billy couldn't help but giggle out, "He's got as much military discipline as an excited Cocker Spaniel puppy...."

Before Adam could reply, Chang had stood up, in his hands a long hand made wooden box. "Yes you do; however, I do not believe you are properly attired as of yet. You have your uniform, but now, you

need your weapons. You may not ever need to use them, and I hope that you never do, but it is ill advised to be unprepared if the situation arises. First, I would offer you something that is hand made by myself. If you will honor me by accepting it." Most were shocked as few had ever heard Chang speak that much at once.

Joel looked up at the tall boy before giving Adam one more kiss. He stood and, to everyone's surprise, bowed formally to Chang - in fact, Chang was impressed by his knowledge of custom and tradition. Joel then said in full Vulcan mode, which was the closest to Chang's own idiom that he could approximate, "I would be glad to accept your gift. And, if it is not impertinent to ask, would you also teach me to use whatever my gift from you is?"

Chang bowed as well, while holding the box out to him, waiting for Joel to open the lid and see what is inside. "Of course I would, but I have a feeling you will know how to use this better than I."

Joel raised an eyebrow and looked so much like his father that Korris started to chuckle. The little Vulcan lifted the lid of the box and gasped in wonder, "A trillpa'morov? You *made* this? Oh, oh... thank you..."

He removed the blade from the beautifully carved box and unsheathed it in one fluid motion. He seemed to pause for the briefest of seconds before backing away slightly so as to give himself room. Joel then began what the two Klingons there and Chang recognized as the stately forms of Suus Mahna. He flowed slowly from one stance to another, the blade tracing a slow arc around him as he did so.

Korris noted that he was hesitant in the motions, but the style was that of only a Master. This was Spock's training. "How do you know to do this, Joel?" he asked as he rose to his feet.

Without pausing, Joel answered and his voice was emotionless, "My father. We mind-melded and his abilities passed to me. This is the first time I have put this into practice - a given since I have only known these skills for a little under three hours."

He finished the last of the forms and re sheathed the blade. He then rolled his right shoulder and winced as a small pop was heard as his joints clicked. "I think I need practice." He then looked up into Chang's eyes and smiled in gratitude. He then bowed before formality fell away and he hugged the taller boy tightly. "Thank you. I think it is wonderful! You're a master swordsmith!"

Chang had a small smile on his face as he released the boy, closed the box, and set it gently on the table. "Yes, you will need more practice to make sure your muscles learn to do what your mind already knows. I think, however, that you will learn quickly." With that Chang bowed again before sitting down.

Will took that opportunity to come over, and place an arm around the little birthday boy. "So tell me, helicopter or Jet fighter?"

Joel thought for a moment, then shrugged. "Harrier Jump-jet... hey, I was raised in 'A' Wales, UK, you know!" he poked his tongue out at Kevin who had obviously said something down their bond-link.

Will grinned, as he tussled the boy's hair. "Okay... I'm gonna need a bit, but I'll let Cory know that a Harrier is gonna be landing here soon, and that I'll be taking you for a ride."

"Really? In a REAL Harrier!?! Wow! Thanks!" Joel bubbled as he bounced happily. Then a comical look came over his face. "Uh," he looked around at them all. "I know Adz... but I've been getting gifts from people I don't know. What's your names?"

This caused a load of giggles, and Will roared with laughter before pulling Joel in for a hug. Eventually he managed to point out all of them, and said, "And I'm Will."

Joel smiled up at him, then asked again, "Uh... I love the gifts... but I need to know why you're giving them to me? You've only just met me."

Adam smiled up at him from his seat on the floor and opened his arms. Joel quickly slipped onto Adam's lap and the older teen explained, "You helped Korris and Koth last night. That's one. In doing so, you helped my brother Chang - Korris' boyfriend and now life-partner. We have a family wedding soon because of what you did, Joel. Second, you are one of our brothers and all brothers and sisters get presents. Together, that's why you are having these particular gifts."

Joel wiped a tear from his eyes and trembled, "I did that 'cos it was right to do it... but thank you. I love you."

Adam smiled and Logan pulled the boy over to give him a hug as well. "Here," Logan said, as he pressed a small parcel into Joel's hands. "This is from me."

Joel sniffed lightly as he opened it. Logan could tell that Joel really didn't know what was in the box, so he explain. "It's called an Ipod. When you figure out what kind of music you like, you can put all your favorite songs in there and listen to them whenever you want. If you can't figure it out, just let me know and I'll show you."

Korris then drew the small Vulcan's attention to himself. "Koth and I have decided that we wish to honor you as well, Joel. Here," he said as he handed over a well made but old looking Bat'leth. "This was our father's. I believe he would be honored for you to carry it and once trained, use it."

Joel trembled as he took the large weapon into his hands. "I shall do honor by this, Korris," he said reverently. "I shall keep it and honor it all the days of my life."

Korris bowed his head and smiled. Koth then moved over and held out a pair of old Mek'leth blades. "These were also our father's. Like Kor said, I think Father would love you to have them. You helped his children and have done so in honor. So, we honor you."

Joel was in a flood of tears as he took them and laid them with the Bat'leth. He was beyond words and Logan held him tighter as he cried quietly - this time, it was just an overload of joy and happiness.

Juan shuffled over and sat next to Logan as he waited for Joel to calm down, waiting to give him his own gifts. As they all watched Joel recover, Jory and Cory appeared in the room. Both had full plates of food, and were laughing at the fun and explosions they had just enjoyed. Jory ran over to join his brothers while Cory waved at them before heading off to look for Sean.

Jory slipped in next to Kevin and whispered, "Presents already?"

Kevin nodded mutely, for his own mind rang with the emotions coming down his link with Joel.

"I'll wait," he giggled before falling into his meal with gusto.

Eventually, Joel raised his head and kissed Logan. "Thank you. I like your hugs... they make my belly feel good," he whispered with a ghost of a smile.

"Cool... is it my turn?" Jory asked. When no one said no, he jumped up and ran over to Joel. "Okay... I think you'll really like what I got you," he pulled a box out of his bag and handed it to him. Once Joel opened the box, he pulled out a long box with many different switches on the top. When Joel looked up at Jory questioningly, Jory explained. "Tonight I put together a very special fireworks show. However, what you have in your hands right now, is the control for those fireworks. When I tell you to, you flip those switches as slow or as fast as you want. Each switch controls one of the fireworks."

Joel's eyes opened wide. "Fireworks?" he breathed in excitement. "You... you mean those things that shoot up and make pretty pictures and loud bangs in the sky? Like at Cory and Sean's wedding?? AND I gets to make them go boom??"

"Yup." Jory answered grinning himself. "The best part is, there are forty switches on the box. Once you go through all of them once, you'll have to go back through them all again... then... you have one more shot at all of them again. Think you can handle that?"

"120 times? WOW! Lots of pictures!!! THANKS!" he yelled in joy, and damn near strangled Jory as he hugged him tightly... at least, if Jory had been a 'normal', none enhanced boy, he'd have been strangled.

Juan stood up and nervously stepped forward. "Uhh.. Joel... I have something for you too. Well.. actually two things. I'm not very good at giving presents, so... uhhh... here." He quickly pushed a box into Joel's hands.

Joel smiled as he opened the box and withdrew a pair of daggers. They were well made, and heavy. Logan whispered in his ear, "Those were given to Juan by Adam not long after Adam rescued Juan. They mean a lot to Juan and it is his way of saying 'thank you' for helping his boyfriend, Koth."

Joel hadn't taken his eyes off the blades in his hand as he listened to Logan. Without looking up, he said, "Juan... I.. Thank you. I'll take care of them for you... they will be looked after, same as Koth's and Korris' Daddy's weapons. I promise."

Before Joel could look back up at him, Juan quickly pulled out the small wooden flute he brought with him. Very few people knew that Juan had taught himself to play this over the last few months. He found the sound of it to be very relaxing and a nice change from the hard and heavy music he usually listened to. Now, though, a song came to his mind that he knew he needed to play.

Joe was the one who first introduced Joel to the wooden flute, and this song in particular. After seeing how Joel acted, and KNOWING what made him act that way, Juan thought this song might help him as much as it helped Juan when Joe first sang it.

He put the flute to his lips and started to play a very slow and haunting tune. All eyes were on Juan, but he had his eyes closed; he knew he wouldn't be able to handle it if he saw everyone watching him. No-

ne were more shocked at what was going on than Adam and his brothers. This was something else new that they didn't know about their little brother. Joe for his part just sat there with a smile. He knew the song from the first note. After about a minute of playing, Juan dropped the flute from his lips, and began to sing in a very soft boy soprano.

There was a boy  
A very strange enchanted boy  
They say he wandered very far, very far  
Over land and sea  
A little shy and sad of eye  
But very wise was he

And then one day  
This magic boy, he passed my way  
And we did speak of many things  
Fools and kings  
And this he said to me  
"The greatest thing you'll ever learn  
Is just to love and be loved in return"

As quickly as he could, Juan brought the flute back up and started to play again, putting as much feeling and emotion into the music as he could.

And then one day  
This magic boy, he passed my way  
And we did speak of many things  
Fools and kings  
And this he said to me  
"The greatest thing you'll ever learn  
Is just to love and be loved in return"

He played a few more notes when he was done singing the second time, then let the flute fall from his lips one last time, head bowed down, and eyes still closed. Any of the empath's could feel the emotions falling off him right now.

Among the Clan kids gathered around, Jed, C.J., and the McKendrick brothers had tears in their eyes, both for the beauty of Juan's performance and remembering the pivotal role that song had played in changing Jed and C.J.'s grandfather's attitude three days before.

Juan was about to turn and run from the room and Koth was preparing to run and join him. However, one second his emotions were building beyond his ability to control, and the next, Juan found that they had lessened. He felt a pair of small hands take his own at the same moment, and he opened his eyes to look at Joel in shock.

Joel's eyes were filling with tears that Juan knew should be falling from him instead, but before he could say a word, Joel beat him to it. "You know, don't you," he whispered just loud enough for Juan to hear him. "I can feel it - you've been there, in that dark place." Joel raised himself up on his tip toes and continued to speak as he brought himself to eye level with Juan, "I know too. But we are not alone anymore, Juan. Daddy helped me hide away the pain of my dark times. I remember them now, but I

don't feel them the same as I used to. I can help you too, if you wanna... I can't take the dark place away, but I can show you how to only remember it but not feel it. If you wanna, I can show you how...."

Juan trembled for a moment, then whispered, "... yes... please. Please, help m..."

Joel's eyes widened in shock as Juan's eyes flashed yellow, but that was all he had time to do, for Juan threw Joel from himself violently. "GET AWAY FROM ME!" came a bestial, fearful scream from what had moments before been a trembling, near-tearful boy.

All Joel knew, was that he was heading towards the wall at a 'not-nice' speed and that he was having trouble breathing. His father's training, however, came to his rescue, and he twisted painfully midair and managed to bounce from the wall and onto his feet without further injury. He saw that Kevin was in shock and that Juan's brothers had already sprung to their feet to surround the now violent boy.

Juan seemed beyond reason. His yellow eyes were showing a clear emotion - panic. Death was coming... fight or flight. Will and Jory were soon on their asses after Juan had slammed their heads together hard and Adam found himself on his back. Although he was the strongest, Juan's sudden fear had surprised him. He rolled to his feet and went back at Juan. This time, in concert with Chang, Adam began to circle the furiously enraged boy.

Joel saw that Juan was backing up towards Timmy and Ricky, who were watching in shock behind him. Joel couldn't let anyone get hurt, not by something that he himself must have caused.

The small Vulcan ran at Juan just as Juan again threw Adam.

"JOEL, NO!" Chang yelled, but it was too late.

Juan saw Joel coming and leapt at him, now fully intent on killing the threat.

In turn, Joel leapt at him, and they met midair.

Instead of slamming into Joel's chest and having his hands around Joel's throat, Juan found himself grasping empty air and having a light, small Vulcan latched onto his back. Juan began to turn his body to land with Joel beneath him when he felt a hand grip his neck... then nothing.

Joel felt the wind get knocked out of him, as well as his shoulder being forced from its socket when he landed with the remarkably heavy boy on top of him as an unconscious dead weight. Joel just groaned in pain as he gently pushed the now limp Juan off him with his good arm.

Chang was by the boys' sides in an instant; Adam was there as well. Chang went to Joel, as Adam started to pull all the various weapons from Juan's unconscious form. "I told him not to bring this many..." Adam muttered under his breath as he pulled out the fifth gun, and the seventh knife.

Chang had helped Joel to his feet and was looking him over gently before speaking to the boy. "This will hurt; I must put your shoulder back into place. If you wish I can inject some pain suppressant?"

Everyone else was busy trying to calm the rest of the Clan down as the very brief fight brought almost the entire clan running. Will and Jory were just now picking themselves up off the ground.

Joel simply shook his head to Chang's question, and with a quick pull and pop Chang re-set Joel's shoulder in his socket. Chang was only slightly surprised that the boy barely grunted as his shoulder was put back in place.

"What is going on here?" came a voice that held as much authority as any had heard before. Spock pushed his way through with Sarek, Amanda and a few others right behind him.

Adam quickly moved up to Spock after making sure that all of Juan's weapons were removed from the unconscious boy. "Captain, Ambassador, I am not sure why, but something triggered a part of Juan that only comes out when he is feeling threatened or is extremely angry. I take full responsibility and will accept any repercussions that are needed." Adam spoke while standing at attention in front of the men and women.

Spock looked between the teen at attention, the unconscious Juan on the floor and then his son, who was having his chest checked out by Chang. He looked back into Adam's eyes and said, "This 'part' in the child on the ground - I take it that it is an alternate personality?"

Adam nodded quickly, "Yes sir."

"And that it only responds when your brother is threatened?"

"Correct, sir," Adam said, and out of the corner of his eyes he saw Cory and Sean push their way through to get to Joel, their faces pale.

"Very well," Spock said, and Adam could see him visibly relax. "Retribution is not called for here. Might I ask, is the boy treating my son qualified in medicine?"

Chang spoke from where he was treating Joel. "I assure you Sir, I am a fully trained doctor, as well as certified in both emergency medicine and emergency surgery. If you wish verification, I am sure that Dr. Hayes would be willing to attest to my level of training." During that, his eyes never left where he was working. "I am not very familiar with Vulcan biology; however, from what I can tell he had a dislocated shoulder, which I have already performed a reduction on. He also has three broken ribs, which I would suggest be wrapped and left to heal."

Spock nodded. "I will take you on your word. Do not be concerned with my son's biology, for in regards to our skeletal structure, Vulcans and Humans are nearly identical. He has more ribs than you, and his bones are denser by at least three hundred percent than Human average, but that is the limit of the differences. Your treatment is therefore acceptable, and you have my thanks. I shall ask Doctor McCoy to assist in my son's healing when this problem with Juan has been solved, and I am sure he will talk with you as well regarding further Starfleet training should you wish it." Spock then drew Adam to one side and began to speak softly with him.

Cory looked at Chang and said, "THAT was high praise, bro. How's Elf?"

Chang raised an eyebrow at Cory's statement, but went quickly back to doctor mode. "I am fairly certain he will have no lasting ill effects from this." He then turned and looked directly at Joel. "I would

suggest that you take things easy for a few days. If you wish, I am sure there are pain suppressors available, if you so choose."

Joel's smile was wan. "No, s'okay, Chang. Uncle Bones can heal them up in a few moments. Just no one hug me 'til then..." He raised his nervous eyes to Chang's as he pressed himself back against Cory's chest, "How's Juan, and what's wrong with him? What did I do wrong?"

Chang sighed. "You did nothing wrong, little one. Juan has a problem in his mind. Because of some of the things that happened to him, he has a separate personality that deals with the stuff that the Juan we know cannot. My hypothesis is that what ever you said to him caused this other personality to be scared enough that it took control and was trying to stop what you wanted to do."

Cory squeezed Joel's uninjured shoulder and said, "Don't blame yourself, Joel. But please, next time try not to get involved with stopping one of the Unit boys if this type of thing happens. They are stronger than average, and some stronger than Vulcans."

Joel looked up at him, "Better me than Timmy and Ricky. I'm Vulcan. I can take more than they can. And I wasn't angry - logic over strength... that, and a nice nerve pinch. I'm going to talk to Daddy. Chang, can you come with me? I'll need your permission and Adz' as well."

"Of course." Chang said, then looked over at Adam, who quickly nodded and waited near Spock until they got to him.

As soon as Joel came within reach, Spock lifted his hand and touched his son's face lightly. Raising his good arm, for his right was sore as all hell, Joel grabbed onto his dad's hand in a firm grip. "I'm okay, Dad... but I think I know what you're talkin' to Adz about. I wanna help him. I can't say why, 'cos it's not fair... but I haveta help Juan."

Spock knelt down and placed his hands on Joel's waist, "Are you sure, Sa'ren?"

"Yeah, unless you think I need more melding practice," Joel nodded earnestly.

Spock smiled, "No, you do not. Very well. I shall be here to help, should you require it."

Joel kissed Spock's nose, then turned to Adam and Chang. "I request permission to mind-meld with your little brother. He has an alternate personality, and according to the information from my father's mind, such in a human can lead to insanity. I will be doing one of two things, and this will be at the behest of Juan himself when I enter his mind. I will either merge both back into one, or eradicate the more alien presence. The optimal result would be a merger. However, I cannot decide that, only Juan. But I need your permission to even attempt this... yours, or Juan's senior member of family, should he have one."

Adam looked over at Janet and Joe, who were standing not far away. She had tears running down her face and Joe was holding her hand. Adam knew they had overheard what Joel said, and after a brief moment, Janet nodded. Turning back to Joel, Adam also nodded. "Do what you can... please."

"You shall have your brother back," Joel said firmly. "I promise."

Adam felt a brief and wondrous sensation flow up and down his spine, as did Chang, and they both looked at each other. In their minds, they heard the Doctor giggle, *'Ki'Melai... His Shaper...'*

Joel turned, and with a slight grunt of pain, knelt down next to Juan's prone form. He painfully lent over the boy's face and kissed his forehead. "Hold on, my 'big' little brother; I'm coming," he whispered before placing the fingers of his left hand on Juan's face....

"My mind to your mind...."

## Chapter 08

CHAPTER 8 NOTE: Please read before continuing.

Chapter 8 deals with some very disturbing issues, all of them dealing with Juan's time as a child, and what exactly happened to make him the way he is. I know many of you think that Juan is rather amusing, and he is in many, sad ways.

This chapter is NOT at all light hearted. This chapter is easily the hardest chapter I have had to write, simply because of how dark and deprived it is. Remember, when writing this chapter, I need to figure out how to create a psychotic killer.

There are many people that probably do not want to read this, and that is why I have set things up the way I have. Chapter 8 is rather small for my chapters, mainly so that if someone decided NOT to read chapter 8, they will not miss anything that is intricate to the story line as a whole.

In other words, feel free to skip chapter 8 if you think you may have problems with the material being covered. I will be picking up right after the mind meld in chapter 9.

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At first, Joel could only sense anger within the mind he was now in. He felt his Katra meld itself around Juan's, and noticed at once that his newest brother, for that is what he had suddenly come to consider Juan, had a major fault with his soul.

'This should not be,' Joel thought.

He went further and came to what his mind perceived of as a doorway; and he entered. He stopped dead at what he saw.

In a room that looked much like a World War One bunker, two Juans, one with black eyes, the other with bright yellow eyes, were in the middle of a no-holds-barred fight.

"YOU WOULD HAVE LET HIM KILL ME!" The yellow-eyed one screamed.

"He was only trying to help and you hurt him! You hurt my friend!" The black-eyed one screamed back as he kicked out and sent Juan Two, the yellow-eyed one, flying.

Juan Two hit the wall, jumped back to his feet and was about to go back after Juan One, the black-eyed Juan, when he noticed Joel was also in the room. "YOU!" He snarled out with such hatred that Joel even took a step back. He wasn't scared because he knew nothing could hurt him, but he was shocked at the vitriol in Juan Two's voice.

Immediately, Juan Two started towards Joel screaming at the top of his lungs, fully intent on killing this boy who was trying to kill him. Juan One moved quicker than even he thought he could, plowing into Juan Two right before he reached Joel.

As they rolled around on the floor, both trying to get the upper hand, till finally black-eyed Juan came out on top. He reared back and started to punch his other half in the face, one word coming out with each hit. "YOU... WILL... NOT... HURT... HIM!" Juan Two finally threw him off and they both came up to their feet at the same time.

Joel was in between them in an instant and each he was holding them apart by his outstretched arms. He looked furiously at this 'thing' with the yellow eyes, as if it were an alien presence. Yet after a few seconds of that brief contact, he felt something that answered the question as to Juan's wounded, odd seeming soul.

The yellow-eyed beast that was clawing futilely at his face, WAS Juan... it was utterly Juan; and just as real and right as the now quiet black-eyed version being held by his other hand. "Oh, shit..." Joel whispered.

Juan Two tried gouging out Joel's eye, but it had as much effect as someone trying to move the Earth by throwing a tow rope around it and tugging with the Enterprise: none.

"Stop it. You cannot hurt me here. I am not of your mind, so you have no effect," Joel said to him softly, his eyes still searching the yellow pair before him.

Juan Two finally backed off and started to look around as if trying to find a place to run to. Not finding any, he turned back to Joel, hate still radiating from him, but standing there; not trying to attack. "Fi-ne... what the fuck do you want?"

"To help," was the simple reply and both Juans felt honesty and love flowing around them, coming from the smaller boy between them. "Just to help."

Juan Two recoiled at the alien feelings coming from the smaller boy, but quickly regained his balance. "You want to help?!?! Then get rid of that pussy over there. I don't need him, or his weaknesses."

Joel turned to look into Juan One's eyes, then back at Juan Two. "You are two halves of the same soul. You both share parts, and you both have parts in whole that the other does not. Neither of you can survive apart, and if I were to 'get rid' of either of you, both would die. You both have strength, but strength comes in many forms. You have some, he has some, neither has all."

"Whatever, all I want is to be rid of him, and I'm sure he wants to get rid of me," Juan Two said, still staring defiantly at Joel.

"No, I don't," Juan One said, which made Two's eyes raise in shock. "You're part of me, you've done so much for me, I... I love you."

Two recoiled as if he'd been hit. "You don't love ME!!! you can't stand me... you're TRYING TO KILL ME!"

"Who is trying to kill you? How or why do you think that?" Joel asked curiously.

"'Cause... 'Cause you only love HIM... No one wants me around... and... and now you're here to get rid of me." He looked past Joel and locked eyes with Juan One. "If you let him get rid of me, then you won't be nothin'. You can't do nothin' without me... You ARE nothing without me."

Joel tilted his head slightly, then nodded to himself. Both Juans had felt a sudden tingle in their minds, and Joel's eyes seemed to fill with an understanding that wasn't there before. Joel walked over to Juan Two and placed both hands on the boy's shoulders. His grip was strong and sure and unbreakable, yet there was no pain. "I did come to help and I assumed that this would be a simple case of a merger or a deletion of the part that should NOT be. However, BOTH of you SHOULD be. I cannot smash one away, nor can I force a recombination. I am therefore not here to kill you. I have never killed. I cannot. I have seen the innocent die and I have seen death. I will not bring death. I just want to love and I love you. If I did not, I would not be speaking to you. I would only speak to the other. It is YOU that needs these words; would I bother if I did NOT love you?"

Again, Joel pushed out what he felt and wrapped it around Juan Two but again, Juan Two recoiled and shook. Joel sighed, "You say no one loves you. You are wrong. It is you that cannot love, for Love does not exist in you. It exists only in the other. Hatred exists in you and not him. Anger you share. But not love... then, if that is the case, how do you KNOW that no one loves you? Can you say you are given not when you don't even recognize it to begin with?"

Two was struggling to get away and fighting with everything he had, but he could not break the grip that the little Vulcan boy had on him. Finally, it was a strangled voice from the other side of the room that made Juan Two stop struggling. "Please... please stop... you're hurting him."

Two actually smiled at his words, his yellow eyes blazing more brightly. "See? See what I mean. He's weak. You should get rid of him. He doesn't even know what pain is. He never felt the pain in the past. He left it... left it for me."

Joel stopped pushing out with his feelings and just held the now motionless boy firmly in his grip. "I cannot. He is the more stable. Should he go, you will cease. If you go, he will slowly slip and die. Either way, you die."

Joel stepped back and held out a hand for One to take. He did so and relaxed as Joel fed strength and love into him. Joel then reached out towards Two. "Take my hand, Juan. For your healing, for BOTH your healing, take my hand and come with me."

Two folded his arms across his chest and sighed. "The only healing I need is to get rid of him... just cut it off... like a cancerous growth... or like they did our balls. You don't remember feeling that, do you? Of course not... you let ME deal with that."

As One hung his head, Joel said again, "Take my hand, Juan. You need to come with me."

Two's eyes narrowed. "Fuck off. There's nothing you can show me that I want to see... unless it's you gutting that pussy!"

Joel's own eyes narrowed. "Now, Juan."

"ARE YOU DEAF?" Two screamed, his hands balling into fists, "I SAID FUCK OFF, YOU...."

"SILENCE!" roared Joel, and Two fell back a few paces in shock, for Joel had released One's hand and was now striding towards him. The fury rippling off the Vulcan was... well, alien... alarming... and powerful. Exceptionally powerful. This was no human emotion. This was titanic and chaotic and destructive. It was released and under no control, and it smote into Two with the force of a volcano. "TAKE MY HAND, OR I WILL ERASE YOUR MEMORIES. I WILL THEN FORCE BOTH SUNDERED PARTS OF YOUR SOULS BACK TOGETHER."

"But... but you said that would... would kill us..." Two managed to say around the tidal wave of fury flowing through and around him.

"I will make it that Juan lives, but he will never be fully whole. I will settle for a loving child who can never face battle than the only alternative YOU seem to be offering: that of a beast who would kill for its own sake... a beast with no love. I offer you BOTH life. YOU WILL BOTH LIVE, but ONLY if you come with me... NOW, JUAN!" Joel held out his hand once more. "Take it... NOW!"

"Well... since you put it that way..." Juan said with a grin, as he took the small boy's hand. "All you had to do was ask nicely."

Joel held onto Two firmly and marched back to One, bringing the now smiling Two with him. He reached One and gently took his hand. One looked up and smiled, for Joel was sending love at him, yet from Two's face, One knew that the Vulcan was sending anger down the other hand.

As the three boys stood there in a line facing a doorway that was forming, One smiled and Two giggled when a completely put out Vulcan muttered, "Nuts... both of them..."

Two couldn't help but giggle. "I prefer psychotic."

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When they went through the door, they found themselves in a place very familiar to the two Juans. Their old room back at the lab. Sitting on the bed was Juan, but he wasn't more than three years old. Or at least, he looked to be three. He was taking apart a pistol, gently, and with great love, he was oiling the barrel and the slide.

"Hey... I remember that gun; it was the first one they issued us." Two said with a smile on his face.

"Oh no..." One said. He knew what was about to happen, and from the feral grin on Two's face, he must have remembered as well.

Before anything else could be said, the door opened and in walked Dr. Drake, the head of the team responsible for creating and training Juan. With him was a boy who also looked to be about three or four, bound and gagged.

"Hello Juan my boy, how are you doing?" Drake asked.

Juan had jumped to his feet and saluted as soon as the doctor walked in. "I am doing well, Doctor, how are you?" Both boys remembered the beating he used to take if Juan did not greet the doctor exactly like that.

Drake grinned as he walked over to the low table that was in the room, the same one that they used if they needed to secure Juan for whatever reason. "I'm doing just fine, thank you for asking." He laid the boy down on the table and started to strap the boy down. "Juan, please come over here and help me strap him down."

"Yes sir." Juan responded, and immediately ran over and helped the doctor strap the struggling boy down.

Once he was secured, the doctor stepped back and handed Juan a knife. "Now, I want you to cut all of his clothes off, then remove the gag."

Juan hesitated for just a second too long, and before he knew what hit him, the doctor pressed the end of the cattle prod he had with him into Juan's side. Both Juan One and Juan Two knew that the cattle prod used had been modified, and it would kill a normal person. For him, though, it just made little Juan scream out in agony.

As soon as little Juan could get back to his feet, because if he stayed on the floor the doctor would just use it again, he quickly moved over to the boy. "I'm sorry for not acting quick enough, Doctor Drake, it won't happen again." Both of the older Juans remembered having to say that many times... just like that.

The little boy quickly cut the other boy's clothes off, then removed the gag and then, like an obedient puppy, moved back to the doctor's side. The little boy tied to the table started to cry and scream and beg for them to let him go. Juan knew, though, that it would not happen. Both of them already knew what was about to happen.

"He's making too much noise, Juan, please make him stop." Drake said, and as expected, Juan did not move but simply looked up and in a shaking voice said, "How... how would you like me to do that, Doctor?"

Drake sighed as he looked down at the three year old Juan and said in frustration, "Just cut his tongue out."

Juan suffered three hours of torture before he finally couldn't do anything else other than what he had been told. Four days later, he was finally able to put the poor boy out of his misery. It took another three days, for Juan to recuperate from the beatings he took because he had killed the boy before he was supposed to. Juan just could not stand to torture the little boy any longer. And for that, he had to live through everything that he was supposed to put the boy through. When someone has the regenerative powers of someone like Juan... Torture takes on a whole new meaning.

Juan One looked down at the floor for a moment, as they stood there watching the young three year old Juan being hurt. He squeezed Joel's hand and whispered, "How can you be calm watching this? You seemed so... so... gentle out there... in the real world."

Joel sighed, "This hurts, but... when I entered your mind, it all opened up to me. I know everything about you... both of you... at least what you've been through. Your personalities took longer... I've a perfect memory, Juan. I have to only see something once and I'll always remember it. Or feel it, or experience the emotion of it... forever. I'm able to shut out the pain and emotion now... but never the memory. Don't worry about me. I've carried my mountain for years... I can carry yours too."

"You're soft... like him..." Two said.

"Is he?" One asked angrily. "Would anyone else DO this if they had a memory like Joel? To suffer seeing THIS forever and ever? I don't think so...."

"What's wrong with this?" Two asked, and One just shook his head as they moved into the next room.

Joel sighed again, "You'll see, Juan. Come... there's more..." and he slowly led them out of the doorway, through 'mist', and into the next 'room'.

The next four rooms showed scenes very similar to the first one; the only difference in these rooms was that Juan was a little older, and it took fewer "sessions" to get Juan to do what they wanted him to do. By the last one, he did as he was told, when he was told, and never had to endure torture.

The worst part was that he was given unlimited access over the next week to the firing range as a 'reward' for passing his first tests. No time during that week was he hurt, or anything. Everyone was very nice to him, and Juan liked the feelings it was bringing up in him. They told him he did well and he wanted to do well again.

When they got into the next room, Juan One smiled a bit. Juan Two looked confused. They were in their room, but sitting on the bed, next to Juan was a man in his early thirties. They were talking and Juan was smiling. He was almost five in this one.

"What's going on? I don't remember this at ALL," Juan Two asked, his yellow eyes narrowing in confusion.

Joel's eyes started to glow blue slightly and he began to work... this was a point of fracture. The two Juans did not notice, however.

"That's doctor Weiss." Juan said, his black eyes filling with tears. "This is when he gave me Rambo. My teddy bear." Sure enough, the man in the room handed the little five year old a teddy bear wearing fatigues. The five year old Juan grabbed it and hugged it to himself.

Joel smiled a bit at the name of the bear and then they were walking towards the next 'room.' Before they got there though, Juan One stopped, tears in his eyes. He was starting to remember. "No... No, please... I don't want to go there."

For the first time, Juan Two didn't have a smart ass remark. He was feeling something strange, but oddly good. He was still looking at the little Juan hugging the teddy bear and memories started, very slowly, to bloom in his mind... memories and feelings that seemed alien to him yet natural also.

"I'm sorry, Juan, but we have to. It'll be all right... I'm here with you," Joel said as he squeezed One's hand a little. One nodded slightly and wiped his tears away, but then took a deep breath and started to move again. As they walked, Joel looked to his other side at Two... and smiled.

The next room showed Juan at the firing range, tears streaming down his eyes, as he looking down the sight of his rifle. He couldn't bear to place the cross hairs on the target. Sitting on the target was Rambo... his little teddy bear. When Juan finally pulled the trigger, he missed.

Juan doesn't miss, but he did then... and it cost him. The next morning he was there again. Again he missed.

It took him two days before he could try again, and with tears in his eyes, for he knew he couldn't handle another session like the last one, he pulled the trigger and cried as the little bear's head exploded.

One quickly pulled the two other boys into the next room. He didn't want to have to see any more of that.

This scene was several months later. Dr. Weiss had been allowed only minor contact with Juan, but now, he was again trying to be nice to the poor little boy.

Right before bed, the man entered the room, and Juan broke out in a smile at seeing him. "I don't have much time, but I wanted you to have something." Weiss pulled his hands out from behind his back and in them was a small bowl filled with ice cream.

Juan took it and began to eat slowly, savoring each spoon full. Once he was done, the doctor pulled him into a hug and quickly left the room.

"What was that? I don't remember any of that happening?" Two asked as he looked between Joel and Juan One, who had a sad smile on his face. "Wait a minute... I... I do remember that." He voice trailed off.

They went into the next room and saw Dr. Weiss sitting on the edge of the bed, a small book in his hand, reading a story to Juan.

"That's... The Fellowship of the Ring... I remember that now. He's at the point where the fellowship is just leaving the council of Elrond," Two said softly; he was starting to remember things that he couldn't before.

Juan One was crying as they approached the next set of doors. He knew what was coming and didn't want to see it. He knew he had to, but that didn't mean he wanted to. Even Juan Two seemed a bit apprehensive to go forward.

Again, it was in Juan's room and Weiss was sitting on the bed; this time though, he was reading the "Two Towers" the second in the trilogy that was the Lord of the Rings. Juan was absolutely entranced

as he listened to the doctor tell him about the fellowship fighting off a Cave Troll and then running from all the Orcs.

He gasped as he heard the doctor describe the Balrog and then the groups flight across the Bridge of Khazad Dum. Juan listened in rapt attention as the doctor said in an old and wise voice, the one he always used for Gandalf:

"You cannot pass," he said. The Orcs stood still and a dead silence fell. "I am a servant of the Secret Fire, wielder of the flame of Anor. You cannot pass. The dark fire will not avail you, flame of Udun. Go back to the Shadow! You cannot pass."

Juan cheered softly as the bridge collapsed, then gasped in horror as the whip came back up and snagged his foot... and pulled him down.

That's when the door burst open and armored soldiers came flooding into the room. Juan was out of the bed and on his feet in an instant. The first soldier that tried to put his hand on the doctor got his head nearly ripped off.

Juan cursed as he saw that none of the soldiers were armed with guns, that would have made things easier, but he fought on anyways. One guy tried to wrap his arms around Juan from behind, and got them both broken for his trouble.

Another one dropped to the floor screaming in agony as Juan destroyed his knee with one kick. Juan didn't know how long he fought to keep these men away from the doctor, but he knew the bodies were piling up in the room.

Then it happened; he didn't see the man coming up from behind him, but he did feel the modified cattle prod as it pressed into his neck. It drove him to his knees, but he got back up. The soldiers were stunned when he got back up, and he dropped another four of them before he was hit again; this time he felt his muscles betray him. He tried to keep fighting, but another one hit him and he fell to the floor. He could only scream as he watched the doctor being pulled from the room, and then he lost consciousness.

The next room, both Juans knew, was about two weeks later. It had taken him that long to heal. For almost a full week he couldn't even walk; most of the bones in his body had been broken.

In this room was Dr. Weiss, stripped naked and chained to the wall. Dr. Drake brought Juan into the room and ordered him to 'punish' the doctor for disobeying orders.

Juan Two looked at Dr. Weiss with sadness in his eyes and a small tear falling. "I... I remember. He used to call me his little elf... His little Legolas, cause I never missed."

It took Doctor Weiss almost two months before he died.

They weren't done with Juan yet. The next room was only two days after the doctor died. When they walked in, they saw Juan standing in a small room; a woman had just been brought in naked and crying. Juan was told to "make it last." He dared not disappoint. It took her two hours to die.

And then a young teen boy. He tried to fight back, but Juan was way too much for him. He lasted almost four hours.

Then a little girl, no more than five. She only lasted an hour.

By now, there was only one member of Dr. Weiss's family left. His new born.

Juan walked into the room where there was a little crib. Dr. Drake was being nice to him and let him have a gun. Juan, only eight at the time and less than seven months before he got rescued, raised the gun and pointed it at the sleeping baby.

"I can't see this! I don't want to remember this! No, Joel! Please!" Juan One started sobbing and the scene before them jerked to a halt and froze.

Joel looked at One and saw him resisting the links he was trying to build between the two boys through the grip he had on their hands. "Juan, you need to. I know it's hard, but you need to."

Juan One was still shaking his head, "I can guess, but I don't want to know... to remember... I couldn't pull the trigger then and I don't want to see or remember... I couldn't... I wouldn't...."

"I know," said Juan Two softly as tears fell from his face. He looked over and passed Joel at One and said, "I knew you couldn't... but I could; and I did. I knew we couldn't take what would happen if we didn't... I... I feel now what you felt then... I wish I hadn't... but I had to... and I did...."

Juan One was mute as he looked at the hand Joel was holding. He tried to release the grip, but that was impossible. It was as if they were one.

"Don't try, sweetheart," Joel whispered, knowing what was going through One's mind. "You NEED to see this... You won't be alone, Juan. Never alone. I am here and Juan is here too... and you'll have your brothers and my brothers and your Koth when we come out of here... but you need to see the rest."

The scene restarted as the Juan in the memory hesitated, his hand shaking as he held the gun at the sleeping infant's head. Then his eyes turned yellow, his hand stopped shaking, and in a hoarse whisper they heard him say, "forgive me... please forgive me." and he pulled the trigger. When he looked up, he saw.. or remembered for the first time... a sign above his door. 'Abandon hope, all ye who enter here.'

The next few rooms were fairly normal, as if that change in Juan was what they were looking for, especially Doctor Drake.

The last room was a long one, though... it started with Juan being brought in and congratulated. "You are going to be rewarded," Doctor Drake said softly, his eyes burning with something Juan did not recognize.

It did not take the boy long to know what that was.

Juan One and Two were both crying, as was Joel, as they witnessed Juan's rape and the torture that went with it. By the end, the yellow eyed, naked and bleeding Juan had been dragged out of the room

and thrown into his own. He had been 'unmanned', and it seemed like the yellow in the boy's eyes would never leave.

"That was months and months before Adam came," Two whispered as he remembered the pain.

Juan One nodded, "I remember... now, anyway... sorry...."

"S'okay...."

Then the room changed without them leaving it, and the hopelessness in the Juan of memory seemed to vanish as he was saved by his eldest brother. And for the first time in a long time, he had love... real love. A love that didn't have to hide....

Juan Two started to smile, "I... I kept hiding then... I didn't like that feeling... but.. it's nice, isn't it?"

Joel nodded, "Yes... I didn't know that feeling when I came here Monday either... it's very nice."

"I thought it had been taken from me forever," One added, a soft smile on his face, "but... Adam gave it back, and Mom... and Daddy...."

Joel smiled more and then the room vanished. He released both their hands.

"We're still here, though," Two murmured as he looked at Joel curiously. "I thought we'd vanish, or one of us, or something."

"The rest is up to you," Joel said as he simply stood there, watching them.

Juan One moved over and took Two's hand. "I've been wanting to get normal for so long... but now... I don't want you to go... I did, once... kinda...."

"Same," Two nodded with a sad smile.

They both smiled softly as a song came to mind. Juan One started singing first:

*"I'm so tired of being here, suppressed by all my childish fears  
And if you have to leave, I wish that you would just leave  
Your presence still lingers here and it won't leave me alone"*

*"These wounds won't seem to heal, this pain is just too real  
There's just too much that time cannot erase"*

Juan Two then took over for the chorus, and he linked his other hand with One's so they were facing each other properly:

*"When you cried, I'd wipe away all of your tears  
When you'd scream, I'd fight away all of your fears  
And I held your hand through all of these years  
But you still have all of me"*

*"You used to captivate me by your resonating light  
Now, I'm bound by the life you left behind"*

Juan One took over quickly, and Two went silent. Sad smiles were on both boys' faces:

*"Your face it haunts my once pleasant dreams Your voice it chased away all the sanity in me"*

*"These wounds won't seem to heal, this pain is just too real There's just too much that time cannot erase"*

Again, Two sang the chorus alone:

*"When you cried, I'd wipe away all of your tears When you'd scream, I'd fight away all of your fears And I held your hand through all of these years But you still have all of me"*

They both started singing the rest together as they pulled each other in for a hug:

*"I've tried so hard to tell myself that you're gone But though you're still with me, I've been alone all along"*

As they sang the chorus for the final time, however, something happened. First, Joel joined his voice with theirs, and second, a light started to radiate off them both so that nothing but pure white could be seen...

*"When you cried, I'd wipe away all of your tears When you'd scream, I'd fight away all of your fears And I held your hand through all of these years But you still have all of me, me, me..."*

As the final words faded, Joel noticed that the dual voices of the Juans had vanished, and only a single, treble voice remained. The light also vanished.

"Look up, Juan," Joel whispered as he reached to take the boy's hand.

Juan did.

There was just him... Just one of him.

"I... I'm me... both... no, there's just me... where is... he is me too! We're one! WE'RE ONE!!!" Juan yelled before starting to cry.

Joel held him tightly for a long while as he sobbed out in happiness and joy.

Then, "Come. Time to go home, Juan," Joel smiled...

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The Clan watched in silence for the first few minutes. Mind Melds rarely took a long time, but when two minutes became five, they started to murmur nervously. Spock and Sarek looked up from where they and Amanda had been patiently watching and looked around at the filled room complete with apprehensive faces.

"Do not be alarmed," Sarek said softly. "Sometimes a wounded mind can take a long time to heal. Neither my grandson or Juan is in any danger."

Relief seemed palpable as everyone relaxed visibly.

Doctor McCoy chose this moment to bustle his way through from the direction of the Kitchen, Teri at his side. He looked down at the two boys and tutted under his breath. "A party, and this happens." He looked at Spock and said, "Teri told me that your son had his arm dislocated. Who performed the reduction?"

Spock reached out with an arm and placed his hand on Chang's shoulder, "This is one of the top medical officers of the new Special Forces Division of the Clan, Doctor. His name is Chang."

McCoy nodded and signaled for Chang to come to him, where they conversed briefly in hushed whispers.

Adam Casey edged closer and closer to Spock, not taking his eyes off Juan's prone form. As he felt himself bump into Spock's side, and felt the Vulcan's arm lay itself lightly over his shoulders, Adam looked up.

Spock saw terror in Adam's eyes and spoke quickly, "Your brother is going to be all right, Adam. At worst, the personality he carries inside him may remain, but both would end up stable."

Adam's eyes seemed to lose some of their tension and he quickly looked back down at the two melding on the floor. "I don't want to lose him... I love all my brothers," Adam whispered to the Vulcan Captain, "but Juan's my first brother. I rescued him first. He might not know it, but I've always tried to protect him the most...."

Spock simply squeezed Adam's shoulder gently and drew the teen to stand before him, Adam's back tight against his chest as they both watched.

It took another four or five minutes, then Joel breathed out heavily and removed his hand from Juan's face. Juan's eyes opened and he blinked around from his prone position, as if trying to figure out where he was. Joel whispered to him, "No more than fifteen minutes has passed since I stopped you, little bro."

Juan didn't reply, he just sat up and pulled Joel into a tight hug. Sobbing suddenly, Juan did not notice the whine of pain that Joel made, nor that Joel was trembling hard. At least not at first.

As he pulled back, he saw Joel's face twisted as the Vulcan tried not to scream. "What's wrong?" Juan whispered, but he didn't need a response, for he saw that the Uniform top and shirt that Joel was wearing was open. Joel's ribcage was bruised badly and his pale scar-patterned smooth skin was mottled dark green with those bruises.

"Oh shit... what happened?!?!" Juan cried out, then got a haunted look and quietly asked Joel, "I did that... didn't I?"

Adam slipped to the floor and knelt next to them both, "No, it was *him*, Juan. Not you. Don't blame yourself, bro."

Juan sighed and bowed his head. "No, Adam. It was me," he said in the deathly silent room. A small sob escaped Juan again as he continued, "I wanted to kill Joel. I wanted to tear him apart... yet I didn't want to hurt him and I loved him... but I was afraid of him..."

Adam reached out and touched Juan's shoulder. "No, it wasn't... Wha?!" he spluttered as Juan raised his head and opened his eyes.

One was black... the other was yellow.

"It was me," Juan said, as tears continued to fall gently down his face.

Will whistled as Jory just stared. Chang, still standing next to McCoy, asked softly, "What has happened, Joel?"

Joel, his hurting right arm held against his equally hurting chest, answered, "They are one. There is no 'gentle Juan' and 'angry Juan' anymore. There is just Juan. All they were apart, he is now - and he is more. He is what he should have always been. Whole. Loving. Strong. Loyal. Brave. He is Juan."

Juan sniffed at hearing what Joel said, "No one's even said that about me before."

"I've got some to add," Koth said as he to knelt down to be with his boyfriend. Juan looked up at him, and his eyes softened even more. Koth smiled and rubbed his hand on Juan's cheek as he looked into those dual colored pair of soulful eyes, "Beautiful, wonderful, amazing, sexy and mine...."

With tears running down he face, Juan smiled up at the small Klingon boy, "I think it's the other way around... YOU are mine."

Everyone around started to laugh until Joel cried out in pain, "... please... don't make me laugh...."

Juan's face became concerned again. "Chang! Can you help him? Please?" his guilt ridden voice asked as he took Joel's hand.

McCoy and Chang moved over as Chang said, "Yes, we will."

"Okay, people. Show's over for now. We need room. Joel will be up and around in no time," McCoy stated firmly. Then he pointed at Cory, Sean, and Kevin, "You can stay, and so can you, obviously," he added, pointing at the Unit boys. "Everyone else, get moving or I'll have you all confined to bed rest, so help me God." Seeing the grins and smirks passing between some of the boys, he amended it: "That's SEPARATE bed rest," and chuckled as smiles vanished from faces right and left.

Those gathered all smiled and scattered back to what they had been doing, while Kevin went to the nearest sofa and grabbed a cushion for Joel. The Vulcan was still kneeling on the floor and Cory and Koth were helping him out of his top and shirt. Juan was looking on sadly and started crying again as he saw the state of Joel's shoulder and ribs.

Joel sighed and then reached over to poke the crown of Juan's bowed head. "Oi," he muttered.

"What?" Juan asked thickly as he raised his eyes to Joel.

Joel pulled him over with his good arm and kissed him on the lips. "There," he stated with a smile as Juan gaped at him. "Do you think I blame you, big little brother?"

Juan shook his head slowly. "No, guess not. I still feel bad, though," he whispered as he gripped Joel's left hand tight. He looked at Chang and McCoy, "Is there something I can do to help him? Please?"

Chang smiled and whispered to McCoy, who nodded. "Yes, Juan. Doctor McCoy will show you how to strengthen the weakened ball joint in Joel's shoulder with the regenerator. Will that be okay?"

Juan nodded, and a smile started to replace the concern on his face.

Joel was helped to lie down by Kevin and Sean, and Juan shuffled over so that the Vulcan's head was in his lap. Kevin giggled, "Didn't need the cushion!"

Juan grinned and shook his head. McCoy held out a small device and showed Juan how to use it, then he left the now smiling ten-year-old to do his job. Koth cuddled in on one side of Juan, while Kevin did the same on the other side. Cory and Sean moved to sit on the sofa with Juan's brothers, thus allowing the two doctors to get to work.

"Does it feel better, Joel?" Juan asked as he concentrated on the boy's right shoulder.

"Uh huh," Joel smiled as the pain was slowly fading, both from his sore shoulder and his hurting ribs.

Adam was watching Juan closely as his little brother radiated peace at helping another this way. Adam was thinking to himself, and trying to work out what had really happened. Was this really Juan?

"Joel?" he asked from his seat as he sat forwards slightly.

Joel looked over at him, "Yeah?"

"What's going to happen with Juan now?"

Joel smiled, and replied honestly, "Well, logically, I'd assume that he's going to need to talk to his brother, his friends, then have a long talk with his boyfriend, then maybe sex with his boyfriend, and..."

"JOEL!" Juan and Koth gasped as they both colored up fast, and Juan nearly dropped his regenerator.

"What? What did I say?" Joel asked innocently.

Kevin was giggling, "Oh, nothing... just like you said about that possible blow job type of nothing...."

"He asked me a question, so I answered it... oh, never mind..." Joel sighed with a lost little smile. He looked back at Adam, who was trying not to break his ribs by laughing. "I think you also want to know about what I did in Juan's head?"

Adam could only nod. He didn't trust his voice.

"Well, I showed them how they got split up, and as I did, I started to knit them back together. Once everything had been seen, they sorta recombined, and it's just Juan, now," Joel explained briefly, looking up at Juan to make sure that much was okay to tell. Juan nodded with a smile.

"Oh, okay," Adam managed after he had calmed down some. "And how will Juan be now? I mean... well, don't take this wrong, Juan, but... you don't seem quite like the Juan we know."

"I am, but... uh.... Joel? Can you explain? I don't think I have the words yet," Juan asked with a helpless smile.

"Sure, bro... mmm... I like that," the Vulcan murmured as Juan ran the fingers of his free hand back and forth over Joel's forehead. He closed his eyes and relaxed as he said, "Juan is different, but only in so much as he's calmer, now. Settled."

Juan snorted, "Calm? Me?"

"What are you smoking, Joel?" Logan spluttered. "Him calm? Never!"

"Keep that up," Juan said to him with a smile so sickly sweet a girl scout would have gone green with envy, "and I'll shove your head up Will's ass...."

"Okay, I'm convinced," Will said with a giggle. "He's Juan, all right!"

Joel giggled for a second, then winced. Chang looked up at him, then patted his stomach softly, "Try not to laugh yet, little one. We are nearly finished."

"Kay," he smiled mutely, yet his eyes registered pain. Kevin reached over and started to massage Joel's ear to calm him, and Juan watched with interest before doing the same to the Vulcan's other ear. Joel smiled up at them in thanks, then looked over at Juan's brothers. "What I meant by calm was that Juan doesn't worry about losing control anymore. He doesn't have to worry about getting angry and another persona taking over, nor does he have to worry about feeling strong good emotions and wanting to back away. The two sides of his personality are now one, so he will be able to flow from one side of his emotions to the other without a different persona needing to be in control. He can be loving Juan, or pissed off angry Juan, or cuddly Juan or... you get it? It's just him, now. Both sides back together. He can just relax and be himself. He's centered. He's calm. He's whole."

"He called me cuddly! I like that!" Juan giggled.

Adam nodded with understanding, "I understand. Thank you, Joel. Thank you so much."

Joel looked embarrassed and glanced at Cory and Sean who smiled at him and nodded. He blushed, "It's only what my brothers and Kevvy did for me... help.

You don't have to...."

"I know," Adam interrupted firmly and gently. "But I will anyway. If there is anything you need, ever, you only have to ask. We're in your debt twice now: for Korris and Koth and what that means for our family, and now for Juan himself."

"Awwww, maan!" Joel muttered, his face now bright green. "You're making me feel funny."

Juan giggled and showed how supple the Genesis kids really were by bending almost double to kiss Joel's forehead as he cradled the boy's head in his lap. "You make us feel 'funny' too, Joel. You said nice things about me and about others. I've heard you. Just accept the nice things we want to say about you too, okay?"

"Kay," he whispered before looking down his chest at what his uncle and Chang were doing. It was not much, now, for they were about finished.

"I think that's got it," McCoy stated with a smile. "No more fighting with freight trains, okay, Joel?"

Joel giggled, and it didn't hurt, so he let himself giggle more. Then, "Okay. No fights. I'll just tickle the one that attacked me whenever I can!"

Juan snorted and giggled, "You'll have to catch me first, shrimp!"

Joel continued to giggle.

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*Editor.Archivist's Notes:* Well. Even knowing what was coming beforehand, this chapter was a harrowing, soul-searing chapter to work through. Yet it is testimony to the fact that, no matter how horrible the situation, there is **nothing** that Love cannot overcome. In the end, you could say that Juan One won out, yet Juan Two won too. Thank you, Roland, for taking us through the deep valley or darkness in the forming of Juan so that we could see the light at the other side. I know how tough this was to write, and I'm sure the readers will agree that it was indeed a labor of love.

- D&B

## Chapter 09

The Clan watched in silence for the first few minutes. Mind Melds rarely took a long time, but when two minutes became five, they started to murmur nervously. Spock and Sarek looked up from where they and Amanda had been patiently watching and looked around at the filled room complete with apprehensive faces.

"Do not be alarmed," Sarek said softly. "Sometimes a wounded mind can take a long time to heal. Neither my grandson or Juan is in any danger."

Relief seemed palpable as everyone relaxed visibly.

Doctor McCoy chose this moment to bustle his way through from the direction of the Kitchen, Teri at his side. He looked down at the two boys and tutted under his breath. "A party, and this happens." He looked at Spock and said, "Teri told me that your son had his arm dislocated. Who performed the reduction?"

Spock reached out with an arm and placed his hand on Chang's shoulder, "This is one of the top medical officers of the new Special Forces Division of the Clan, Doctor. His name is Chang."

McCoy nodded and signaled for Chang to come to him, where they conversed briefly in hushed whispers.

Adam Casey edged closer and closer to Spock, not taking his eyes off Juan's prone form. As he felt himself bump into Spock's side, and felt the Vulcan's arm lay itself lightly over his shoulders, Adam looked up.

Spock saw terror in Adam's eyes, and spoke quickly, "Your brother is going to be all right, Adam. At worst, the personality he carries inside him may remain, but both would end up stable."

Adam's eyes seemed to lose some of their tension, and he quickly looked back down at the two melding on the floor. "I don't want to lose him... I love all my brothers," Adam whispered to the Vulcan Captain, "but Juan's my first brother. I rescued him first. He might not know it, but I've always tried to protect him the most...."

Spock simply squeezed Adam's shoulder gently, and drew the teen to stand before him, Adam's back tight against his chest as they both watched.

It took another four or five minutes, then Joel breathed out heavily and removed his hand from Juan's face. Juan's eyes opened and he blinked around from his prone position, as if trying to figure out where he was. Joel whispered to him, "No more than fifteen minutes has passed since I stopped you, little bro."

Juan didn't reply; he just sat up and pulled Joel into a tight hug. Sobbing suddenly, Juan did not notice the whine of pain that Joel made, nor that Joel was trembling hard. At least not at first.

As he pulled back, he saw Joel's face twisted as the Vulcan tried not to scream. "What's wrong?" Juan whispered, but he didn't need a response for he saw that the Uniform top and shirt that Joel was wearing was open. Joel's ribcage was bruised badly and his pale scar-patterned smooth skin was mottled dark green with those bruises.

"Oh shit... what happened?!?!" Juan cried out, then got a haunted look and quietly asked Joel, "I did that... didn't I?"

Adam slipped to the floor and knelt next to them both, "No, it was *him*, Juan. Not you. Don't blame yourself, bro."

Juan sighed and bowed his head. "No, Adam. It was me," he said in the deathly silent room. A small sob escaped Juan again as he continued, "I wanted to kill Joel. I wanted to tear him apart... yet I didn't want to hurt him, and I loved him... but I was afraid of him...."

Adam reached out and touched Juan's shoulder. "No, it wasn't... Wha?!" he spluttered as Juan raised his head and opened his eyes.

One was black... the other was yellow.

"It was me," Juan said, as tears continued to fall gently down his face.

Will whistled as Jory just stared. Chang, still standing next to McCoy, asked softly, "What has happened, Joel?"

Joel, his hurting right arm held against his equally hurting chest, answered, "They are one. There is no 'gentle Juan' and 'angry Juan' anymore. There is just Juan. All they were apart, he is now - and he is more. He is what he should have always been. Whole. Loving. Strong. Loyal. Brave. He is Juan."

Juan sniffed at hearing what Joel said, "No one's even said that about me before."

"I've got some to add," Koth said as he to knelt down to be with his boyfriend. Juan looked up at him and his eyes softened even more. Koth smiled and rubbed his hand on Juan's cheek as he looked into those dual colored pair of soulful eyes, "Beautiful, wonderful, amazing, sexy and mine...."

With tears running down he face, Juan smiled up at the small Klingon boy, "I think it's the other way around... YOU are mine."

Everyone around started to laugh until Joel cried out in pain, "... please... don't make me laugh...."

Juan's face became concerned again. "Chang! Can you help him? Please?" his guilt ridden voice asked as he took Joel's hand.

McCoy and Chang moved over as Chang said, "Yes, we will."

"Okay, people. Show's over for now. We need room. Joel will be up and around in no time," McCoy stated firmly. Then he pointed at Cory, Sean and Kevin, "You can stay, and so can you, obviously," he added, pointing at the Unit boys. "Everyone else, get moving or I'll have you all confined to bed rest, so help me God." Seeing the grins and smirks passing between some of the boys, he amended it: "That's SEPARATE bed rest," and chuckled as smiles vanished from faces right and left.

Those gathered all smiled and scattered back to what they had been doing, while Kevin went to the nearest sofa and grabbed a cushion for Joel. The Vulcan was still kneeling on the floor and Cory and Koth were helping him out of his top and shirt. Juan was looking on sadly and started crying again as he saw the state of Joel's shoulder and ribs.

Joel sighed and then reached over to poke the crown of Juan's bowed head. "Oi," he muttered.

"What?" Juan asked thickly as he raised his eyes to Joel.

Joel pulled him over with his good arm and kissed him on the lips. "There," he stated with a smile as Juan gaped at him. "Do you think I blame you, big little brother?"

Juan shook his head slowly. "No, guess not. I still feel bad, though," he whispered as he gripped Joel's left hand tight. He looked at Chang and McCoy, "Is there something I can do to help him? Please?"

Chang smiled and whispered to McCoy, who nodded. "Yes, Juan. Doctor McCoy will show you how to strengthen the weakened ball joint in Joel's shoulder with the re-generator. Will that be okay?"

Juan nodded and a smile started to replace the concern on his face.

Joel was helped to lie down by Kevin and Sean, and Juan shuffled over so that the Vulcan's head was in his lap. Kevin giggled, "Didn't need the cushion!"

Juan grinned and shook his head. McCoy held out a small device and showed Juan how to use it, then he left the now smiling ten year old to do his job. Koth cuddled in on one side of Juan, while Kevin did the same on the other side. Cory and Sean moved to sit on the sofa with Juan's brothers, thus allowing the two Doctors to get to work.

"Does it feel better, Joel?" Juan asked as he concentrated on the boy's right shoulder.

"Uh huh," Joel smiled as the pain was slowly fading, both from his sore shoulder and his hurting ribs.

Adam was watching Juan closely as his little brother radiated peace at helping another this way. Adam was thinking to himself, and trying to work out what had really happened. Was this really Juan?

"Joel?" he asked from his seat as he sat forwards slightly.

Joel looked over at him, "Yeah?"

"What's going to happen with Juan now?"

Joel smiled, and replied honestly, "Well, logically, I'd assume that he's going to need to talk to his brother, his friends, then have a long talk with his boyfriend, then maybe sex with his boyfriend, and..."

"JOEL!" Juan and Koth gasped as they both colored up fast, and Juan nearly dropped his re-generator.

"What? What did I say?" Joel asked innocently.

Kevin was giggling, "Oh, nothing... just like you said about that possible blow job type of nothing...."

"He asked me a question, so I answered it... oh, never mind..." Joel sighed with a lost little smile. He looked back at Adam, who was trying not to break his ribs by laughing. "I think you also want to know about what I did in Juan's head?"

Adam could only nod. He didn't trust his voice.

"Well, I showed them how they got split up, and as I did, I started to knit them back together. Once everything had been seen, they sorta recombined, and it's just Juan, now," Joel explained briefly, looking up at Juan to make sure that much was okay to tell. Juan nodded with a smile.

"Oh, okay," Adam managed after he had calmed down some. "And how will Juan be now? I mean... well, don't take this wrong, Juan, but... you don't seem quite like the Juan we know."

"I am, but... uh.... Joel? Can you explain? I don't think I have the words yet," Juan asked with a helpless smile.

"Sure, bro... mmm... I like that," the Vulcan murmured as Juan ran the fingers of his free hand back and forth over Joel's forehead. He closed his eyes and relaxed as he said, "Juan is different, but only in so much as he's calmer, now. Settled."

Juan snorted, "Calm? Me?"

"What are you smoking, Joel?" Logan spluttered. "Him calm? Never!"

"Keep that up," Juan said to him with a smile so sickly sweet a girl scout would have gone green with envy, "and I'll shove your head up Will's ass...."

"Okay, I'm convinced," Will said with a giggle. "He's Juan, all right!"

Joel giggled for a second, then winced. Chang looked up at him, then patted his stomach softly, "Try not to laugh yet, little one. We are nearly finished."

"Kay," he smiled mutely, yet his eyes registered pain. Kevin reached over and started to massage Joel's ear to calm him, and Juan watched with interest before doing the same to the Vulcan's other ear. Joel smiled up at them in thanks, then looked over at Juan's brothers. "What I meant by calm was that Juan doesn't worry about losing control anymore. He doesn't have to worry about getting angry and another persona taking over, nor does he have to worry about feeling strong good emotions and wanting to back away. The two sides of his personality are now one, so he will be able to flow from one side of his emotions to the other without a different persona needing to be in control. He can be loving Juan, or pissed off angry Juan, or cuddly Juan or... you get it? It's just him now. Both sides back together. He can just relax and be himself. He's centered. He's calm. He's whole."

"He called me cuddly! I like that!" Juan giggled.

Adam nodded with understanding, "I understand. Thank you, Joel. Thank you so much."

Joel looked embarrassed and glanced at Cory and Sean who smiled at him and nodded. He blushed, "It's only what my brothers and Kevvy did for me... help. You don't have to..."

"I know," Adam interrupted firmly and gently. "But I will anyway. If there is anything you need, ever, you only have to ask. We're in your debt twice now: for Korris and Koth and what that means for our family, and now for Juan himself."

"Awwww, ma-an!" Joel muttered, his face now bright green. "You're making me feel funny."

Juan giggled and showed how supple the Genesis kids really were by bending almost double to kiss Joel's forehead as he cradled the boy's head in his lap. "You make us feel 'funny' too, Joel. You said ni-

ce things about me and about others. I've heard you. Just accept the nice things we want to say about you too, okay?"

"Kay," he whispered before looking down his chest at what his uncle and Chang were doing. It was not much now, for they were about finished.

"I think that's got it," McCoy stated with a smile. "No more fighting with freight trains, okay, Joel?"

Joel giggled, and it didn't hurt, so he let himself giggle more. Then, "Okay. No fights. I'll just tickle the one that attacked me whenever I can!"

Juan snorted and giggled, "You'll have to catch me first, shrimp!"

Joel continued to giggle.

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Ten minutes later, and they had all gone back to their food. Joel was feeding Kevin again, as per normal, while Koth was doing the same for Juan, who was laughing at him. Adam, Logan and the others were just watching Juan in wonder as he just opened up and played. It was simply wonderful.

Joel, however, began to feel strange. It was that same feeling from the Enterprise. As Kevin would say, he was feeling 'horny', so after giving Kevin another mouthful of spaghetti, Joel started to nibble on Kevin's neck.

"Do you two need a room?" Logan giggled as Kevin's eyes rolled back in his head.

"Hummm?" Joel hummed as he looked up. A blush soon followed, "I did it again... sorry, Kev...."

"I'm not complaining, but after we've finished, we'll need to calm you down a bit," the brown haired boy giggled before kissing Joel softly. "You can't miss your entire birthday 'cos you're turned on, can you?"

Joel grinned, then looked up when Spock walked over to them and handed both him and Kevin their shakes. "Thanks, Daddy!"

Spock's eyes twinkled as he nodded. He was about to move away when Jason ran over. "Pop! I need a word quickly?"

"Of course. In private, or will it be acceptable to do so here?" Spock asked.

Jason shrugged, "Here's fine. It's about Sammy."

Joel's attention perked up quickly, and his horniness seemed suddenly forgotten. He kissed Kevin again before rising to stand with Jason and his father. "I know too, Daddy! I'll go and get Sammy while you talk with Jace!"

"Okay, my son," Spock said as he bent down to hug and kiss his boy.

Joel turned back to the table, "See ya later! I got another brother to help!"

They watched him zoom off on his mission before looking at each other. Kevin smiled and shrugged, "That's my Sa'ren...."

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It wasn't too much later that everyone started to head away from the room. First was Juan and Koth, Juan saying he needed some time to figure shit out. Then, in singles and pairs, everyone else left, till it was just Adam and Logan, both of them wondering what this "new" Juan would be like.

"Come on, Adam, lets go take a walk." Logan said while getting up, and pulling Adam to his feet. Both boys needed a break from all the tension going on.

Once they got outside, and started to walk around, they saw many kids; most of them younger then they were, out there running around and generally having fun. They both stopped and watched for a bit. "You know, Logan... It's times like these that I'm really conflicted."

"Oh?"

"Yeah, at the same time, I'm really upset 'cause I never got to be a kid like that. But then again, if things didn't happen the way they had, then how many kids would we have not been able to help?" Adam spoke wistfully while looking out at his younger brothers; both Kent and Jimmy, playing with a bunch of other kids.

Logan was about to respond when they saw Jimmy run off towards two people walking up, one was a teenager, the other looked to be in his early twenties. Adam wandered who they were for a brief instant, then when Jimmy ran into the arms of the younger one, it came to him. They were the guys that rescued his little brother.

"Come on, Logan, that's Skipper and Bobby." Adam started walking over with Logan right behind him.

"Oh that's right... we got something for them." Logan grinned, still not believing what Adam had pulled off. But as Adam said, 'they saved my brother, there's nothing too good for them.'

"Hey guys!" Adam said as he walked up to the group. Jimmy turned around and grinned up at Adam.

"Skipper, Bobby... this is my big brother Adam." It was such a change in Jimmy that both Bobby and Skipper had bemused smiles on their faces. Jimmy had almost said more about himself in that sentence then in all the time he was staying with them.

"Hey guys.. nice to meet you." Adam said after shaking hands with both of them. "I've heard quite a bit about both of you."

"None of it good, I assume." The younger, Bobby, said with a grin.

"Well, some of it was." Adam said with a mile wide grin as he pulled Jimmy into him in a hug. "This little guy almost talked my ear off about you guys. Once I got him talking, that is."

Logan couldn't help but jump in... "Yeah, now we can hardly shut him up."

"HEY!" Jimmy said indignantly, but laughed with everyone else.

"But, since you guys are here, I figure now would be a good time to give you guys a little something from us. Consider it a thanks for helping my little brother." Adam said as he pulled out a card from his pocket.

"You guys didn't..." Skipper started to say, but Adam stopped him with a hand.

"Skipper, there is nothing more important to me than my family. You went out of your way and helped my little brother, and what we did for you in return is no where's near enough... in my opinion." Adam said emphatically.

When Bobby opened the card, he looked perplexed, then read the card to Skipper. "This is for two guys who we could never thank enough. What we got for you could not be put in this card, so you'll have to wait till you get home for it. Don't worry... you'll know it when you see them."

Both guys looked at Adam questioningly, and Adam just grinned. "Bobby, I hear you're the youngest EMT in the state of Maine?" When Bobby just nodded, Adam went on. "Well, if you want to, you may end up being the youngest... something else too. But... you'll figure that out later."

Bobby was trying to say something, but got interrupted by Adam turning Jimmy around and looking at him. Adam taking on a very serious tone. "Jimmy, I want you to listen to me closely. I know that you've been having your nightmares still, and I think I've found a way to help you. Will you let me help you?"

Jimmy's smile faded, and quickly his eyes turned from joyous and happy to scared and panicked. Adam sent as much love and comfort as he could through his eyes, but it didn't really seem to work - until someone else walked up and took Jimmy's hand. Almost instantly, Jimmy seemed to calm down a bit.

Adam looked over to see a boy about eleven years old, sandy brown hair, and Adam could tell right away that this boy was shy, and reserved. Adam smiled deeply. "Thanks, I'm still learning how to do the empathy stuff."

"Well, me too," the newcomer said. "Back where we came from, I could feel what other people felt, but I couldn't DO anything about it." He looked pained at saying that, as if it was a fault in himself.

"Thanks, your doing a good job now." Jimmy said quietly as he squeezed the boys hand in thanks. "I'm Jimmy..." He struggled to say what he wanted, until he looked into Adam's eyes again. He knew he didn't need to be afraid with his big brother around, but it was still hard. He took a deep breath and tur-

ned to the boy. "I'm Jimmy, and Adam wants to help me with my nightmares. But... but I'm scared... could... would... can you help me?"

"Of course I'll help," the boy said. "I'm Galen, by the way. I know you're Adam and Logan, but, um, you're *\*really\** Adam's brother -- by blood, I mean, not brothers the way we all are brothers now?"

Adam nodded as Jimmy looked to him. "Yes we are. Jimmy and Kent have the same mother as I do. Jimmy was also 'experimented' on like I was, but he is different. Jimmy can control fire as easy as we can breathe. But he's afraid of it. We need to help him get over that fear, or else he will always be afraid of it and of himself." Jimmy nodded and was pulled up close to Adam, trying to be strong; but still needing to feel the comfort of his big brother.

"I'll... I'll try. If you guys will help me." Jimmy said while looking not just at Adam and Galen, but also to Skipper, Bobby, and Logan.

Logan noticed something in Bobby's expression -- it was what he saw in the mirror when he was holding in his own temper by main force. "Okay, spit it out Bobby," he said to him. "You don't think we'd ever hurt Jimmy, do you?"

"It's not that," Bobby said. "You didn't see him when we first found him. He's got that same panicked expression on his face and I don't ever want him to be that scared again." This last came out with some force, almost defiance, a "Don't fuck with his head" tone underlying it.

"Whoa, dude!" Logan said. "We're looking to do the same thing you are -- we want to help him get past that fear, so he'll never have to feel that way again! But in order to do that, he has to FACE that fear. That's what Adam wants to do here." Logan was restraining his own temper, knowing what was eating at Bobby. Skipper reached out and put a firm hand on Bobby's shoulder.

Jimmy was almost in tears, but he spoke up. "Bobby, Logan, touch Galen. You'll *\*see\** he wouldn't hurt me. I can *\*feel\** who he is inside me somehow, and I *\*know\** it. Just touch him. You'll see."

"You don't mind?" Bobby asked Galen. Wordlessly he shook his head no. Hesitantly, Bobby reached out and touched the side of Galen's head. Logan followed suit.

Slowly everyone there touched Galen, and then nodded in agreement. They all knew they had one mission right now, and that was to help Jimmy. "Okay, little guy," Adam started, "this is what we're going to do. The best way to help you get over your fears is for you to use your abilities."

Jimmy started to look really scared, and Adam rushed on. "You don't have to worry, we'll all be right there to help you through this. None of us will let anything bad happen to you okay?"

The young boy almost had tears in his eyes, but he looked up at his big brother and tried to be strong for him. Adam put his arm over Jimmy's shoulder, and walked him out to an unoccupied area of the Short Compound, Then he, along with everyone else there to give Jimmy support, got a first hand exhibition of just how strong Jimmy's control of fire actually was.

All during the display, Adam and Galen were helping Jimmy deal with the memories that came up because of what he was doing. Slowly, Jimmy began to get more comfortable with his powers, and as a

result, more comfortable with himself. It wasn't long till Jimmy was smiling and showing off what he could do. It was Bobby asking him a few questions that really made Jimmy work it out, but shortly, not only could he make fire, but he could also put it out.

It was his final display though that made everyone there gasp in shock. Jimmy tuned to them all, grinned, took a few steps back, then wreathed himself completely in flame. He could only hold it for a few seconds, but it was more than enough to make everyone there stare in shock.

When the fires went out, a grinning Jimmy was standing there. Of course, he couldn't figure out why everyone was laughing. "Uhhh.... Jimmy... Next time you do that, dude, you may want to think about your clothes." Jimmy looked down, and for the first time noticed that somehow he had managed to burn all his clothes off.

"The Human Torch never had to worry about that in the comics," Bobby giggled.

Skipper laughed. Thinking of the porn comics he'd seen in the Navy, he said, "Well, not in the ones they sold to kids!"

Will, who along with the rest of the core Unit, along with Riti, Viccy, all came over right before Jimmy erupted himself into flames, reached into his pack and pulled out a flight suit, then tossed it to him. "Here, it's a bit big, but at least you won't have the bird boy thinking it's worm hunting time.

"Cheep?" Riti giggled, eying 'little Jimmy' with hungry eyes...

That of course got everyone laughing again. Finally Logan couldn't help himself any longer. "You know, Adam," Logan said while throwing his arm over his lover's shoulder. "I think you're right. The insanity of this place IS worse than at our place... but I think I like it." Everyone laughed as Juan and Koth came back up to them. Adam couldn't help but think, again, how nice it was to see Juan smiling. He had smiled before, but it was almost always a feral grin, this time Juan was smiling with amusement.

"So how are you feeling?" Will asked his little brother, as they came into the group. Juan didn't say anything; his smile and the nods were enough.

About that time, Danny Shavers, one of the Unit's younger members at seven, was pulling on this older boy's arm, towards the group. Once he got there, Danny looked up to the big kid, "Well Daniel... ask them."

Daniel smiled as he looked around at the group, "Danny said you guys are really cool when you fight with swords. He... he said you had an amazing sparring match once. Do you think you could do it again... I wanna see that... PLEASE!!!!" He hit them with a full dose of the puppy dog eyes.

Chang was actually the first one to speak. "I think that would be a good idea. I have worried as of late that Adam might be getting rusty."

There was stunned silence for a moment as everyone registered that Chang made a joke, but then the group erupted into laughter and taunts directed towards Adam. Finally, Adam just raised his hand and the group fell quiet. He reached into his pocket and pulled out the modified cell phone that he carried so he could reach Daileass.

"Daileass, could you please transport our training swords to my location. Please make sure they're the sturdy ones. Also please ask Khan to report to my location as well. It's time to give my uppity little Samurai brother a lesson in humility."

Daileass was laughing so hard they could barely make out what he said. "Of course, Adam. Good luck.... you'll need it. Juan... I got fifty bucks on Chang, and under seven minutes."

Juan grinned and nodded as he pulled out a little book and started to write. When he looked up, all eyes were on him, including Khan who had walked up with the four swords. "What... I always take the bets. Of course, very few people ever bet on Chang losing, so I've started taking bets on how long his opponents will last. Daileass is down for seven minutes. Obviously he thinks Chang's gonna play with you guys a bit."

Of course, it was on then. The three boys spent a few minutes warming up while Juan was busy taking bets. While Adam was busy, even Logan walked over to Juan. "You breathe a word of this... you're dead. I got a hundred bucks on four and a half minutes." Juan broke out laughing, but put it in his book. From there, they all made their way over to the soccer field.

The game was settling down, and cries of fun and laughter soon filled the air as the kids either played in the two teams or watched. They were soon joined by Adam Casey, Logan and many from the Special Forces Division.

Once Matty had scored his final goal, Adam pulled Cory to one side and explained what he and his brothers wanted to do. Soon, the pitch had been vacated of players and the kids all settled down in a large ring shape; leaving a nice open space in the middle for the Unit kids to show off their skills.

Tristan and Donna were not paying attention to the duels when they started, however, but were both chatting intently with Riti and Victoria.

The three boys arranged themselves in the center of the group that had gathered and then made them all move back by about twenty feet. Amur Khan and Adam looked at each other. The gaze spoke volumes. The two of them had obviously worked on a plan to defeat their brother.

"You're going down this time, Bro." Adam teased.

"Yes, my brother. Today is the day you lose!" Khan growled.

Chang for his part seemed to take no notice of what his brothers were saying. He went over to Korris and said to him, "I would put your money on seven minutes thirty and a half seconds." Chang made sure that both Khan and Adam heard what he said.

Juan looked up as Korris made his bet. "My stop watch doesn't do tenths of a second."

"Well, let Daileass keep the time then," was the reply from Korris.

"I would be happy to keep the time, but I am sure it won't be necessary. If Chang says that seven minutes thirty and a half seconds is what it is going to take, that is what it will take," came the amused reply

from Daileass. Juan looked up and his eyes widened with surprise as a rush of people wanting to change their bets, and some placed new bets rushed him.

"Hey! Back off will ya. ALL BETS ARE CLOSED! Jeez! Thanks a lot, Daileass!" Juan was disgusted.

"Always ready to help, bro."

Juan stuck his tongue out into the air, like was always done when gesturing to Daileass. The Unit's AI might not have as many cameras here as he does at the Unit base, but everyone who knew Daileass knew he had probably hijacked some US government satellite so he could watch. Possibly even broadcast the fight to the TV's in the Unit base.

Adam scowled, but couldn't keep the corners of his mouth from turning slightly upward. "Remember, Daileass, WINDOWS ME! And I have a boyfriend that can make it happen!"

"You wouldn't. How could you even say such a thing. I am telling Mom on you."

From the tone of Daileass' response, it wasn't a stretch to imagine him standing there sticking his tongue out at Adam.

"You shouldn't dish it out if you can't take it my AI brother. Besides you would be cute as Windows ME," Khan said with a wicked looking toothy Cheshire Cat like grin.

"How can you say that. You don't love me..." was all Daileass could get out before, Adam smiling at the banter, loudly shouted out.

"Daileass, call it!"

Khan suddenly became all business. Chang for his part seemed to be oblivious as he stood talking quietly with Korris, while facing away from his brothers. Suddenly Daileass called out to the combatants. "Is everyone ready?"

Upon receiving a "Yes" from Adam and Khan, and an almost imperceptible nod of the head from Chang, Daileass called the start of the match, his voice ringing out from every Unit cell phone/communicator in the area.

"Gentleman. Start your engines! In this corner we have the ever inscrutable 'Little Samurai Brother' Chang." This made the people watching snicker. "...and his opponents for this match..." Daileass made a dramatic pause. "It's the Lover Boy in charge Adam and his partner Amur 'the Kitty Boy' Khan!"

"LETS GET IT ON!"

Khan and Adam spread themselves apart by about twenty-five feet. Both were holding their katanas in one hand, still in the sheath, directly in front of their chests horizontal to the ground. Chang moved slowly towards the center of the ring created by the crowd. Khan and Adam kept their distance from Chang about the same as they followed him to the center of the ring.

Chang appraised the situation, and slowly drew one of his two katana from its sheath. He was looking at the strategy that his brothers had chosen and he grinned. They had obviously been working on this quite a bit. They were in synch with each other. Chang was excited. This would be something new. He loved to push himself, but without Master Takamura around, that had proved next to impossible.

Suddenly both Khan and Adam made for Chang. He sprang into the air nearly twenty-five feet to avoid them, but apparently that is what they expected him to do; for Khan left the ground to meet Chang in the air while Adam placed himself in a way to make it difficult for Chang to come back down again. Both drew their katana and held the sheath in their other hand. Chang grinned to himself. *'I am not that easy to trap, my brothers.'*

As soon as Khan was close, Chang thrust the point of his blade at Khan's wrist. While Khan countered, Chang did a little twist of his arm and pushed the blade wide. Khan made to strike Chang's head with the sheath he was holding, but Chang was faster. He grabbed Khan by his wrist and twisted his body around so he was over Khan's back, who now found himself facing Adam. Chang threw a kick and sent him flying straight at Adam. Chang used the force of the kick to change his own position, and was now coming down the length of a katana to Adam's left.

Adam, instead of moving out of the way, sprang straight at Khan. They grasped each others wrist and spun around, with the result being Adam and Chang colliding sword to sword. As soon as Khan hit the ground, he threw himself into the mix with a ferocious growl. Chang was being pressed hard to defend himself from both his attackers. A gasp and then a cheer escaped from the crowd.

Chang still only had one of his katanas drawn. His feet remained absolutely still as his upper body twisted fluidly. Both Khan and Adam were raining blows down with ferocity and force. This was a "friendly fight," but they were not pulling back one bit. To do so would be an insult. The swords were moving so fast that most of the kids watching could not follow. All they saw was a flickering blur of the swords and they heard a ringing of the blades that sounded like the continuous ring you get when you run your wet finger around the top of a crystal wine glass.

Oaths could be heard from everyone watching. Some of the children had tears in their eyes, not because they were frightened, but because they were feeling truly safe for the first time in their young lives. These were some of the people who had rescued them, and had promised to protect them. These were the leaders of the Clan's Special Forces Division: the Clan's Strong Right Arm. These people put their all into what they were doing and the example was truly inspiring. For the first time in a long time, many of the kids felt truly safe, and they all truly believed in the 'U.N.I.T.' and their union with the Clan.

Suddenly, Chang changed the flow of the battle. He tagged Khan on the side of his head with the sheath, pivoted on one foot and sent a lightning fast kick to the solar plexus of Adam, who managed to just barely deflect it by crossing his arms in front of himself. It was all the distraction Chang needed. He quickly bent backwards and thrust the sheath a good ten centimeters into the ground and used it like a pole to vault himself into the air, just as Khan and Adam both thrust their blades at him.

Logan was impressed. He knew that Khan and Adam had been working hard to come up with ways to defeat Chang. He had been working out with them for a while now, and was witness to their sessions. They would work with Logan on his sword skills until he was exhausted, then they would continue on, sometimes for another three to four hours. To see the result of all that hard work was personally satisfying to Logan.

Before Chang landed, he had his other katana drawn. He was moving in on his opponents as they checked their forward movement so as not to cut each other and they fluidly turned in unison to meet Chang's attack. They were beaten back by the furious assault. For the next ten or fifteen seconds, it was all they could do to keep Chang from cutting them.

"One Minute!" was called by Daileas.

Juan was getting excited. His blood was pumping hard. It was all he could do to restrain himself from joining the battle. His eyes were shining with the light of a warrior. Daileas of course had made a base wide announcement and almost everyone not on duty was hastily making their way to watch the fight on the closest TV set. It was a special thing to see the original U.N.I.T. members fight with each other, especially Chang.

Koth had made his way to Juan's side and took his hand in a tight grip. The young Klingon warrior was feeling the same thrill of battle as his beloved. His brother Korris, for his part, was starting to growl. He was so turned on by his lover's strength and incredible skill. He knew from experience that he would not be able to last against Adam and Khan, and he was no slouch. Korris doubted that any of his Klingon instructors could have lasted against any of the three warriors in front of him. He felt no dishonor at this. There could be no shame in falling to a superior warrior. To fall in battle was all a Klingon needed. 'Today is a good day to die' is more than just words to a true Klingon.

His beloved was a Klingon Warrior in every way imaginable, and their hearts beat as one. Without even realizing it Korris began reciting the origin myth of the Klingon race...

***"With fire and steel did the gods forge the Klingon heart. So fiercely did it beat, so loud was the sound, that the gods cried out, 'On this day we have brought forth the strongest heart in all the heavens. None can stand before it without trembling at its strength.' But then the Klingon heart weakened, its steady rhythm faltered and the gods said, 'Why do you weaken so? We have made you the strongest in all of creation.'***

Somewhere along the way he was joined by Juan and Koth as they shared the feelings of their brother.

***And the heart said... 'I am alone.'***

Adam and Khan had shifted their tactics again. They were moving in seemingly random patterns and trying to press Chang. Their bodies had become like reeds twisting in the wind. Chang was grinning from ear to ear with a fierceness that would chill the heart of the most battle hardened Klingon. *'My brothers have gotten much better. A month ago neither of you would have been able to pull this move off. I am impressed but you will have to do much better than that if you wish to even press me.'*

***And the gods knew that they had erred. So they went back to their forge and brought forth another heart.***

Almost as if they had heard what Chang was thinking, they increased their speed and began weaving drunkenly around Chang. The grin on his face became, if anything, more fierce. A calm spread through his entire being and he shut his eyes.

***But the second heart beat stronger than the first, and the first was jealous of its power.***

*Fortunately, the second heart was tempered by wisdom.*

A kid in the crowd noticed what Chang had done, and let out a cry.

"Look! Look! Chang doesn't even have his eyes open!"

Several others in the crowd took to making similar exclamations.

*'If we join together, no force can stop us.'*

Adam and Khan continued to press forward, but it seemed to have little effect on Chang's defense. Soon Chang was weaving and bobbing in the same fashion. Juan, Korris, Koth, and those with the training and the senses to see it realized that Chang was not blocking with his katana, as were both Adam and Khan. Chang was effortlessly avoiding their attacks while using his blades and feet to press his attack on his brothers.

With a sudden increase in speed and ferocity, Chang destroyed his brothers' defense as Korris, Juan, and Koth finished the legend. He kicked Khan hard in the side of the head and sent him flying, using one katana to shave the fur off of his tail as he flew by. Adam, for his part, caught the hilt of the other katana on the side of his head. It only missed his temple because of Adam's incredible reflexes.

*And when the two hearts began to beat together, they filled the heavens with a terrible sound. For the first time, the gods knew fear. They tried to flee, but it was too late. The Klingon hearts destroyed the gods who created them and turned the heavens to ashes. To this very day, no one can oppose the beating of two Klingon hearts.'*

Another cheer went up from the crowd. They were swept away by the display of skill from Chang and the words of the legend. Many were thinking to themselves something along the lines of...

*'Could anything better describe the boys of the U.N.I.T. Their creators were destroyed by the coming together of the five of them, and all who joined them since would overcome all obstacles in their path!'*

Just being around these boys inspired you to do your best and become better.

"Two minutes," came the call from Daileass. The excitement in his voice was palpable.

Chang opened his eyes to see his brothers slowly circling him.

"My brothers. I am impressed that you have learned this technique in such a short time."

Khan suddenly realized that his tail had been shaved on the top and let out an earth shattering roar. Chang continued as if nothing had happened.

"But if you wish to even give me a work out, you will have to do much better than that, or I will shave the fur from your entire body."

Comments from the crowd were mixed with laughter. Most thought that Chang had no sense of humor. They saw him as all business, and basically like a Vulcan, emotionless, even though that is not an accurate description of the Vulcan race. To hear him taunt his brothers was a shock for most.

Khan seemed to lose himself to anger for a moment, but then locked eyes with Adam and they synced almost at once.

*'Good. My brothers have learned some self control.'* Chang was pleased. It meant so much to him that his brothers respected his skills so much that they would put this much effort into trying to defeat him.

Juan, for his part, had become so excited that he was literally shaking. He was squeezing Koth's hand so hard that if he had not been a Klingon it would have been crushed. As it was, it was causing Koth pain, but they were both so excited neither noticed.

Korris was grinning with the same ferocity as Chang. He had never been more aroused by his beloved. Korris was making all sorts of guttural noises, and his arousal was plain for everyone to see, if they hadn't been so caught up in the fight.

"Three minutes," was the call from Daileass.

Khan sheathed his blade and thrust it through the belt on his uniform. He crouched down on all fours and began to slowly circle Chang. Adam immediately pressed forward again. He charged and met Chang head on. Khan used his speed to come at Chang from behind. He leaped in the air and drew both his katana and the sheath. Suddenly Chang wasn't there anymore. It happened so quickly, at the last possible moment, that Adam and Khan collided.

This did not throw them though. Adam quickly pivoted grabbed Khan by the shoulder and used him to change direction and vault at Chang. Just as suddenly as before, Chang was not there. He had stepped under Adam and attacked Khan with his feet while his swords flashed upwards at Adam, who just barely moved out of the way with a mid air twist. As Adam landed, the right side pant leg and the left side of his shirt fell open where they had been slashed by Chang's katana. Khan had taken two shots to the head and one to the chest. Before Chang's feet touched the ground, he sheathed one of his katana he had previously stuck in the ground as he tumbled over it. When he landed on his feet he quickly whirled around to face his opponents.

"So far you have used several different styles including Capoeira mixed with some variant of Drunken. While interesting, it will not do much to help you. I think I will use one sword to give you some help, as two just seems to give me too great an advantage."

Adam and Khan paused for a moment. The last exchanged had thrown them. They were both painfully aware that Chang had only used his sword to deflect theirs when it was being used to further an attack. For the most part, they had yet to come close to hitting him with their blades, while on the other hand, it had been all they could do to deflect his attacks with their blades. Both Adam and Khan had defeated master swordsmen with as much as twenty plus years of experience, but no one came even close to what they were facing in Chang. He was the archetype of the Scholar Warrior that Master Takamura spoke about.

Chang wasted no time and flew at Adam slicing him open across his belly as he connected with a foot to his head. As Adam went down, there was a small spray of blood. If Adam hadn't been so quick, he would have received a very nasty gash from the blade. As it was he went down hard.

As Daileas called out "Four Minutes," a frantic scream filled the air, and fireballs suddenly rained down on Chang. Jimmy had lost it. He was panicked that his brother was dead. His whole body was aflame and he was floating above the crowd. Chang, for his part, never lost his composure. He deflected the fireballs with his mind and sent them flying off into the distance where they would hurt no one. Chang disliked using his telekinesis, he felt very shy about it, but he would not let anyone get hurt over a sparring match.

Adam sent a simple message mind to mind to his little brother.

*"Stand Down, Soldier!"*

Jimmy came to his senses realizing that his brother was fine. He fell from the sky like a brick. He sat on the ground and blinked for a moment, then realized he was naked because he had burned all of his clothes off. He let out a little yelp and his hands flew down to cover himself as he looked around frantically. Joe, was sitting in his chair just a few feet away and threw the blanket that he had across his lap to his newest son. Jimmy quickly used it to cover himself, still blushing furiously. Adam sent him some reassuring thoughts as Jimmy covered himself. Adam was relieved to find mostly embarrassment at his nakedness, and his foolish action, as well as relief that Adam wasn't dead.

Khan took advantage of the distraction and came at Chang like a bolt of lightning. One second Chang was in front of him, and the next he was behind him. Khan barely got his sword in place to block the downward slash of Chang's blade. The blow was so forceful it took him to his knees.

Khan knew he was in real trouble as he rolled onto his back. There was no time to get up. Chang was pressing his attack and he knew he couldn't defend against it for long unless Adam intervened.

Adam suppressed his urge to comfort his little brother and saw the predicament that Khan was having. He moved with incredible speed at Chang's back. As he tried to bring his sword down on Chang, he found it deflected by Chang's foot. Chang never let up on his attack on Khan. Without even looking, he used his feet to keep deflecting Adam's sword. Khan was as frightened as he had ever been in his life. He had always known that Chang held back when they sparred, but the display today made him aware that the gap was much further than he had previously thought. Both himself and Adam were breathing hard, and Chang wasn't even sweating.

Adam jumped back and used his feet to propel two rocks the size of a head at Chang.

"Six Minutes," was the call from Daileass.

With a fluidity and grace that a dancer would sell their soul for, Chang pivoted around through the air in the middle of his attacks on Khan, sliced one of the rocks in half with the katana. He caught the other rock with his foot like a soccer ball. He continued around with the rock balanced on the crook of his foot and shot it back at Adam, who narrowly avoided catching it full in his face as he charged at Chang again.

Khan took advantage and executed a back flip, landed on his feet, and quickly put some distance between himself and Chang. He needed to collect himself, but Chang was not having any of it. As soon as his foot touched the ground, he seized Adams wrist, twisted, causing him to drop his sword, and hurled Adam straight at Khan.

Chang had maneuvered his opponents in the direction of his other sword. Chang threw his other katana into the air and let it stick itself next to his other blade. He allowed Khan and Adam to compose themselves for a moment. Adam quickly retrieved his sword. He and Khan began to circle the now swordless Chang. The circling lasted until Daileass made the Seven Minute time call.

Chang made his move before Khan or Adam had a chance to even react. He flew in and proceeded to drive Khan straight at Adam. His kicks and punches literally caused all of Khan's muscles to turn to rubber. With a kick, Khan's sword flew into the air just as Adam made stab at Chang with his.

Chang grabbed Adam's blade as he twisted out of the way with his fingers and threw it in the air as well. He executed several blows to both his opponents who fell to the ground unconscious. As his brothers fell to the ground, he leaped up seizing both swords. He landed between the unconscious bodies and jammed both swords up to the hilt into the ground next to their heads.

Chang casually stood. The crowd was stunned. No one was saying a word.

"Time please, Daileass."

Daileass called the time out in a voice that spoke of disbelief.

"The swords were thrust into the ground to the hilt at exactly seven minutes thirty and a half seconds."

The crowd went absolutely ballistic. They all rushed forward but were stopped by Daileass calling for a halt before they trampled Khan and Adam.

Chang was about to check on his brothers but never got the chance. He was seized by Korris in a fierce hug. Korris planted a kiss on his lover and before he could protest dragged him off toward some unknown room in the Short Compound. He was singing a Klingon song at the top of his lungs as he went.

*Qoy qeylls puqloD.  
 Qoy puqbe'pu'.  
 yoHbogh matlhbogh je SuvwI'  
 Say'moHchu' may' 'Iw.  
 maSuv manong 'ej maHoHchu'.  
 nI'be' yInmaj 'ach wovqu'.  
 batlh maHeghbej 'ej yo' qIjDaq vavpu'ma' DIuv.  
 pa' reH maSuvtaHqu'.  
 mamevQo'. maSuvtaH. ma'ov.*

*~Klingon lyrics (by Mark Okrand)*

**Literal translation**

*Hear! sons of Kahless.*

*Hear! daughters.*

*The battle blood perfectly cleans*

*the warrior who is brave and loyal.*

*We fight, we're passionate, and we kill perfectly.*

*Our lives are not long, but they're very bright.*

*We certainly die, and we join our fathers in the Black Fleet.*

*There we always really continue fighting.*

*We won't stop. We continue fighting. We compete.*

*\*The Warrior's Anthem is a traditional piece of music sung by Klingon warriors on their way into battle.*

From [http://memory-alpha.org/en/wiki/Klingon\\_warrior%27s\\_anthem](http://memory-alpha.org/en/wiki/Klingon_warrior%27s_anthem)

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"Captain Spock, might I have a moment of your time?" Chang asked formally as he approached the Vulcan man who had just left CIC following his son and Kevin Thompson.

"Certainly, Chang," Spock nodded, "but there is no need to call me 'captain' unless it is on official business. My name, with or without a honorific such as 'pop' or 'uncle', is acceptable."

Chang nodded. "Thank you, uncle," he said. "I have a request to make of you."

"Proceed," Spock gestured to some of the chairs that had been left out to take advantage of the sun while still being in sight of the children playing.

Chang sank into a seat and said, "I gave a trillpa'morov that I had crafted to your son as a Birthday and 'thank you' gift. He then started to use it in the forms of Suus Mahna that I recognized - and did so very well, I must add. My betrothed recognized his forms as that of a master - yours, to be precise."

"That would be understandable. We did meld, and my knowledge and skills seemed to pass themselves to my son. Unusual, but he has an eidetic memory of a type uncommon in the vast majority of Vulcans," Spock explained. "How came you by the knowledge of Suus Mahna?"

"Master Takamura. He taught me martial arts and also transferred much of the knowledge I needed by telepathy. Including training in metalwork."

"That is how you were able to forge a trillpa'morov?" Spock asked.

Chang nodded, yet his eyes showed some small surprise. "Correct, uncle. Why are you not surprised that a human taught me Suus Mahna?"

"I know Uncle Takamura very well. He met my father in the 1930s and was a regular visitor to Vulcan when I was a child. He taught me judo, karate and jiu-jitsu," Spock explained with a small smile. "As I recall, he gave most acceptable 'hugs'."

Chang smiled briefly. "I remember having only a few from him, when I was younger. It was discouraged by those in charge of the facility I was in," he said, a hint of sadness in his voice. "I did wonder where he had gained the knowledge of Vulcan metalwork from, as well as martial arts," he added, "and it is regarding Suus Mahna that I have come to you now."

Spock nodded his understanding, "You would like me to assess your knowledge of the art and help refine your skills in it?"

"Yes," the Asian boy nodded. "Joel has asked that I teach him how to use the trillpa'morov correctly. He has the forms, or at least those he showed us earlier, but not the muscle memory. But before I dare teach him and help him, I must be sure that I too, can do the forms correctly."

"Logical," Spock said with approval. He stood and gestured towards the duel area that was now being vacated after the most recent match. "I believe most of the children are now engaged in the activity of 'raiding and pillaging the fridge', so we seem to have the ring to ourselves."

Chang walked down to the ring area next to the Starfleet captain, and once there, Spock told him to warm up. Chang did so, and then stripped to the waist.

"First, please run through all the forms that you know," Spock instructed, "and I shall assess your current level of ability."

Chang nodded and moved to take his blade from where he had left it, but Spock stopped him.

"I do not wish to cause offence, but until I know you can do all the forms correctly, you should use this instead," he said as he handed a wooden training sword to the boy. "The last of the defensive forms have a tendency to cause injury if done incorrectly."

"I know," Chang said with another slight smile as he took the training sword. "It is only due to my healing ability that I even attempt those forms."

Chang then began to move through all two hundred of the forms, and only when he reached the last four did Spock find areas to improve. "If you were not enhanced, and if that were a real blade, you would have crippled yourself then," he said gently.

"I know," Chang agreed, "hence why I wanted to be trained before I train another. Especially little Joel. When Korris said that you knew Suus Mahna, and when he told me after our meal that you were a master - I would really appreciate all the help you can give me."

Spock smiled softly, "Normally, with only one or two exceptions in my memory, this would take years. However, you seem to have all that Uncle Takamura knows. You, as he, just need to refine those last forms. He left Vulcan before he could complete his training." Spock then removed his jacket and polo neck shirt and joined Chang in the ring. "I shall have to guide your motions. As you are Human, this may seem unusual - I shall be standing behind you, and you shall be pressed against my body. That way, your movements and mine are one. Is this acceptable to you?"

"It is," smiled Chang. "Korris mentioned it. I trust you, Uncle Spock."

Spock nodded and moved around behind the boy. After spending a moment to get Chang's feet into the correct placement, Spock grasped Chang's wrists with his hands and started to move through the last four forms himself. As he did so, Chang's body also moved at the same time.

"Here - this is the critical moment - move your wrist thus," Spock said as he moved Chang's wrist in the prescribed movements, "and you shall complete the form correctly, and be ready to flow into the next without injury."

"Ah," Chang murmured, "it seems so simple now that I have seen it done."

"As are most things to those with ability," Spock said.

They continued through the moves, all the while a quiet flow of instruction came from Spock's lips. Once they had gone through the four forms three times, Spock backed away.

"Yourself. Start," he said, and Chang did so.

Again, after three times, Spock spoke. "Faster."

Soon, Chang was running the last four forms at the correct speed.

"You have mastered it, Chang," Spock said in approval. "Now, we shall Ascend the Forms."

"What does that mean, Sensei?" Chang asked respectfully.

Spock raised an eyebrow at the name, then smiled. "You shall start from Form One and go through until Form two-hundred. I shall start at two-hundred and go through in reverse to one. Form one is an attack, and its counter is Form two-hundred. Form two has its counter in Form one hundred and ninety-nine. And so they go. Once you have reached two-hundred, you start flowing them in reverse. One hundred ninety-nine, two-hundred, one hundred ninety-nine, one hundred ninety-eight, and so on back down to one. I shall always be opposite to you."

Chang nodded, internally excited by the prospect of this challenge. A movement to the side of the ring made him turn to see almost his entire family there watching, minus Jory. Joel and Kevin were also there, and Joel was a little inside the ring and topless as well.

Spock turned to his son, "You may copy us for now, Sa'ren, but do not try the last four Forms until either Chang or I have trained you. I must insist upon that, my son."

"I won't, Sa'mi," Joel smiled as he picked up a small training sword. "I'll only do Forms 1 through 50 and 101 through 150. They are the easiest."

Chang smiled at his newest brother, "Take your time with them, Joel."

"I will!" Joel giggled as Korris came up to him to do them with him.

Chang shot a look at Spock, who said, "Korris is an Adept at Suus Mahna, and is covered to train the first two levels. As are you, Chang. That is clear to me already. If you Ascend the Forms to the level I already expect from you, I will call you as Trainer. From there, we shall see."

While Korris started teaching Joel some of the finer points of the Forms he was wanting to practice, Spock and Chang took their positions to begin the Ascent.

"Begin," Spock said, and those who had gathered watched in fascination as the two opponents began to seemingly fight each other.

Adam whistled softly before they had even gotten a quarter of the way through the Forms.

More and more children started to gather around the duel ring and all began muttering to themselves at the spectacle being presented.

There was a fine sheen covering both Spock and Chang as they completed the last Form after both Ascending and Descending them. "That was exceptional," Spock said, his eyes showing an emotion clearly - pride. "I name you Suus Mahna Trainer. I would not normally do this, but do you wish to take the last step?"

"What is the last step and what does it involve?" Chang asked while breathing deeply and winding down his arm muscles.

"Duel with me," Spock said. "Your task is to use the Forms as an alphabet, yet create the 'words' as you see fit. Any and all forms of Martial Arts may also be employed within the use of Suus Mahna. We duel until one disarms the other, or until the other yields."

"I shall limit myself to your level, Sensei. Could you tell me an approximation of your strength and speed, please?" Chang asked curiously.

"Most Vulcans are, on average, three times stronger and faster than humans. I, however, am hybrid. I am stronger again by about fifty percent or four and a half times that of a human," Spock replied.

"However, do not limit your strength, for Suus Mahna is neither about strength nor speed. It is about skill. Your opponent's strength can be turned against them, as can their speed. That is what the Test looks for - your skill."

Spock paused for a second as Chang nodded, then he added, "The only limit I will impose is on mind powers. I shall not use my own abilities with touch to numb your nerves and senses, and you shall not

use your own telekinesis and telepathy against me nor to bolster yourself. In all other fights in your future, of course, use them. For this Test, however, it is just what you can do to and with your body as it stands."

"Are you sure, Sensei?" Chang asked with a hint of worry in his voice. "Since I am genetically enhanced, I'm likely more robust than you, and a lot faster. You are stronger since you are an adult, but... Are you sure?"

"Quite sure. Are you ready?"

"Yes," Chang nodded as Nathan came up to them both and handed them real Vulcan Duelling blades.

Spock looked at Jason, "Master Jason, you are Test Master in this instance."

"Yes, Master Spock," Jason nodded formally. He took a place just by the ring and said loudly, "Begin."

While Spock could not jump quite as high, nor run quite as fast as Chang, Adam, Juan and Will could see that their brother's speed meant very little in this case: Spock sent him flying more often than not. Then again, Spock's greater strength meant just as little, for Chang also sent the far heavier Vulcan to the ground just as many times. Both meant very little here: this was a case of pure skill.

And it frightened Adam how much his brother seemed to be learning. "Oh my God," he whispered as Spock thrust a lethal blow at his brother, yet his brother simply flowed around the oncoming blade and sent the Captain to the ground heavily. Adam looked at Will and Juan, "Chang's more dangerous now than ever before."

Juan looked like he had suddenly had the wind taken out of his sails. "So, you're not going to fight him anymore?" he asked, looking miserable.

Adam chuckled, "Of course I am! You'll get your betting fix in, little bro! Jeez!"

Juan looked much happier. "Good! I made a... nice profit, earlier," he giggled, catching himself.

Koth sniggered, "And the rest, oh-you-with-the-cutest-butt!"

"Hush, Koth!" Juan blushed, then giggled. "JESUS!" he yelled as Chang literally threw Spock up into the air.

Joel's heart was in his mouth as his father came back to the ground, but he needn't have feared. Like a cat, Spock landed on his feet; then swept Chang's out from under him while disarming him in the same movement.

"End!" Jason called loudly, and those watching cheered.

"Fuck!" Juan hissed with disappointment, and turned to Cory. "Here!" he said ungraciously as he dumped a credit chip into the Patriarch's hand, "not betting against Joel's dad again!"

"Did Captain Spock just beat Chang?!" Khan hissed softly to Adam, not believing his eyes.

Adam nodded then whispered back, "I saw it, but I don't believe it."

Chang rose to his feet with Spock's help and said, "Could you have done that at any time, Sensei?"

"I was unsure. However, after that vertical throw, I felt it best to end the fight before my son lost his father, so I attempted it," Spock said dryly as he held his hand over a deep gash running down his forearm. "You are remarkable, Chang. I am honored to be counted as A'nirih to you."

"I already have a father, Sensei," Chang said softly, looking at Joe who was seated with Janet watching them.

Spock nodded, "In my culture, a child can have many fathers. Your father," he nodded towards Joe, "is your Sa'mekh. Any others you gain are your A'nirih. It does not mean you should call me father or 'dad', though. You seem to like calling me 'uncle', and that humbles me as it is."

Chang smiled softly as he checked the few shallow cuts he had received in the duel, and watched as little Antonio Barnes ran up with a regenerator for Spock. "I thank you, Uncle Spock," he whispered. "I understand."

"Also, other than my pride, you have my respect," Spock added as he watched the nine year old boy fix his bleeding arm. "I name you a Master at Suus Mahna. You have the right to train any that wishes it." He bowed respectfully to the Asian boy, who copied him. Then, Spock added, "I shall have a trill-pa'morov made for you, as is the custom."

"I can make one myself, Uncle," Chang replied with a smile.

"I know you can. However, it is tradition for one to be made *for* the new Master," Spock said as he laid a hand on Chang's bare shoulder. "Fight with logic and honor, Child of Suus Mahna."

Chang smiled and nodded his head, "Live long and prosper, Master Spock."

Spock nodded again before going and picking up his uniform shirt and jacket. As he started back for CIC, Joel was suddenly in his arms, chatting quickly to him. The last Chang saw, Spock had stopped by the doorway to the building and kissed his son.

"Hey, bro!" Adam chuckled as he picked up Chang in a bear-hug, "Congratulations! But, I'll tell you something... don't think your new title will stop me from kicking your ass next time we fight!"

Chang rolled his eyes, but showed no other sign of emotion.

Juan didn't need any other sign.

That single one was enough...

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Later:

Chang and Korris had only just sat down with the others when Ambassador Sarek came up to them. Adam stood and nodded formally, "What can we do for you, Ambassador?"

"Nothing, Adam. Rather, I may have something for one of your number; for Chang," Sarek answered as he returned the nod.

Chang stood to his feet. "For me?" he asked curiously.

"Yes," Sarek said as he addressed the Asian boy. "Master Takamura sent a message to me on Vulcan eight months ago, asking for a particular piece of armor to be made for him. He supplied the measurements and the design, yet asked that it be created with the method and technology of the old T'naehm Fo-wein - Battle Armor. At the time, such had not been made in over five hundred years. There was an issue with the information that he sent us, however, that we were never able to work out. I tried contacting him, but I have not been able to raise him since that last message; not even to tell him that the armor is ready."

"How does this affect me, Honored Grandfather?" Chang asked curiously. Juan raised an eyebrow at the term his brother had used, but said nothing.

"For three reasons: one, the armor has been made in the style of the armor once worn by the Japanese Samurai; two, the armor is in your size, Chang. I checked against the measurements Daileass has for you. The armor is exact to them," Sarek said softly. "For the third, come with me. I brought the armor with me to earth, hoping to locate Master Takamura here. However, now that I have discovered who you are, I may have the answer to this puzzle."

Chang nodded, his curiosity piqued. He and the others all walked with Sarek towards Teri Short's large house and entered into the guest area.

"Here it is," Sarek said as he led them into the sitting room of his quarters.

In the corner, on a stand, was the most beautiful example of Samurai armor that Chang had ever seen. In the centre of the chest-piece, a symbol was engraved.

A Japanese *katakana* symbol.

Chang's name:

"This is the third reason, child," Sarek said as Chang's mouth opened in wonder. "Master Takamura never told me for whom this armor was made, but these three 'clues' - its form, size, and your name on it - give a probability of 99.835% that it was commissioned for you."

"It is beautiful," Chang whispered as he ran a hand over the chest-piece.

"Take it, my pupil," came a voice from the door.

Chang turned to find Takamura standing there smiling at him. "I had it made for you Chang. Of all those humans I have taught, you are the most worthy - it is yours."

Chang looked again at the armor, then back at Takamura. He walked over to the man he had always thought of as 'father'; thought of as such long before having been adopted by Joe. He came to a stop less than a foot from him and looked up into the Japanese man's eyes - and tears came to his own. "Thank you... F...father," he murmured hesitantly.

Takamura had not expected this reaction. Since he was not capable of fathering children, he had long felt that his heart would break if any child called him that. It was for that reason, that he had asked Sarek at Spock's birth to simply be 'uncle' to the child. Sarek had named him 'a'nirih', but he felt it would hurt too much for young Spock to call him that.

Now, without any outside prompting, a child had claimed him as 'father'.

His arms flew out and surrounded Chang, then pulled the boy tight to his chest.

Chang suddenly broke out into tears and cry's of joy at the complete acceptance.

"Son..." Takamura whispered, tears flowing down his face from those ageless seeming eyes. "Son."

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**\*\*Logan's Perspective\*\***

Finally the party was over, and we could head back to base, but more importantly we could head back to our room, I thought as the transport took us.

I almost yanked Adam from the transporter room as I whispered hoarsely, "Come on"

I got my love as far as the doorway, when I suddenly came to a halt as Adam turned back to Alvin, who was in command this shift, and said sternly, "Alvin, we are NOT to be disturbed unless the world is coming to an end. Is that understood?"

The little chipmunk squeaked, "Y-y-yes SIR!" as Adam tried to hide a smile and turned back to me.

Just as I thought we might be going to go, he stopped again and once again turned and spoke to Alvin, "Make sure it's really ending and not just someone thinking it is"

With that he turned, and while I, along with the rest of the command center, stood there with our mouths hanging open. Adam now yanked on my arm, pulling me out and down the corridor, almost growling "Come on."

Wow, he must have been taking lessons from Khan.

We had been trying to find some much needed time for one another since the funeral, and it looked like we were finally going to be able to get some as we got back to our room.

We really needed some loving without any of the worries that had been plaguing us these past few days.

Adam slammed the door and pushed me against the wall, crushing his lips to mine as the fire swept us away. So it was with some surprise when he suddenly pulled away, leaving me there with nothing in my arms as he quickly walked back to the door, and I watched as he locked it.

"No little visitors this time," he said with a grin as he came back to me and resumed where he had left off.

For all the hurry in getting here, now things slowed down as we touched, held and loved one another slowly, putting all the love we each could into every movement to one another.

Finally, though he whispered "Shower," and smiling I began to remove his clothes as he followed suit on me.

The relief was so intense as the last of my clothes were removed that I almost popped just from that, and when he reached out and wrapped his hand around it, I fell back against the wall, almost passing out from the pleasure, it seemed.

Grinning he asked, "Is someone a bit fired up?"

All I could do was whisper back, "Oh, a hell of a lot more than a bit."

He just grinned bigger as he pulled me by something on into the shower room, before letting me go and starting the shower.

Once he had it set right, he motioned me in, saying sweetly, "After you, my prince."

I felt myself blushing at that because I didn't think I was all that much a "prince", it was him that was a God to me.

He entered after me and, picking up the soap, slowly began washing my back as I moaned at the feelings it brought to me.

He gently washed every inch of me in the back, then turned me around to the front and did the same, except for where I now ached.

I was leaning back against the wall in the shower as he finished the last toe on my right foot and looked up at me with his hands on each thigh.

The love I saw there almost brought tears to my eyes as I watched him slowly move each hand upward until they met at the center of all my feelings right then.

"OH JEEZ!" I almost screamed before saying, "Adam, no, stop, I can't..." but he just said "Ssssh" as his hands froze leaving me quivering.

"I don't want it over," I whispered as he laughed softly.

"Silly boy, I can last all night, remember? You on the other hand won't last five seconds unless we fix that," he said as his hands moved suddenly.

I could only cry out as suddenly everything which had been building up inside overwhelmed me, and the world went away for a time in pure feeling which flooded my senses.

When I came back to the world, it was to find myself in Adam's arms on the floor of the shower, as he was placing gentle kisses along my neck and shoulder.

A soft moan of "mmm" was all I could verbalize as he just held me tightly.

After a while of just enjoying his touch and love, he said "Two point three seven seconds actually."

It took a moment to make my brain work and figure out what he was talking about as I pulled back and looked at him, but when I did, I felt myself blushing and muttered "Bite me!"

To my shock he moved his head back down and did exactly that.

"HEY!"

"What?" he asked smiling.

"You bit me," I whined, pouting at him.

"Oh, that did so NOT hurt," he replied laughing.

"Yes it did," I said, trying not to join him.

"Big baby," he said next as his lips found mine.

When they broke and I could breathe again, all I could say was, "As long as I'm your big baby."

He just looked at me before saying "Always" and putting his lips back where they belonged.

Our lips played and our hands explored, all the while the wonderfully hot water fell on us, and it was like the world wasn't there anymore.

I could picture us on a tropical isle somewhere under a beautiful waterfall, the water streaming over our bodies, alone, just the two of us.

"Already?" I heard him ask and it brought me back to find him looking down at me.

I giggled and said "The sexual recuperative powers of a thirteen year old are actually...." But he stopped me as his lips found mine again.

"You've been spending way too much time with Mom," he said before we were lost in one another again on our island, all alone.

The touches, the love, and the feelings got more and more, better and better.

Each time when I thought it couldn't get any better, it always did, and this time was no different.

I was heading for home run number two, and I could feel Adam approaching his first of the night, when the dream was rudely shattered.

We weren't alone on that island, although I was thinking about asking Peter or someone to see what they could do to change that, as a voice came out of the speakers.

"Uhh...Adam?" Alvin stuttered.

Adam to my surprise just kept on doing what he'd been doing, I think hoping Alvin would just go away.

"Adam?" he asked again tentatively before saying "Are...are you there?"

Adam just growled and finally said loudly "NO!"

"Oh," then silence came from the speakers for a moment, before a frightened eight year old could be heard saying, "Uhhmm...Adam...uhmm"

"WHAT!" Adam now growled loudly in almost a shout, and I knew he wasn't a happy commander at the moment.

"Uhhmm," Alvin squeaked out again.

"Is an asteroid about to strike the Earth, or Romulans attacking? The FCC took over a starship and is about to fire on us?" Adam was almost yelling.

"Well no," Alvin replied.

"That damn devil boy is back again?" he asked and I broke up laughing at that, which earned me a glare from my love.

"I don't think so" Alvin replied fearfully as I heard him asking quickly if anyone had seen Pablito around anywhere.

"THEN WHAT THE HELL IS IT, CAUSE IT SURE DOESN'T SOUND LIKE THE WORLD IS COMING TO AN END TO ME," he yelled now.

I could hear Alvin shaking as he spoke, as he almost moaned out "I'm sorry, Adam, but...well...uhmm...I...ah...really think you should take this phone call."

The rush at the end to get it all out made it almost not understandable, but we did.

'Phone call?' I wondered.

At a glance at each other, I could tell we were both thinking the same thing, as Adam growled out, "Who the fuck is it?"

That got silence long enough for Adam to spit out. "WELL?!"

"Uhhmm....Sir....It's....well...it's the Commander of the Genesis Project...." Alvin was saying, when Adam jumped to his feet and yelled, "WHAT?!!!"

"It's...it's General Adams, sir," Alvin said in a now terrified whisper.

I watched as Adam turned towards me with a completely stunned expression on his face his mouth working but no sound coming out.

I got quickly to my feet and reached out a hand to his shoulder as he just looked at me finally managing to get out a strangled, "Adams?"

The man responsible for everything that had ever happened to Adam and his family was now on the phone wanting to talk to him.

"Adam?" A hesitant voice asked over the speakers

"We'll...we'll be right up," Adam managed to say, and I could hear a click as the speaker shut off.

"Adam?" I asked softly, taking him into my arms.

He fell against me, holding me tightly for a moment before pulling himself back, and once again the Commander was back as his gaze went cold and he said, "Let's go."

"Adam?" I said again, causing him to turn back to me, and for just an instant the tough guy was gone and my gentle love was there, with pain filling his eyes that spoke volumes about what was being felt inside by him, then it was gone and he just said... "I'll be fine."

He was out of the shower and into our bedroom before my foot stepped over the divider. By the time I was dried off and joined him, he was almost dressed, and shooting me an impatient glance.

I quickly donned my own clothing, and without saying anything he was out the door, not even waiting for me as I scrambled to catch up.

I was almost feeling hurt as we damn near ran towards the command center, but I also knew how much this was hurting him. All eyes in the room turned towards us as we burst through the doors.

There were a lot of them because most everyone, including all the original Unit members, were there.

It was a telling sign of how much this was affecting him, as well as how much he loved me, when he reached out his hand and took mine, holding it as he looked briefly at me.

Within that look, though, was the Adam I loved most, the one who loved me back, and in that look was all his love for me sent in a glance which warmed my heart, as he once again became the Commander. He dropped my hand before turning back to Alvin and saying; "Put him through."

I watched as he quickly checked his uniform to make sure it was all proper while Alvin completed the call, and then the fucker was on the view screen smiling at everyone.

I thought I could almost see every single one of the Unit members begin to salute. Only a conscious effort on their part not to stopped them, but they did all come to attention.

"Well, well, well, all my children together, I see, along with a couple of traitors," the General said in an almost conversational voice as he looked out at everyone in the room.

I watched Mom and Daddy Joe stiffen, and I thought Mom was going to lose it or maybe Adam, because I could see every muscle in his back tense up with effort as he calmly replied "General?" in a questioning voice.

I knew how much it was costing him to remain silent, though.

"Lesson of command for you, Lt. Adam, one which I thought you would have learned by now. One who betrays one commander will betray another sooner or later."

"I don't need any lessons in command from you, General Adams, and I hardly think standing by us constitutes betrayal, other than to your greed and the cruel plans you had to kill us," Adam replied coldly.

"Oh my boy, it wasn't anything personal. Just part of the job; you became expendable. Then again, you always were," The General said, smiling still.

"What do you want?" Adam asked, obviously with little patience right then.

"Come, Adam, lets remain cordial; I know you were taught better than this. As to Dr. Hayes and Captain Casey, they betrayed their commander, their country, and their duty. For that there can be no forgiveness nor quarter," he said to the question.

"I suppose it's in the eye of the beholder then, General," Adam replied steadily, refusing to respond angrily.

"Hmph. So how have you all been? Lost a few of your so called army, I heard?" The General asked next, smiling once again.

"Lost? No, General, we didn't lose anyone. They died fighting for their family and against people much like you," Adam replied coolly.

"Shame really, you all were destined for such great things, and now to be reduced to this existence, living in a cave amongst a band of worthless children," the General commented sourly.

That did it... Adam moved forward and in an icy voice said, "Just one of these 'worthless children,' as you call them, is worth more than a hundred of someone like you! Now what do you want?, or this conversation is over."

"Ah, the impatience of youth, and to think..." the General began, but Adam simply turned to Alvin and started to tell him to end the call, when the General quickly said, "I wouldn't if I were you."

"Give me one reason why not?" Adam asked, turning back to the screen.

"Because we have a lot to catch up on, my boy. After all, you cost me one of the most valuable men I've ever had work for me; not to mention stealing my life's work," the General said.

"We have nothing to catch up on, General. I have no idea what I could have stolen from you, since you didn't have anything I wanted. As to costing you a man, well, I only hope I cost you more than one," Adam told him with a predatory smile on his face.

"Adam, Adam, dear boy, do you not think taking my other children constitutes theft? Do you know how much was invested in their creation and forming them into what they became? Do you know how much time and effort it took to find someone like Pinkerton, and you just murdered him in cold blood... not to mention all the plans you ruined?" the General asked snidely.

"You're a sick bastard, General Adams," Adam replied softly.

The General actually laughed at this before saying, "Adam, you've been a thorn in my side for way too long, and my only regret is that it's come to the point where I've got to let you go. I just wanted to catch up a bit with my babies before I said goodbye is all," he replied.

"Well, your babies are just fine," Jory snarled before adding, "now that we're away from you."

Adam shot him a glare, but the younger boy wasn't repentant in the slightest as the general replied, "Ah, Joris, my little pyro. Do you have any idea how much trouble we went to in order to instill that 'need' within you?" he said chuckling, before turning to look at Juan and going on. "And Juan, my absolute favorite, how have you been, my sweet boy."

"Just ducky," Juan replied.

"You wound me, dear boy; you were my favorite," Adams told him.

"I'd like to do more than wound..." Juan said as his eyes went yellow.

"Oh yes, the eyes, a masterpiece. Do you know the effort it took to make you what you are today, Juan? The countless hours spent going over every little thing that would be needed to make the perfect little psycho?" the General asked.

"You made him this way on purpose?!?!?" Adam asked in disbelief and shock.

"Of course. Everything we did was on purpose, Adam, everything. The perfect little killing machine... able to go from sweet little boy to psychotic in an instant. No questions, no qualms, no nothing but kil-

ling. Of course, there was always a matter of chance thrown in, but we did everything we could to eliminate that element. Do you know how hard it was to find someone with the proper scientific qualifications, yet that was also a sadistic child rapist?" the General asked laughing, before adding, "Oh, and keeping him from acting out those... 'desires' until the time was optimal?"

Several people who knew Juan's story gasped in shock now, as Juan, trembling, stepped forward and asked, "You... he... he acted upon your orders?" The rage in his voice was unmistakable.

"Of course, Juan. No one in those facilities took a leak unless it was on my orders. I ran Project Genesis, every single aspect of it. You are what you are today because of me. Oh, and with a bit of help from Doctor Drake, of course. By the way, did they ever grow back?" he said smiling.

"You Motherfucker!" Juan screamed.

"Is that any way to thank me for making you into what you are? What a shameful lack of gratitude," the General said nastily.

"I'll show you my gratitude, all right, you sadistic fuck. How would you like to have your ass raped...with my SWORD!" Juan was literally vibrating with rage at this point.

The General actually laughed and laughed before choking out, "Perfect, just perfect, but I think I'll pass this time."

Adam had held up his hand, causing Juan to back off as he said, "Too bad, you already used up all of your 'get out of jail free' cards, asshole. So, what the FUCK do you want?"

"I see we neglected the social niceties too much with you in your upbringing," the General said, looking back at Adam.

"That's it, I've had enough. Goodbye, General," Adam said as he began to raise his hand to Alvin.

"WAIT!" Adams yelled now.

Adam turned back around and just stared silently until the General let out a deep sigh, "Very well..."

"Very well what?" Adam asked quietly.

"To put it bluntly, I've taken a great deal of trouble to get this call through to you where even your Starfleet and Clan friends can't trace it, so I'm not worried about you finding me, although I'm sure you'd love to."

"You have no idea, General. Do you know we have dreams about you? Very nice ones too... they're all about what we're gonna do to you... once we catch up with you," Adam said with a feral grin.

The General sighed again and muttered... "Children, always so ungrateful, the ones you care about the most end up hurting you the worst."

"General!?" Adam said warningly.

"Very well. To put it bluntly, I'm well aware of your efforts to locate me. I'm also aware of those other two bastards' inquiries as to my whereabouts. I always said they were trouble; I'm just sorry I didn't get to them in time," Adams said.

"Who?" Adam asked, now confused.

"I believe you have met both of them, Larkin and that prick Reynolds. I got most of the rest, but hadn't quite gotten around to them yet. Now it seems they are turning over every leaf and bush to find me, and they're frankly getting a bit closer than I'm comfortable with."

Jeremy could be heard muttering, "Rock, you mean."

Adam smiled before saying, "I'll be sure to tell Uncle Tom and Uncle Mike, I know they're looking forward to seeing you again... real soon, even."

"I'm afraid a reunion just isn't in the equation at the moment, but you can tell them I haven't forgotten them or what they cost me. Next time you see them. ask 'em how they liked losing their team one by one," he told Adam.

"Oh I will, and you won't like the answer," Adam replied.

"It was so...so...invigorating to watch little Miguel, though, wouldn't you say?" The General asked sweetly, before adding in that same sweet tone, "To think something so small could take something so large, amazing, isn't it?"

"You mother fucking bastard!" Jeremy screamed out.

"Ah, Jeremy, how was your stay in Juvy and the home? I went to a lot of trouble to find just the right places for you," Adams said, gloating.

Tyler moved forward and wrapped his arms around Jeremy, trying to pull him back, but Jeremy was way too pissed to be moved.

"Why don't you tell me where you're at, and I'll be glad to show ya how thankful I am for all your trouble?" Jeremy growled out, while the General just laughed.

"General Adams, it's now or never, because I'm tired of this. All you're trying to do is hurt us more, and I'm not going to let you do that. Either give me a reason to keep this call open, or I'm ending it and we'll see each other soon... real soon," Adam told him coldly.

"Fine, I want to be left alone. Simple as that. I want you to let me go and I want your word, on your oh so precious honor, that you nor any under your command will ever bother me again," Adams replied.

Adam just looked at him for a long moment before bursting out laughing, which was obviously not what Adams had been expecting by the scowl which appeared on his face.

"What reason on Earth or any other place in the universe would make you think I would just let you walk away?" Adam finally asked when he could calm down.

I watched as the scowl left and the smile returned to the General's face.

"Well, I have about two thousand reasons, but I think this one will do very nicely." He turned in his seat with the camera following his movements. Everyone gasped in shock at what was revealed.

A child, a very young child, was tied inside a cage with each arm and leg going to a separate corner of the cage, in effect holding him spread eagled. The child couldn't have been more than a five or six years old at most, and he had not only the shock collar around his neck but a gag in his mouth.

Even like that, the hatred which burned in his eyes was noticeable to all present, as well as the fact that he never stopped struggling against his bonds.

"This little hellion is from our last Genesis base, Adam. Not very smart, as you can see; he won't stop struggling, even though it's impossible to break through those bonds," the General said as he turned back to face Adam.

"Let... him... go." Adam said, barely suppressing his rage.

"Your word, Lieutenant... Your word of honor you'll leave me alone and stop trying to find me," Adams said, looking out just as coldly at Adam.

Adam looked at the other members of the Unit, conferring with them briefly, before turning back to Adams, drawing himself up to say what needed to be said.

"For your crimes, General, I can't give you that promise, even for one of our own. You will be brought to justice. His death will just add to the list of crimes you have already been sentenced to death for," Adam replied sadly.

I watched the look on Adams face and was worried when he began to smile.

"Lieutenant, you just don't learn, do you? Do you think this is a bluff? Do you think I don't have the advantage?" Adams asked softly.

Then, shocking all of us, he turned again, only this time he had a gun in his hand, which he fired once into the cage. The bullet struck the boy in the head, killing him instantly as everyone cried out in horror and anger.

"That's one, Lieutenant," Adams said, as suddenly there was a new picture filling the screen of thousands of what were obviously Genesis kids, all standing at attention in Parade formation, and all wearing the shock collars upon their necks. It was obvious that they were at a second location than where the General was right then.

"Should I give the order for the rest of them?" Adams asked now as he returned to the screen.

I watched as Adam stared at the screen for a full minute, a look of utter disbelief etched on his face. Standing there in formation was a group of our brothers and sisters, a group easily ten times larger than all the other Genesis kids we've been able to rescue... combined.

I knew Adam well enough to know there could only be one answer. I couldn't imagine what this was doing to him inside. I know for damned sure I wouldn't want to be in his shoes.

It was almost three minutes of absolute silence, no one daring to utter a word. I could feel that Adam was talking to his brothers. He didn't need to talk to me; he knew what I would say.

Finally he squared himself up, and stared directly at General Adams. "You know I can't let them die, General. I will give you my word of honor, even though you're not even worthy of it. But know this, General. If even one of them get the sniffles between now and when I come to get them, I WILL hunt you down, and I will do things to you that not even Juan would think about. Is THAT understood?"

"Your word, and I'll give you the co-ordinates of the base." The General said, smiling triumphantly, ignoring the threat Adam made.

"Neither I, nor anyone under my command, will pursue you any longer, General," Adam finally said into the silence. I knew, deep down, how much every single one of those words had to hurt Adam to say.

"Got em..." Alvin said quietly.

"Well, I suppose this is good bye then, my children, but I do have one final thing to say. You see, part of your thinking you are so superior to us regular humans is that you underestimate us. I don't suffer traitors well, Lieutenant, and I've been planning this for a very long, long time."

"There's not much you can do, General, just go before I change my mind," Adam said softly.

Adams laughed as he said "Chang, my most noble child, my true warrior 端は始めあるが、始めはあるが、その間端および方法は生命を作る、すべてに名誉を与える端 彼らのマスターを裏切る人に1つの運命だけ可能である。ヘイエズ博士および Casey 大尉はコードの方法で彼らの運命に遭わなければならない。

(The end is but the beginning, The beginning is but the end and the way between is that which makes life and honor all. To those who betray their master only one fate is possible. Doctor Hayes and Captain Casey must meet their fate in the way of the Code.)

\*\*End Logan's POV\*\*

Adam and the rest understood what he said, yet didn't at the same time. They didn't know what had been done to Chang and the rest of them.

In a split second, at super human speed, Chang moved, drawing his sword, and executing his moves flawlessly ,first one stroke then another, over before anyone realized he had even moved. Once they did, though, the screams began.

Those screams were upon seeing what the beautifully choreographed movements resulted in, as Chang came fully to a stop once again two bodies began to fall with strangled choking gasps.

Logan called out "MOM!" at the same time as Juan screamed "Dad!"

Chang never moved or even looked at what was going on around him.

It looked like he wasn't even there.

Adam stared stunned at the scene before him, both his parents dead before they hit the ground.

"And now the rest, my brave warrior," Adams could be heard saying as Chang suddenly began to move again.

Author's Notes: Well that was a bit unexpected. Oh... Thomas Sent me a PM a while ago asking that I heal up "Daddy Joe." Well Thomas... It's often said that death cures everything... so thanks for the idea.

Now if you will all excuse me, I need to make a mad Dash for Str8's Castle, as mine I don't think will be safe.

I do want to end with this little note though. This chapter, as well as the next few are my doctoral thesis for the Evil Author Academy. Please feel free to tell me what you all think.

## Chapter 10

(The end is but the beginning; the beginning is but the end and the way between is that which makes life and honors all. To those who betray their master only one fate is possible. Doctor Hayes and Captain Casey must meet their fate in the way of the Code.)

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Jory had drawn his gun and was bringing it up to Chang when suddenly it disappeared, and a young boy walked into the room. Shaking his head, he raised his hand and golden fire spewed forth; striking Chang and freezing him in place.

"YOU!" the all but forgotten General screamed.

"Hello, General Adams," the boy replied, walking over to Chang and touching his head, then catching the boy as he fell laying him gently onto the floor. By this point, everyone else had rushed over to Janet and Joe. Logan was making a futile effort to stem the flow of blood from his mother's neck, while Adam had pulled Joe from his chair and was also holding his hands around the man's neck. Adam knew there was nothing he could do; Chang had cut Joe's head almost clean off.

Suddenly, the boy waved his hand and Jason was standing there in only his tee-shirt and he was just finishing tugging that off. Looking stunned as he took in what was going on around him, he exclaimed, "FUCKIN' HELL!... what the FUCK is going on?" he asked, but didn't get a chance to get an answer as another voice filled the stunned room.

"You...you're dead." the General said disbelievingly.

"Yes, I am," Pablo replied coldly as he turned and said to Jason and the rest. "They weren't satisfied with what they had done to your bodies; they also wanted more. They implanted subliminal controls in all of you. Jason, you need to go in and remove them."

Then he turned to the General and said. "What you have done will not be allowed to stand." With all eyes on him, Pablo moved over to Joe and Janet, kneeling between them and placing a hand on each of their chests.

"You are needed here by too many to let evil triumph and you have much yet to do; return to us, return to your family." The words were spoken so softly that most could not even hear them.

A golden glow began where his hand made contact with their bodies until it was almost blinding in its intensity. Even the Unit members were forced to turn their eyes away. When it faded, both Joe and Janet were sitting up and looking around bewildered.

"You know, General... I have a lot of friends in Hell, and called in a few favors. Your express ticket to Hell is here and they are so looking forward to meeting you," Pablito said next, as he turned to face the screen again. On his face, was a feral grin that might have put Juan to shame.

At the same time, a voice everyone recognized said, "It's soooo nice to see you again, General."

All watched, as General Adams gasped and spun to face who had spoken; fear plainly visible on his face. He spun back to the camera and yelled, "You gave me your word, Lieutenant!"

Adam was just as shocked as the General was; he had no idea how they knew what was going on, nor where the General was... but he was sure glad they did. "I'm sorry General, but Captain Reynolds is not under my command. By the way just... for the record, I'm a Colonel, not a Lieutenant," Adam replied with a cold smile.

"Neither are we..." came another voice as Tom, Tony, and Elena walked into the picture.

"I'll be there in a little bit, poppa," Pablo called out, standing next to Jason, who had his hands on Juan's head, trying to find the triggers that the General had put in there.

"Why?" Mike asked.

"Oh, I have to heal him," Pablo replied, grinning.

"WHAT?" Jory yelled out in utter confusion.

"Well... we wouldn't want him to die too quickly, now would we?" the angel boy said with that feral grin back on his face.

"All right, Pablo, but this isn't something children need to see," Mike said, moving forward and turning off the video as the General could be heard mewling, "No, no, you can't do this, no!!!"

Everyone could hear Jory's comment in a very serious tone, "Damn... I really wanna watch that."

It took everyone a moment to figure out who spoke next as a soft "So would I" ,could be heard. All eyes fell onto Janet, who was sitting there running her fingers through Chang's hair. "What? For once I agree... That FUCKER needs to die." Stunned silence reigned for a second until Pablo spoke again.

"You'll all be all right once Jason finishes with you. One more thing I gotta do," Pablo said as he waved his hand and the kid from the cage appeared on the ground in front of him.

Kneeling down once again, he looked up and asked, "Father, please help right a wrong and bring this young boy back to his family." With that, he placed his hand on the child and once again the glow caused everyone to look away.

When it was over a confused young boy sat there, the collar once around his neck now in his hands as he looked at everyone around him and asked softly, "Where... Where am I?"

Khan quickly moved over and took the boy in his arms. "Come on little one, I'll take care of you." The little boy looked up at the massive form of Khan, then to the huge paw that was lightly sitting on his shoulder. It took a second, but the young boy then looked up into Khan's eyes and smiled. "Okay..." Khan smiled a toothy grin, bent over, picked the young boy up, and took him out of the room.

Adam moved over to where Pablito was standing. Adam placed a hand on the boy's shoulder and quickly pulled him to a corner of the room. "Pablo, you can't do this!"

"What do you mean I can't... Why the hell not?" The boy was obviously shocked at what Adam was saying.

"Because it's not right," Adam said softly.

"THE HELL IT ISN'T! This fucker's gonna pay. Come on, Adam, you know better than anyone what this dickhead's done!" The angry look on Pablo's face matched a few others' who were close enough to hear what was being said.

"You're right, I know all too well what he's done, and what I know is probably not even half of it. But that doesn't make it right to sink to his level. I don't want that for you, Pablo... you're better than that." Adam passionately pleaded.

"Oh... I'm not sinking to anything Adam... healing, as you've seen is part of the job." The angel boy said with that same grin then when he saw Adam's mouth open to say something else quickly said. "You know what, Adam? We don't have time to argue about this. I'll.. I'll think about it. But you got a lot of shit here you gotta deal with."

"Yeah, I know. Do me a favor, though. Before Uncle Mike leaves, make sure he calls me. I'll need him to do something."

"Okay." Pablo stepped up and hugged Adam, and then in a flash, he was gone.

Jason, meanwhile, had thrown his tee-shirt on the nearest console as he had decided that with it on, he'd be emphasizing the fact that his dick was showing. He floated over the blood and landed by Chang and began scanning.

"Adam, when you have a moment, I'll need to scan you too," Jason said in concentration as his eyes blazed blue.

Adam nodded and walked over to Jason, his mind spinning with the implications of what this all could mean.

"Fuck!" Jason's face paled and he gripped the sides of Chang's face. "No... wait... No! Shit... Wait... there... there you are... Oh, God... please let him still be here..." Sweat started to bead on the Welsh boy's brow, and even his back was clearly becoming slick as he fought with something Adam could not even imagine.

"What?!?!?!" Adam said, as the rest of the people in the room stood watching as Jason worked.

They received no answer from Jason at first. After a long, heavy moment, Jason took his hands from Chang's face. "I found him," he whispered with relief, his head bowed. He breathed slowly, as if he had run a marathon, before looking up into Adam's eyes. "He's there. Thank God he's N-Gen. If this had been Juan or Will or one of the others, they'd be gone."

"Why? What happened?" Adam asked, clearly concerned.

"Most normal 'conditioning' acts more like a hypnotism, or brainwashing. This was something - else. When that fuck-faced *cunt*," Jason spat the word out, loaded with venom, "... what he had arranged... Once triggered, the person would be gone, and a new persona would take over. One that was completely loyal to... to *him*... and the new persona would know everything the original one did. Think of how Juan was before - now have all of the good that he was him, even when two persons, removed and just a robot - a robot with all Juan's skills, knowledge, ability, trained viciousness...."

Adam swallowed, and Koth reached to pull Juan into his arms quickly.

Jason raised his face to look at the nearest camera. "Daileass, I want you to close off ALL communications into and out of this Camp. I don't even want someone to be able to send smoke signals - clear? Get Ark to help you. Only YOU should have access to the rest of the world."

It was weird to hear a disembodied voice sound scared but Daileass did. "Umm... Adam?"

Adam looked hard at Jason, not angry at Jason, but fuming over what was going on and also more than a bit scared. "Do it."

"Yes Sir." Suddenly all computer screens went blank, and for a moment, it was eerily silent in the usually busy command station within the Unit's Base. "It's done... I have even blocked cellular signals and satellite signals from reaching in. Ark has agreed to scan everything coming in and relay to me... Just in case." His voice trailed off, his last statement left unsaid.

"Good. Adam; I need to check the rest of you. I don't think they'd have done this to everyone involved in the "Experiment" - just the 'best'. That's you five, and maybe the Cats," Jason said as he stood. "And can someone throw me a jumpsuit or something? My nuts are beginning to get... chilled..." he said seriously.

Adam nodded, "I'll go first." He wasn't about to let any of his brothers try this without letting Jason do it to him first.

"I wanted you to go first anyway," Jason said as he took a hastily thrown jumpsuit from Alvin and squeezed his legs into it. "Damn, this is tight," he smiled. He tied the arms around his waist and adjusted his family jewels a few times. "Last time I wore something this small I was smaller than Joel! Anyhow - yes, you first Adam. If I trigger something when in your head, you'd survive it as you're N-Gen like Chang. The other three ain't."

With that, he took Adam's hand and his eyes lit up again.

A bare moment later, Jason smiled. "Okay. There is programming there, but I can scan without triggering it. Okay, next - William! Come on, cute stuff - my balls may be warm, now, but they're getting crushed."

William tried to smile, but simply couldn't. He came up and took Jason's hand.

As Jason scanned William, Korris came up to Adam, "Chang's not getting up. I don't understand - I thought Pablito said my brother could help?"

Adam pulled Korris into a tight hug. "I'm sure he'll be fine. We'll just have to wait and let Jason work."

As Will was given a brief hug, Jason looked over at Juan and Jory. "Let's speed this up. Come here you two," he smiled as Juan and Jory came closer. Koth followed behind.

"Wish my boyfriend and girlfriend were here too," Jory whispered to Juan as Jason took their hands.

A moment later, Jason released them and looked at Adam. "I can't remove this type of conditioning, bro. It'll take a Vulcan melder to do that, and...."

"Daileass - Grab Joel and get him here now!" Adam ordered quickly.

Jason's eyes flew open wide, "Uh, Adam? He and Kev are off on their wedding night? I meant Poppa Spock..."

Too late - A transporter beam resolved in the place where Jason had 'popped' in, and Jason winced.

Joel and Kevin were in the middle of a serious kiss, and thankfully still fully clothed. However, Joel's reaction was pitiable, for he closed his fear-filled eyes and fell to the floor in a fetal position.

Kevin, however, had his left hand raised and was pointing it about wildly. "What the fuck... Hey! What gives, guys?" he asked as he took in where he was and who was there. "Sa'r? Oh, Sa'r! Don't panic!" he said softly as he fell to his knees to pull Joel into his arms.

"OH SHIT!" Adam exclaimed as he started to rush to where Joel was on the floor. Adam almost fell to the floor though as Juan barreled past him and almost baseball slid to be lying next to Joel. Juan was speaking so softly that not even Adam could hear what his brother was saying, so he looked up into the air.

"Daileass... next time you transport someone... it is polite to LET THEM KNOW!" Adam had to stop there because he realized he had shouted the last part.

Everyone could hear the blush in Daileass' voice. "Uhh.. yeah... I just got told that.. by about ten people... and one... alligator... and you were the nicest."

"You sure?" Joel was heard whispering to Juan.

Juan said softly back, "Yeah. This is my home, my big 'little' brother. And we need your help."

Joel cracked open his eyes and sat up slowly. He gripped Kevin's arms tightly as they were wrapped around him. "This feels weird... I've not been this far from Blondie and Ted, before... I... I can't feel them anymore..."

Kevin kissed his cheek softly, and Juan copied him. Joel smiled, then looked up at Adam... then around.

"Ch...Chang? What happened? Why's Auntie Janet and Unca Joe covered in blood?" the now concerned little Vulcan asked quickly.

Jason moved over with Adam. "I'll send it all to you, that way you'll know. I've picked everything out of your Adz' head, so you'll have all of it," Jason rushed as his eyes lit up again.

Joel's eyes went flat a bare moment later. "HE DID WHAT?" he raged as he leapt to his feet. Juan backed away as the Vulcan's fury rippled out.

A desk chair was then thrown against the furthest wall.

"Whatever Unca Mike is doing to him is going to be too easy," Joel shouted, completely pissed off. "Crucify the fucker! I..."

As the boy lapsed into Vulcan to continue his swearing rant, Jason and Korris exchanged a look. "I have to say," Korris murmured, "that the Vulcan's can swear better than even us Klingons!"

"More practice - they're a titchy bit older!" Jason giggled.

Juan, lost in fits of giggles, walked over to Joel and pulled him into a hug. "It's okay, Joel... It's over and done with. We gotta worry about the here and now. Oh.. and don't worry... I won't tell your mom what you were just saying."

Kevin snorted with amusement, "I don't know if she'd understand it all... some of those words are so old they ain't included in the Clan language dump..."

Joel took in a deep breath and balled his fists. He was still shaking in rage, and couldn't regain control. He didn't have the training. "I need my Mammy or Daddy," he grated, "Or my Cory... I'm... I'm going to..."

Juan was gently pushed to one side, and Janet picked up Joel. Having met her in the Party earlier, Joel had formed a close bond with her in those few brief minutes. He relaxed so fast he nearly slid out of Janet's arms. "Shhh... we're okay. We're still here, and soon we'll all be back to normal. We just need our little Joel to help."

"Thank you, Auntie Janet," Joel murmured as he felt his anger subsiding.

After another moment, he was placed back on his feet. He looked down at Chang, "He's gonna be the hardest one. Kor? Can you take him to his room? I think it'll be best for him to wake up some place real quiet once I've helped him."

Korris nodded, and after receiving a nod from Adam, bent down and picked up his bonded's limp form.

"Jace?" Joel said next. "Scan everyone. No matter if they were in Genesis or not. Let's be sure."

"Acknowledged," Jason said softly as he rose into the air and closed his eyes.

Joel moved and climbed into Adam's arms. Held chest to chest to the fourteen year old, Joel whispered, "This meld is going to be... odd, Adz. For this, I'll know everything about you. And you will know everything about me too. I have to check every part of your mind for the trigger points. Okay?"

Adam nodded and closed his eyes.

Joel spared a glance for the now furiously blushing Logan. "Sorry, bro. I'll say nothing... much," he giggled before fixing the fingers of both hands to Adam's face. "My mind to your mind..."

Jason, however, wasn't paying attention. "Oh, God... Dailess?"

"Yeah? Look, I said I was sorry..."

"Hush, goof. Call in ALL the Genesis kids. Every last one, I'll tell Nathan in Orlando by Telepathy to sort out the Cats and few others there. But I need EVERY LAST ONE of the G-Kids in here - like ten seconds ago!"

Alvin spoke up immediately. "Sir... If I may, it would be easier to use the conference room Alpha. It only has one entrance, and they would not be able to access any sensitive equipment. Also, Daileass, please revoke all computer access to EVERY station in the base. This would be a Def-con Alpha lock down."

"I'm not Mikyvis, Sir. But they are on their way, and this time I notified them." Daileass replied.

Logan stepped forward, and addressed Jason formally. "Patriarch Evans... I believe it would be logical for you to take command of the Special Forces Division until such time as it can be turned back over."

Everyone turned and looked stunned at Logan until they heard Alvin's soft voice, "That would be... Logical."

Jason nodded, then his ill fitting jumpsuit fell off completely. After floating back to the ground, he quipped to the now mutely laughing group, "So much for my command dignity!"

Alvin chuckled. "Sir... just so you know, Adam has a spare uniform in his office... for the times when he and Logan... make a mess."

"First, a uniform three sizes too small; and now one five sizes too big? Jesus!" Jason giggled. "No, no need to deprive the horny duo of their spare change of clothes. I've commanded a mission this way from the Nest before..."

"Hey now!" Logan retorted.

Jason grinned at him, then said, "Logan, please stand by your brothers. You need a meld too. Kevin - can you be ready to help Joel? This will take a lot out of him. Nathan is preparing ten Vulcans from our Division to come over, and Poppa Spock and Aunt T'Pol will join us once they've sorted out the G-kids back at Orlando."

"Okay, Jace," Kevin said, his eyes betraying how put out he was.

Juan misunderstood what Kevin's face was telling everyone, and asked, "You still upset about what happened to Dad and Mom?"

"Yes, but not for the reasons you think," Kevin said shortly. "I was about to get fucking LAID, and now this SHIT happened!"

Before Juan could respond, a raucous blast came over the P.A. system Daileass's voice came, as always, from everywhere: "This is a DEFCON 1 ALERT! This Base is now under lockdown! ALL Genesis Project Members are required to report to the main briefing room immediately. All other person-

nel are required to report to their quarters. If you have not been assigned to quarters yet, please respond to the mess hall. Repeat... This is a DEFCON 1 ALERT! This Base..."

As soon as Daileass was done, Donny looked over at Emily, then turned to Jason. "Sir, I think it would be wise for me and Lieutenant Larson to report to the conference room to make sure all the Genesis kids are unarmed."

"Agreed," Jason said as he nodded at Donny and Emily, "Talons, go with them." At that, they all headed towards the main conference room.

"But Jace!" Koth protested as he pulled Juan in even closer.

"Now, bro. He's in good hands with Joel, but if any one of those others starts something, you have more chance of taking them down than Donny or Emily - don't you?"

"Well, yeah... sorry, Voice. Acknowledged," Koth said as he straightened up. He kissed Juan quickly, grabbed his brother's bat'leth that had been dropped when Korris had taken Chang out, and ran off after the other two.

Jason then grinned at the scowling Kevin, "Hey, at least you weren't like one of the enhanced girls here, Kev. She was about to jump a bone when Daileass put out all fires of ardour..."

"So what!" Kevin spat moodily. "She's probably done it before... This is our... WAS our first night... I wanted it to be special, and now it's been fucked up by some asshole... I wanna kill him... And I'm being selfish..." he whispered finally as a single tear trickled down his cheek. "Sorry..."

Jason smiled, "Don't worry. Okay..."

"There, done," Joel whispered as Adam sank to his knees. "Uh... Adz... I need... to breathe... please?"

Adam was hugging the slender Vulcan boy tightly; very tightly.

"I'll... neck... pinch you if... you don't... let go!" Joel managed to say in growing panic.

"Sorry, but I didn't know... 'bout you OR Juan... oh, Joel... Juan..." Adam cried softly as he released his hold slightly.

"You told him?" Juan whispered to Joel.

Joel shrugged, "Not really. He saw everything I am and know. It'll happen with you in a moment, bro, so you'll understand then. He won't say nuffin' - you know that."

Juan just nodded and then stood in line behind Will and Jory waiting for his turn.

As Joel climbed into Logan's arms, he giggled, "You're very bendable, ain't ya?"

Logan, after catching the look his mother just gave him, decided that it might be best to NOT answer that one.

As Joel started the meld, Janet turned to Jason. "When did that bastard get my son?"

"A few years back. Logan has a day he doesn't remember being in school. They took him then," Jason said softly.

"Is it possible for me to join Mike?" Janet grated slowly to herself.

Jason looked over at Adam. "Bro, I give command back to you now. Logan asked me to assume control temporarily."

"Thank you, Jace," Adam said as he got up from his knees. "How many are affected?"

"Everyone from Genesis, including the AI boys here: Alvin and the rest," Jason said slowly. "Joel can meld with an Android - Vulcans can - but they cannot reprogram in a meld... I think we'll need Austin from the Compound."

"No," Adam said as he looked up. "Just 'No', Daileass."

"I wasn't gonna do nuffin'!" the AI protested loudly.

"Austin will come over with Poppa Spock," Jason said a second later, his eyes distant. "Spock is not pleased over there."

"Wait a minute... you mean my brothers have programming for this?" Daileass asked.

"That's the way it sounds." Adam said.

Daileass was quiet for a few seconds, then he came back. "Commander, I have turned over all base operations to Ark until such time as my memory banks can be scanned. I will still be talking, but Ark is running everything else."

"Acknowledged." Adam said with a shake of his head. "Uncle Mike... please make it slow and painful." he spoke softly, but many people overheard, and everyone nodded in agreement.

"Daely? You too, bro... sorry," Jason whispered after his eyes had blazed out even brighter. "God, that's hard. Positronic brains INSIDE a body is easy... finding YOURS in your special ROOM is quite another..."

"Finished... what IS this fetish with BBQ sauce?" Joel asked curiously. "And doesn't it make your dick st..."

"Never mind Joel!" Logan rushed as he too started hugging the boy tightly, tears in his eyes.

Janet and Joe were laughing hard. "So THAT'S where it all went to," Joe said.

Jory's eyes were wide as he looked at Adam. "Adam... do I gotta?"

"YES!" Janet, Joe, Adam and Jason all said at the same time.

"Ahhh man. Joel... not a word... okay. No matter what you see.... NOT A WORD!" Jory said seriously, but with a smile as he walked up in front of the smaller boy.

Joel grinned and winked at the boy. "First, I need Kevin," he whispered as he was let go by Logan. He walked on wobbly legs over and was pulled into his husband's arms. "Kev? After what I've seen, we're gonna have LOTS to do..."

"Oh, God save us," Logan said as Adam ran and tackled the escaping Will, then giggled as he was brought back to the line.

A few minutes later, and Joel walked over to Jory. "My mind to your mind..." he whispered, while Jory crossed his fingers fervently.

"I dread to think," Jason giggled as he found a place to sit and watch the show, "what Jory is so scared of Joel seeing."

"I'm not going to ask," Joe chuckled.

They all watched silently. Two minutes later, and, "Jory - you've nothing to be ashamed of! Logan IS cute. Yeah, he's your 'bro', but you're not blood-brothers, are you? Besides, Trist and Donna are hot! I'm happy for you!"

Logan's jaw hit the floor.

"Talk about brothers bonding!" Jason howled as he fell off the chair and rolled around on the floor.

"I'm gonna get you, elf!" Jory giggled as he blushed. As he moved away, he was caught by Logan and pulled into a hug.

"Thank you," Logan said with a smile. "You're cute too."

"Awww, man!" Jory whined. "MOM! Tell them!"

"I hope you're not after ANOTHER member to the threesome you've got going already, little brother," Adam mock glared at him, before breaking out in laughter.

"MOM! Tell them!" Jory whined louder. Janet, for her part, just sat there smiling, shaking her head.

Will was now looking completely pale faced. "I'll give you as many rides as you want, Joel, if you say NOTHING when this is done. Deal?"

Joel just smiled.

"Well..." Joel said as he finished the meld with Will.

A pause.

"Well what?" Jory pressed, looking between them.

Joel looked over at Billy. Then back at Will; then at Billy again.

"Come on! Fess up! You've done the rest of us!" Logan giggled.

"I don't see it," Joel said as he faced Will again. "He looks nothing like a Black Hawk... how can you get so turned on by Billy AND a helicopter?"

"What? Hey! I'm FAR more attractive than a Black Hawk!" Billy managed to say through his laughter.

"Yeah, you are," Joel agreed. "Besides, Will don't get rode by his 'Hawk..."

Will couldn't help but laugh as Billy tried to say something.... anything. "Not to mention I like his 'gun' better."

Juan was the calmest of the group, especially after all that had been revealed.

Everyone knew why - what was hidden in Juan's past was horror, not comical, and Joel had already seen it. Also, due to them ALL knowing what Joel knew, they knew it too.

However, they had forgotten something...

As the final meld finished, Joel bust out laughing. "Wow, you sure had a fun afternoon since the last meld, didn't ya? AND a lot of money... THEN more fun..."

Uh huh," Juan grinned.

"Good for you, bro... oh, I have a gift for you," Joel smiled as he turned to Kevin. The brown haired boy smiled and pulled something from the backpack he was wearing.

After throwing it to Joel, the Vulcan turned around and handed the wrapped parcel to Juan, "Here, someone you've missed for a very long time, bro."

Juan opened it slowly. A huge sob came next, and a choked word; just one.

"Rambo!" Juan sobbed as he held the small bear to his cheek. Then he cried... and cried...

Joe quickly pushed his chair over to Juan and caught him just before he fell to the floor still clutching the teddy bear. Joe easily pulled the boy into his lap and quietly soothed his tears. Janet walked up, and pulled Joe's chair back a bit before she too knelt down and comforted the crying boy.

All the others first went up to Joel and hugged him. "Thanks, Joel," Adam whispered.

They all knew what had happened in Juan's past, now. They all knew just how much that small, tiny bear meant to their brother.

"Guys, the Vulcans have arrived, and Poppa Spock says he'll be here soon," Jason said with a grin.

"The others will be getting their melds now. Joel? You want to meld with Chang? Or do you want your Dad to do so?"

"I'll go. Can someone show me where his room is?" Joel asked as he finished his hug with Jory.

"Sure," Janet said as she let go of Juan. "Come with me, Joel; you too, Kevin."

As Janet led the two small boys out of the Command Center, Alvin called over, "When do we start planning some butt-kicking, Adam?"

Adam never got the chance to reply.

"Rambo says right now," Juan said, a huge happy smile on his face. "And he's REALLY pissed off!"

"The bear is angry," Joe chuckled evilly. "You won't LIKE the bear when he's angry..."

It took about five more minutes before Spock, T'Pol and Austin showed up. Adam quickly asked Austin to deprogram Alvin, then they needed to work on Daileass. Austin nodded and walked over to join with the Clones and Chipmunks.

They were all about to head out to deal with the other Genesis kids when Todd was beamed in, looking very confused. He saw Adam and immediately went to attention. "Sir. Sergeant Casey reporting as ordered."

Adam saluted back, then pointed over to where the 'clones' were standing by Austin. "Report to Alvin, he'll fill you in. Are you armed?"

"No sir," Todd answered confused, "I was told to leave all weapons back in Maine."

"Good... carry on." Adam said, then he and the rest of his brothers, Jason, Joe, Spock and a few others made their way down to the conference room, leaving Austin talking with Alvin and the other Chipmunks. Logan, however, stayed behind with his clone brothers.

"Grandpop Spock has told me what has happened," Austin said seriously, "and he told me what type of programming this will likely be."

"How bad could it be?" Simon asked while Theodore brought Todd up to speed on the events so far.

Austin pursed his lips. "Bad. This would be different for you than for a biological. This 'alien' programming would be a part of your main set, and that means I'd have to remove a large section of your native programming."

"We're... we're gonna die, then," Richard stated hollowly, prompting Logan to hug him tightly.

"Of course not," Austin soothed gently. "I'd not be doing this if that was the outcome. You're just going to be different."

“Different how?” Logan asked curiously.

“Their programming will be upgraded to mine. I'm a prototype, A.U.S.T.I.N. Series. They'll technically think faster, react faster, and their telepathy will be more my level as well. We'll be brothers.”

“We'll be smarter?” Alvin pipped up happily.

“Oh, God – that's ALL we need,” Logan sighed as he covered his eyes with one hand.

Richard started to tickle Logan in retaliation, while Austin rolled his eyes. “Okay, Alvin. I'll start with you. You don't have a port, do you?”

“Nope,” Alvin smiled. “Marc had to use an uplink to help me when I nearly died on Saturday.”

“Cool,” Austin smiled, “Okay, that's what I'd have to use now anyway. If I tried using a port, your native protective software would try and fry my brain.”

“What about me?” Daileass asked softly from the nearest speaker. “I have ports and they're all linked to the rest of the servers.”

“Mmm,” Austin looked thoughtful, then, “We'll get all your brothers sorted first, then they can help me with you. We might need to disconnect you first.”

“Okay,” Daileass said, sounding slightly happier now that he knew it was possible to fix him as well.

Austin gently pulled Alvin to stand in front of him, and their eyes seemed to lock.

Logan found that he was holding his breath, and it was only Zed and Kaden thumping him on the back a few times that stopped him from blacking out. “Breath, idiot,” Zed murmured. “Jeez. We don't need the upgrade, you do!”

“Sorry,” Austin said hollowly, “but Logan's 'programming' is too inferior for me to do anything with.”

“You're all based on me, 'little' brothers...” Logan shot back quickly, “so watch it!”

“But we're the improved models! Perfect, and cuter, in every way!” Theodore grinned as he did a small twirl.

“Yeah, right,” Logan grinned as well, rolling his eyes. “How can you improve on this?” he giggled as he gestured at himself.

“Easy,” Tyce chuckled. “We've not got some sick BBQ sauce fetish!”

“Weeeelllll,” Gabe said as he giggled, “I kinda really like BBQ sauce... just not THAT much!”

Logan decided that discretion was the better part of valor, and remained silent.

“One for the Clones, Nil for the donner!” Rainer quipped to Peter and Todd.

Alvin grinned as Austin finished with him, "Actually, it's 4 for us and 2 for Logan. Remember that time with the snipe hunt?"

"Oh yeah! We've STILL gotta get him back for that!" Rainer agreed.

Alvin's face, while happy, was also thoughtful.

"What's it like, Alvin?" Todd asked. "Did it hurt or something?"

"Nope. It's... I feel so much smarter! I'm a genius now!" the little eight year old giggle.

Logan continued to remain silent. It was just easier this way. He pulled the giggling Alvin over and into his arms as Austin started on Simon.

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Adam stopped outside the doors to the conference room and took a breath. He looked at everyone else and spoke softly. "There is only one real way I can do this. I don't like doing it this way, but I have no choice. Will, make sure Joe stays near the exit in case something bad happens. I am going to have them go one team at a time into the other room where all the Vulcans are waiting. I won't give them any explanation until we know if any of them have been... compromised." Adam looked around and got nods from everyone. He then sent a quick message to Donnie, straightened his uniform, took a deep breath and went into the room.

"ATTENTION ON DECK!" Donnie hollered as the door to the conference room opened. Everyone there jumped to their feet and saluted. Adam was stone faced as he walked in and up to the podium. He returned their salute and motioned for them to sit. He looked around and met eyes with everyone there. Every one of his brothers and sisters looked back at him, some with concern in their eyes, some with questions, and even some with fear. He hated to see those looks from his family, especially when they were directed at him.

"I apologize for the wait, but many things have been happening lately and most of them directly affect us. I am aware that many of you have team members that are not here; however, there is a reason for that. We have a mission coming up that needs our special abilities if we are to succeed. What will happen now is one by one, each team will be called into the room behind this one, where they will receive part of their briefing. After everyone is done with that, we will return here and continue. Unfortunately, for right now, I must order every single one of you to not discuss what is going on with anyone else until everyone has their mission."

Adam waited to make sure everyone there was ready, then sent his mind out to the room behind this one. He got the okay from Khan, who, along with Thor and Tyr, had already been scanned by the Vulcans, and now are going to act as security.

Adam then started with Strike Team Alpha, and watched as they made their way to the door at the back of the room where Khan was waiting. Adam stayed in contact with Khan the entire time and ten minutes later, he got the news.

Every single one of them had the programming... thankfully none of them had been activated.

---

Things were going well, they had been through two full teams, and only had one left. As they got to the pilots, Adam got a call from Jack that Mike had reported their findings, after the interrogation of General Adams as well as the fact that Daileass now had full control of the base again.

Adam quickly made his way back to the command center, leaving Khan in charge, as both Jory and Juan wanted to come with him. When Adam got into the command center, Jack just nodded to Adam's office and the entire group went in.

They found Mike in a fresh set of clothes, still drying his hair. Adam could only grin thinking that the General must not have had a good time if Mike had to take a shower after they were done.

"Just taking a break to let you know what we've learned so far," Mike said.

"You're not done?" Adam asked.

"Oh no, we'll be there a while yet," Mike said grinning; only there was no humor present in it, and that kind of frightened Adam.

"So what did you learn?"

Mike smiled slightly and shook his head. "Well Adam, you were right. Adams was holding back. Alvin was kind enough to pull the info from Adams' computer and put it into a report for you. However, these are the high points. The base holds over three thousand kids, not just the two the General had said. Every single one of them has been genetically altered after being kidnapped before their first birthday." Adam growled a bit, as that really pissed him off, but Mike wasn't done.

"It gets better..." Mike said before he sat down in Adam's chair. "This isn't the only base."

"WHAT?!?!?" Adam exclaimed, then put his hands to his face. "How many more kids did this mad man fuck with?"

"Not sure... there's not much information on the other base on dick head's computer, but what there is tells me that the place is even more heavily guarded than the one he told us about."

Adam sat down heavily in one of the other chairs. After a minute, he looked up and met eyes with Mike. "We'll just have to deal with that one later. For now, we'll concentrate on taking out the first base. Thanks for the info, and have fun with the General."

"Oh we are... and Pablo is making sure this takes a LONG time..." Mike grinned, then asked Daileass to take him back. After he was gone, Adam sighed and went back down to the conference room where the last of the pilots were getting their meld; so far so good.

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"ATTENTION ON DECK!" Donnie called out as Adam walked back into the room. Immediately, all talking ceased as everyone jumped to their feet to stand at attention; everyone nervous as to what exactly was occurring in the base. Adam made his way back up to the podium and stood there looking out for a second, taking in his family and trying to figure out how to tell them something like this.

"As you were." Adam spoke softly and all the Genesis project members sat back down, looking back at Adam; the trepidation evident in their unwavering gaze. They all now knew some of what was going on, but not the entire story. Adam had thought hard on what he was going to say, and finally decided he needed to tell them everything. They would all find out eventually, and he would rather it come from him. Hell, this was something that *Could* only come from him.

"You all now know some of what has happened, but let me fill you all in on exactly what Adams was able to do to us. Yes, I said 'us'. It turns out that EVERY member of the Genesis Project had this programming... That includes all of us... up to and including me." Adam took a moment and closed his eyes, trying to fight back the tears. The room was deathly silent as everyone let the words he had just spoken sink in. The ramifications of those words scared them all deeply.

"General Adams used that programming to try and take away something so precious to all of us, that I don't think we would have been able to survive if it hadn't been for some divine intervention by Pablo." He took a deep breath as this was the hardest part, the part he wasn't sure he could make it through, but like every other time, he took a deep breath and said what had to be said no matter how much it hurt. "This isn't going to be easy to say and even less to hear but... Earlier today when he called...when he called but... but before he hung up... General Adams forced Chang to kill our parents... he forced him to kill our mom and dad." That was when Adam finally couldn't hold the tears back any longer, the point when he didn't even try as the pain and fear he'd been holding in since that moment came out to be shared with this, his family, as it should be. It took only a brief moment, but then the entire room exploded with cries and in overwhelming emotion at hearing such news. If Joe hadn't been sitting right there, many of them would probably have lost it entirely; not that a few didn't. Adam didn't because he couldn't right now. But he also knew that...later... when he had his Logan and was alone with him, then would come his time and probably his love's as well. Joe quickly wheeled his chair over, and stopped directly in front of the podium. He raised his hand to try and quiet everyone down, and finally they all did, except for the occasional sob which couldn't be silenced, no matter how hard the person tried.

"I want everyone to know that Janet and I are fine, and I want you to know that our son, your brother, Chang, is also fine." At the grumbles he heard he raised his hand again and said, "Janet and I no more blame Chang for what happened than we blame you. It wasn't your fault and it wasn't his either. The only difference, THE...ONLY...DIFFERENCE...between you and Chang is he got activated and thankfully you didn't. Don't stop loving him any more than we will, because of all those affected by today's events, he of all of us, will need that love the most."

There was silence after that as Joe let what he said sink in for a moment, then Malinda stood up and declared loudly to all assembled, "We will stand by our brother and we **WILL NEVER** stop loving him." All looked to Malinda as Joe and Adam held their breath, but they had worried for nothing as a loud

roar swept the auditorium, a roar of one word: "CHANG!" When the thunder had died down finally, after several had begun to think it might never end, Joe, with tears running down his face, continued, "I also want all of you to know that had either one of us... died... died... and stayed dead..." Joe paused for a moment to try and not lose it entirely, and when he felt able, finally continued. "If we hadn't been brought back... if we hadn't... we would have died as two of the proudest parents in this world. I... I just wanted all of you to know how damned proud I am of every single one of you. I never thought I would have kids, and certainly not as many as I do, but now... now I wouldn't trade it for anything in the world. I am HONORED that you are my children, but even more I'm *Honored* that you all call me dad."

Joe had to brace himself, as almost as one person; they all came flying out of their chairs and crashed into him. Some sobbing, others outright crying, none were able to speak coherently, the emotions overwhelming them.

They had almost lost their daddy, and now that they had him back, they didn't want to let go, ever.

It took almost ten full minutes for everyone to calm down enough, and take their seats. During that time, Adam had asked Dailess to contact the rest of the strike teams and all of the combat staff, and have them report to the conference room. He had them all wait outside so he hit the Genesis kids with the last part. "Now... just so all of you know, General Adams is not having a very good night. Uncle Mike, Uncle Tony, Uncle Tom, and Aunt Elena are... taking care of him as we speak." Adam couldn't go on, as the room erupted in cheers and shouts of joy. Adam for his part couldn't help but grin at the thought of what the General was having to go through. Once they had quieted down some, he gave the order for the rest of the combat staff to come in and find seats. Then he got down to business.

"For those of you who do not know what happened earlier, you will find out shortly enough. Feel free to ask any of the ones that were here before you got here to fill you in. For now... we have an operation to plan." He grinned as everyone in the room sat a little forward in their seats, all eager to hear what was happening.

"Just to re-cap, General Adams contacted me earlier and tried to strike a bargain with me. Basically, he wanted us to leave him alone, and in return, he would give us the location of the last of the Genesis Bases." That got everyone's attention, and military discipline went out the window as they all came to their feet demanding information. Adam put his hand up, and they all found their seats again; a few of them actually looking a bit sheepish for their outburst.

"This is a big one. I never thought that they would have this many kids involved in the project. This base holds about twenty five hundred kids. Maybe more, as we know General Adams wasn't being entirely honest with us." Again the room erupted, after about thirty seconds of stunned silence. This time, though, he let them carry on for a few minutes, then called for quiet.

"The first thing I need is for everyone to give me an operational status report for your team. I need those ASAP. We will start having meetings with the command staff every two hours to figure out what we have and what we need. I would suggest all of you take combat naps as often as you can. I would not be surprised if Adams had given orders to kill all the kids there if he doesn't report back, so we have to do this as quickly as possible. Alvin, Simon, Theodore, get your gear together; I want you guys ready to go in one hour. You're going to be our eyes and ears in there. It's time for you boys to do what you were made for." The three youngest Logan clones grinned, and nodded, then ran out of the room.

Finally they would be able to put their training to the test. They were made to be the infiltration team... now they would be able to do it.

"The rest of you, go over your gear, and make sure you're ready for one hell of a fight. I'm sure Uncle Tom would give us whatever help we need, but this is a family issue... this is OUR fight. We'll have all the help we need from our brothers in the Clan, as always; but, we'll be the front line. That's where we work the best." Adam paused for a moment making sure to meet eyes with as many of his family as he could, then moved out from behind the podium. All eyes were on him as he came to a stop in the middle of the room... in the middle of those he called brothers and sisters.

"This is another one of those times, where we might not all make it back. I hope you all understand that. But I know we all have the same thoughts on this one. Those kids are our family. They are just like every single one of us, and because of that, I would gladly give my life to help get them away from the bastards that hold them now. When we go in, there will be no quarter given. There will be no mercy. We now know that every single one of those that are guarding our family were handpicked by Adams. As such, they are there willingly. They know what's going on, and they choose to stay and to hurt our family. Every single kid there is wearing a collar, and they were all made to stand in formation today waiting to see if Adams would give the order for their guards to open up and kill them all. I will NOT allow that to happen. I will not stand for them to be there any longer than needed." Adam looked around and saw nothing but nodding heads and agreement from everyone there. He was about to say something motivational, but figured he would hold that till later. Now they had work to do. "You all know what you have to do. I know you will all do the best job that you can. Tomorrow morning, we will have another full staff meeting to go over plans. Until then, let's get to work." Adam turned on his heel and started to walk out. He didn't stop, but he did grin when he heard every one of them in the room erupt into cheers, and started to run out of the room, all of them intent on their current mission.

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"Is everyone okay now?" Korris asked quickly as he rose from the bed where he had been cuddled against Chang's recumbent form.

Janet nodded. "Yes, although most are now embarrassed beyond all belief."

Joel smiled at Korris' confused look. "Auntie Janet? Can you go back and help the others? This one's going to be okay," he whispered softly.

Janet embraced him briefly before saying, "Okay, sweetie."

After the door had closed behind her, Joel looked at Kevin. "When I say, I want you to run. Run fast. Okay? You won't survive what I think is going to happen here."

"What do you mean? You said..." Kevin started, but Joel placed a hand over his husband's mouth.

"It will be, but the steps between are going to be rough," Joel said softly, looking back at Chang as the Asian boy lay on the bed.

Korris looked between the two little boys, then sighed. "Joel is right, Kev. If Chang is anything like me, I'd be pissed too; at the least."

"Oh. Okay. I'm going to stay here, then," Kevin replied as he sat down by the door.

Joel walked over and crawled up on the bed to be near to Chang's face. "I'm coming Bro... My mind to your mind..."

---

Chang had never been so helpless. He couldn't move; couldn't see. Couldn't taste, touch, smell nor feel. He was afraid. He knew this was his own mind, but this... this had never happened before. Jason had never told him about anything like this!

Then, he wasn't alone. Someone else was there; someone familiar. Someone he knew; someone who was, to his mind, impossible to be here.

It was himself; yet not himself.

The other person looked like him, down to the color of his eyes, but...

"Who are you?" Chang asked steadily.

"You," the other replied. "Why are you still here? The Master said that I would be alone."

"Master?" Chang asked.

"The General; "Our Master," the one you and the others tried to betray."

"How is he your Master? How are you here? What are you?"

"You; I am you. The you that the Master truly wanted; the one who will obey without question. The one who did not have to hurt, yet still has your knowledge. I am the Master's true son. You - you are just a mistake; the trial. Once you passed the test, I was to come out, and you were to be gone."

A pause.

"But you are still here. This is not what was planned. You have to leave, now. Goodbye."

Chang found that he could raise his arms, and just in time too, for the 'Other' came for him.

Swords appeared with a thought, as did armor, and both Chang's started fighting.

And fighting.

"This is not going to end," Chang said after what seemed like weeks and weeks of ceaseless combat. "We are too evenly matched. We cannot beat each other."

"I must destroy you. I have no choice. You can either let me, or we will both be here forever. I cannot stop. You are not real. I am," the Other answered as he renewed his assault.

"I will not give up. I cannot," Chang said evenly. "If you are truly me, you will know that."

"I cannot be beaten; you might as well surrender and die honorably by my hand."

"To surrender would be a dishonor. You are not strong enough to beat me. Nor am I able to beat you. I am resigned to stay here forever. I will not let you hurt my brothers."

"I am stronger. You love. You are weak. You would join your blood to an alien? You would engage in sex with one? You are weak. I am too strong for you," the Other responded with a growing sneer.

"But I am stronger," came a new voice, and both Chang's stopped fighting and pulled away to see who the newcomer was.

It was Joel; in his Vulcan Armor.

"I am Sa'ren of Vulcan. I am in here, and here I have power. Yet, I am not OF here, so you cannot touch me. I am stronger than you," Joel said to the Other.

The Other backed away slowly. "Alien. The Master will stop you. He will not let his true son die."

"Right now, it is likely your 'Master' is squealing like a bitch as he's fucked with a table leg," Joel spat, then he moved with the speed of thought.

All Chang saw was the other 'him' exploding as Joel's form came into contact with it.

"Funny," Joel murmured. "I thought that killing a programmed personality would feel worse. It... he was never truly alive. There was no soul. I couldn't even feel it. I'd know - I think. My Katra is melded with yours, Chang," he said softly as he looked over at his Asian brother. "But there is just yours here. He was not real. You are... at least, I think he wasn't... I hope not..."

"What has happened, little brother?" Chang asked as he came over to embrace the thoughtful little Vulcan.

Joel turned his sad eyes up at Chang. "Open your heart and mind. You shall see. I have to see all that you are. You will see all than I am. Everything we both know, the other will as well. You will learn of what has happened from the viewpoint of your five brothers who witnessed it. Once your anger has run its course, I ask that you will listen to me - even if your heart and mind is made up, listen before you act. Do I have your word on that? Just for five minutes once you stop screaming?"

Chang felt his mouth go dry. "Yes, brother; you do."

"Then, open your mind Chang. Feel the Sands of the Forge... Feel the past of your life. See all that I am... Embrace Forever!"

---

Joel opened his eyes and looked over at Korris. "We are in the meld still. We ask that you move off the bed, Korris. We do not wish to hurt you. Kevin, we also ask that you run, "Now." Go and find Joel's Father and stay with him. Say nothing. Run."

Kevin nodded and ran, while Korris stood up.

"Korris, we ask that you reach and take a hold of Joel's body. Once Joel's hands leave Chang's face, you are to pull Joel away. His Vulcan speed is not enough to compensate for Chang's," Joel's oddly dual voice echoed.

Korris did so, and gripped Joel tight.

"Now!" Joel yelled as he removed his hands.

He was pulled away in time, for Chang came up raging.

---

"Ah, Adam?" Daeliess' voice quavered from the speakers.

Adam looked up from where he'd been watching the kids, his brother and sisters, dealing with what they had learned. "Yes?"

"You might want to get some repair guys over to Chang's place. He just threw his forge through the fucking wall!"

"Oh," Adam said his eyes a little wider than before. "Close off the entire area, bro."

"Done," Daileass responded. "Jesus! The bed followed the forge!"

---

Chang stood there panting. His eyes were closed, and all he could see were his brothers watching as he... as he killed his parents. Tears started to flow from his eyes. He knew what this meant. He knew there was only one thing he could do to satisfy his honor. He couldn't look anyone in the eye with the shame he felt right now. With his head still down, he slowly walked over the shattered remains of his sword locker. He reached in, and pulled out the tanto he had made shortly before he met Korris.

"You promised me five minutes, Chang," Joel's voice said firmly.

Korris was taken aback by the maturity now heard in the little Vulcan's voice. This was a side of Joel that Korris had heard about, but, to his knowledge, none had really seen; the part of him that had grown up well beyond his years.

"I want my five minutes. You gave me your word."

Chang bowed his head, the tanto hanging loose at his side. "I will keep my word," he breathed.

"Then turn and sit. We need to talk," Joel said as he and Korris picked their way across the now messed up room.

Chang did so, but still would not meet their eyes. Joel was having none of that. He reached and lifted Chang's chin and used an old trick of his father's to capture another's gaze.

"Your honor is gone. You have been violated, and as such, only death is your release. However," Joel said, as Korris went still at his side, "That is not your ONLY option. There is - another way."

"What other way? My honor is gone - stolen. I must avenge and die, or simply die. I cannot avenge as the General is already dead or dying. Therefore, I must take my life. It is the only honor I can hold to now," Chang whispered back as he fought to break the gaze.

Joel allowed the link to drop between them and turned to Korris. "There is another way," the Vulcan said, staring hard at Korris.

At first, Korris was at a loss as to what Joel was referring to. Then it hit him. "Chang - when you bonded with me, you became Klingon; just as I became Human. Our honor is one. Yours has been taken, and therefore, so has mine. My people, however, have a way to regain that honor."

Chang looked up slowly. "How?"

"To fight the unwinnable battle," Joel said softly as he looked between them.

Korris nodded, and Chang's eyes started to regain some life - some hope.

"What battle?" Chang asked. "What would be enough to purge this stain on OUR honor, beloved?"

Korris closed his eyes in thought, but Joel smiled, "There is another reason I sent Kevin to be with my Dad. He is telling me of what your brothers have discovered, as well as what Draco just reported on. There is not just ONE Genesis base, there is another..."

"Do you know the details?" Chang and Korris asked together.

"No, I told Kevin not to tell me. However, Koth is on his way. He is bound to the same honor under Klingon law. He is blood of your blood - the both of you. He will remain and cover for you. I will not know where you are, nor what you are doing," Joel replied. "That way, I cannot be made to answer. I

have to answer any question. If I don't know, then I cannot answer. All I can say is that you are going to regain your honor."

Joel stood and moved to Chang's right side. He pulled one of the two daggers that Juan had given him for his birthday out, then opened Chang's shirt. After briefly touching the spot where he knew the location chip that all Unit members had was, he then cut into Chang's skin and removed it. Chang did not feel a thing.

"Prepare and go once Koth is here. I must leave to remain ignorant. Fight with honor, Korris. Fight with honor, Chang," Joel said as he began to move away, dropping the small chip on the floor. "Remember - today is a good day to die."

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A few moments later, Koth came walking into the room. He only took a moment to look around and see the destruction that Chang had caused, but then his eyes landed on his brother and his brother's bond mate. He stopped dead in his tracks... both Chang and Korris were suiting up in their armor.

"What...?" he asked, then his eyes locked on Chang's. "Oh. I see."

Koth looked back at Korris, "I wondered why Kevin said I should bring the details of the second base we found out about. Mike wasn't able to find out much till just a few minutes ago... but what we found out now... It is such a tough nut to crack that Adam wants to leave it till Saturday... if you want this info... then..."

"The Unwinnable Battle," Korris said softly as he activated the shield on Chang's belt.

"I'm coming," Koth said quickly.

"I am sorry, but I cannot allow that," Chang said softly. Before Koth could say anything, Chang continued. "This is my honor, and I need to do this. Korris is my bond mate... my Honor is his so it is OUR honor to fight for. He is your brother, I know, but I must ask you something difficult. I must ask that you stay here. Stay here and help my brothers when they learn what has happened. Stay here and make sure they understand. And most importantly... Stay here and help Juan. He needs you."

Koth stared at Chang for a long moment, and then ran into Korris' arms. "I'll let Sto'Vo'Kor know you're coming brother," he wept softly. "I'll really make sure they know you're coming... I promise."

"Thank you," Korris whispered back. "I know you will." There was a slight pause, then, "I have to ask something hard of you, Koth."

"Anything," came the boy's answering whisper.

"We need you to lie for us. They cannot know where we're going, and Draco cannot trace me on my chip. I can't remove it or hell will break loose, but..."

"I will lie for you; for the both of you." Koth backed away quickly after leaving the padd he had with Chang. "Qapla! Die with honor!"

Then, the small Klingon ran sobbing from the room, holding that final image of his brother and his brother's bonded in their armor fixed firm in his memory.

Therefore; when he had to make the Call, he'd always remember them at their best...

Chang waited for a few moments, as he took his various weapons out of the rubble and checked to make sure they were all undamaged. He then looked over at Korris as he read from the PADD. "The base is located on an island located just off the northern California coast. According to this, the base only houses a ten person Genesis team, but the security there is tighter than on the base that holds three thousand. It says here that General Adams had these brothers developed as the back up to your team, and are supposedly more advanced."

Korris looked up and met Chang's eyes. The steely determination there gave Korris the strength to go on. "The security consists of two thousand troops, as well as anti aircraft, and anti sea going vessel armament. We have maps, but the place is set up like a damned fortress. I... I don't know how we'll even get in."

Chang nodded, then took the pad, and started to look at the maps; a plan forming in his mind. He then took out his clan communicator and opened it up. "Ark, this is Chang... May I please have a secured line to talk to you?"

---

Adam hugged Joel as soon as he entered the room. "Thank you, bro. Thank you so much," he whispered as he kissed Joel's forehead.

Joel smiled tiredly up at him as Kevin came over and cuddled into his side, "S'okay, Adz. You're my brothers and I love you all."

Adam grinned happily, "If you and Kev want to go home now, you can. Your dad shouldn't be much longer. I know it's your wedding night and everything."

Joel smiled softly, and Kevin did as well. Kevin murmured, "We're too tired now anyway, Adam. My strength was being sapped by Sa'r when he was melding, but we're both beat."

Adam hugged them both tightly. "I'm sorry, bros. You go wait outside, then. It's a nice night - at least you can have some alone time for a romantic view," he whispered with a smile.

Joel nodded happily. "Oh, one thing though," he said quickly, "Tomorrow Kev says you're all planning a rescue of the big base, right?"

"Yes," Adam said softly. "Mike has said there's another base, but we can't get that tomorrow. That we'll do on Saturday. Why?"

"I'm coming with you. Kev too. I have my armour, and Kev has a 'morph, so we're both safe," Joel said seriously. "I just have a feeling. I need to be there."

Adam pursed his lips. "Well..."

"I insist, Adam," Joel said firmly. "If I have to throw my weight in the Family and House, I will. I'd rather come with your blessing, though. I'll do what you tel me to stay safe, and I have my armor and we're both covered by BFG - Kev's Fuzzy. I'm coming."

Adam shook his head and smiled, "How can I argue with the king of the elves? You're just as hard headed as your dad, Joel. Okay. You can come. We'll have all the protection you'll need, but yes, you can come."

Joel smiled, jump into Adam's arms, and landed a kiss on Adam's lips. "I love you bro," he whispered. Then he slipped back down, "We're going to look at the stars now, Adz. See you later."

"Your dad won't be much longer," Adam smiled as the two boys made their tired way outside and out into the crisp night air.

---

Chang looked over at Korris after checking his equipment over for the third time, they were ready to go. He walked slowly over to his bonded and pulled him in close. "Thank you for coming with me. I know we won't make it back, but.. but to be able to regain my honor with you by my side..." Chang's voice faltered for a moment, raised his eyes to meet Korris's, and slowly brought his lips to the other boy's. The shared a passionate kiss for a few moments, till Chang broke it, and pulled back. "Thank you."

He then slowly moved over to the only piece of furniture to escape his earlier rage. A side table that was next to his bed. He moved it over to sit in the middle of the room, and placed his ceremonial dagger in the middle of it. Next he took a piece of paper, and wrote a note to his family. His normal emotional control was non existent at the moment, and tears fell onto the paper as he wrote. He hoped they would understand what his Honor demanded. When he was done with the note, he looked up and meet Korris's eyes one more time, and with a barely noticeable nod from his love, he raised the communicator to his mouth. "Ark... we are ready."

Less then a second later, all that remained in the room was the echoing whispers from Korris:

"Today is a good day to die."

Boxerdude:

Editor's notes:

Well it has been a while since I have added any notes but I think after the last few chapters it is far past due. I must say that Roland has really set this up to be extremely exciting. We have really been able to see more about the Unit than ever before. Now we get to really see what Chang is all about, even more so than before. I do feel sorry for him as Honor is what his life is all about. I just hope that he and Korris can come through this next mission alive. I can't imagine they will come out of it well. Although, I would not want to be on the receiving end of a pissed off Chang and a Klingon!!! That combination is lethal at best! I also like the fact that Janet and Joe are alive and boy do I like Pablo!!! You know, angels can bring down god's wrath on those who are "not innocent" as in totally evil. Fitting for one such as Adams who has done nothing but create total hell for those he calls his children.

Now, on another note, Roland has set the stage for the UNIT to get back down to business and be who they are! The front line for the Clan and to save kid's in need. This special mission just happens to be to save even more of their brothers and sisters. Camp Bam Bam is getting ready to get even bigger so I hope the Mikyvis have something in mind to house all these new family members!! LOL. And I would really like to know what this BBQ sauce thing is all about. I am a bit scared to think about where Roland ever got this idea!!! LMAO!!!

Can't wait for the next chapter to see what this story has to bring!!! So many ways it could go, so many doors open, which one will Roland choose to go through!!!

Happy Reading!!!!!!

Boxerdude

Clan Short Archivist's Notes:

I don't know whether to applaud or cry or do both. Frankly I don't have the energy to do either as this chapter took it all out of me. Gen Adams deserves what ever he gets and more. I sincerely hope that everyone at Camp Bam Bam will be able to stand down very soon as get some much needed R&R and healing.

The Story Lover

## Chapter 11

*Note: Some time ago D&B asked DarkStar to help them with a scene, a Unit strike team disposing of a bad guy who had shown up in the backstory of one of their characters. He exceeded expectations, fleshing out some of the characters of the Unit's Strike Team Charlie and dealing with a highly controversial subject sensitively. D&B and Roland are honored to welcome Dark Star's contribution, "Austin's Story" as an integral part of both Jigsaw and Camp Bam Bam.*

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### Austin Casey's POV

I walked slowly up to the door and knocked softly, awaiting a reply from within.

After a few moments without getting one, I came to the conclusion that just maybe I'd knocked a bit too softly, oh, and with some help from Til saying, "Ya might try making it loud enough for someone to hear."

After suitably impressing him with my glare, which he didn't seem to get, I sighed and brought my hand up again.

"KNOCK...KNOCK...KNOCK"

"Much better," Til snickered.

That earned another glare, which got me a giggle in return.

Someone had been influencing my team way too much.

"Come in," a voice called from inside, and our brief respite from worry was over.

I quickly pulled Til in for a hug as I whispered "Thanks" before letting him go and looking at Becky, who was squeezing my arm reassuringly.

I didn't know how this was going to go over, and everyone knew I was worried about it, yet they all backed me.

They all stood by me.

"Okay, let's do this and...thanks, guys," I said as I checked over my uniform quickly and moved to open the door.

I heard a soft, "Someone's got to have your back," from Bryan, and I couldn't keep a smile off my face as I entered with all of them behind me.

"Sir, Lt. Casey and Strike Team Charlie reporting for mission debriefing SIR!" I said as I and my team came to attention in front of the Base Exec.

"At ease, Lieutenant," he stated before asking, "May I ask why you're here rather than with Adam?"

"With all that's going on, we figured it would be better to give it to you, sir," I told him.

"Understood, proceed then," he told me.

With a quick glance at the others, I took a deep breath and began.

"Well, you see, it started the other day as I was heading back to quarters...."

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**\*\*FLASHBACK\*\***

"I'll see you later, Bry," I said, laughing at his joke as I turned towards home.

"Aw, come on, Austin, just for a little while," he whined.

"Look, you go and have fun, but I am not going off to Beijing for Chinese food," I replied as I stopped and grinned back at him.

"You're just scared," he taunted.

"Damn right!" I said, laughing before walking off.

"Chicken, and of a girl too," he called after me.

"Yep, and I'll tell her you said so," I shouted back, only to hear him begin begging me not to.

I just laughed as I walked away, heading towards our pod.

As I got there and walked in, suddenly there was this tremendous scream, followed by a ball of pure energy barreling towards me.

"DA!" my little angel yelled as I bent down and scooped her up into my arms.

"Well, hello, Dani, how's my baby girl doing today?" I asked as I kissed her cheeks while hugging her.

"Fine, Daddy, I got to meet Mary today and she's nice," she told me/

"And who would Mary be?" I asked, frowning.

"She's a girl, Daddy," Dani proclaimed, as if it should be obvious to anyone or me specifically.

"You would think that would have been obvious by the name, luv," my other angel said, coming into the room laughing while Dani just giggled.

"I got that part," I grumbled, which caused more giggles.

"She's a wee one that can give this one a run for her money," Becky replied.

"Oh no, two of them!" I said in mock horror.

"Da!" Dani whined.

"Whaaaat?" I whined right back.

"Muuuum" was her next plaintive cry.

"You're horrible," I said, which got me a kiss, which became a nicer one as giggles erupted from my arms.

"Mummy's kissing da, mummy's kissing da," Dani started singsonging.

I stopped doing that to look down at her giggling face, then began to shotgun kiss her cheeks, neck, and nose as I said, "Now da is kissing Dani."

This just got her laughing like crazy as I sat down with her on the couch and Becky asked how my morning went.

"Well, after you headed off, Bry and I went down to the mat for a while. He's really coming along nicely and Chang has taught him a lot. Other than that, not much; oh, he's scared of you, by the way," I ended, grinning at her.

"Me? Why on earth would he be frightened of me?" Becky asked.

"Oh, I don't know, maybe what you did to that guy in Taos a few months back might have something to do with it," I replied, grinning.

"Whatcha do mummy?" Dani asked.

"Nothing, sweetheart, your dad is just teasing," she replied.

"He likes that," Dani said after thinking about it for a minute.

"Yes, he does," Becky replied, mock glaring at me.

"Save me!" I cried.

"Oh you, quit," Becky said while Dani started giggling again.

"Da, can I stay over with Mary?" Dani asked finally.

"Well, I don't know about that," I said, looking at Becky, who suddenly was looking elsewhere.

"PLEEEEEEEEEEEASE?" she begged.

"Dani..." I started, but she interrupted with "Please, pretty please, with sugar on top."

"Do we know her parents, or does she have any?" I asked, thinking of all the new kids who had come in.

We didn't know most of them anymore, not like before.

Dani was just nodding her head up and down rapidly, giggling while Becky started laughing.

"What?" I asked, since it was obvious they knew something I didn't.

Finally Becky said "You could say that."

"So can I?" Dani asked.

"Well, who is it?" I shot back.

"Uncle Jack and Uncle Dave," she replied.

"Jack and Dave, but they don't have any..." I started to say, when Becky interrupted me and said, "They do now, three of 'em."

"Three?" I asked, looking sharply at her.

"Yep, three wee bairns, Mary and her two brothers," she replied.

"Oh..." I managed to say.

I hadn't seen that one coming.

"So can I, da?" Dani asked.

"Well...I don't know," I said, looking seriously down at my angel, who got a worried look on her face.

"Da, pleeeeeease," she cried.

"But, Dani, what will I do for Dani hugs and kissies if you're gone, I can't go without them," I told her.

She got a thoughtful look, or maybe desperate would be more descriptive, as she tried to come up with an answer, until finally she broke out in a big grin and said, "Mummy can give you hugs for me to-night."

"Hmmm," I mumbled as I thought about that, watching the hopeful look on her face while Becky just looked at me.

"Nah, sorry, that just won't do," I told her finally.

"What? But...Da..." she said, looking at Becky quickly.

"You see, mummy hugs and kisses are great and all, but they just aren't yours, sweetie; yours are special, and I just couldn't do with not having them all night," I said.

Now I had her going as she squirmed and tried to figure something out, but Becky came to her rescue.

"Leave off, you great big oaf, or you'll be having her in tears now," she said, scooping up our angel and saying, "Come on, then, let's get your kit sorted."

I just shook my head as they walked off, and turned on the TV to see what was on.

Dailess setting up the satellite system was really cool, and we got like a million or so channels, but even so it seemed like there was never anything good on to watch half the time.

Before I could get too far into looking, there was a knock on the door and I got up to answer it, to find Til standing there.

I took him into my arms and planted a gentle kiss on his forehead as I said, "Hey there, big guy, what's up?"

"UNCLE TIL!" I heard the scream and quickly got out of the way as a now naked and very wet streak shot straight for the startled twelve year old.

"Hey girly," he said, scooping her up into his arms as Becky came storming out yelling, "Daniela Raffaella Lanart Casey, get your skinny wet little behind back in this bath right this instant!"

"But Mum, Uncle Til's here!" she whined, hiding her head in Tilden's arms.

"And no doubt he'll still be here when your bath is done too," she said, not that it got any response from the child, who had much more important things on her mind, such as talking to her Uncle Tilden.

"If you be wanting to stay the night with your new friend, then you get back in here this instant, young lady, do you hear me?" she scolded.

"Yes mum," Dani said very quickly, shimmying down the now not so dry boy and trotting back towards the bedroom and bath, but with a big grin still on her face.

"Bloody boys, it's all your fault," Becky muttered as she quickly followed the girl, who suddenly came darting back out, ducking Becky, to say, "Bye, Uncle Til," then just as quickly dart back around Becky, who had her mouth open to scream again.

"Bloody 'ell," she said, pulling the door shut behind her this time.

We both broke down in laughter when she was safely gone.

"How's it our fault?" Til asked, still laughing.

"Well, a girl would never go naked, don't you know that?" I said, smiling.

"Huh?" he asked.

"That's her take on it, even though Dani would rather be naked than clothed any day," I told him.

"She should come down with the little ones sometime. They've stopped trying for the most part to keep them in clothes at all," he said, laughing.

"You tell her that, then," I retorted, but he quickly got a look of horror on his face and said, "Uh uh, no way, not me!"

I had to laugh at that.

We sat down and he cuddled up next to me while we found a program to watch.

It didn't get watched long as someone came running out, still starkers but at least dry this time, to climb up in our laps for some cuddles.

"I know now, Daddy," she said, looking at me seriously.

"What's that, pumpkin?" I asked.

"Well, I'll give you a bunch of Dani kissies and hugs now, and then some extra ones when I get home tomorrow," she said, and the look on her face was so proud of figuring that all out.

I just couldn't tease her anymore, so I told her, "That would work, sweetie; just make sure I get lots tomorrow to make up for all I'm going to miss tonight, okay?"

"Okay da, I will," she said, snuggling back into me.

Tilden just looked up at me and smiled gently.

"Have you seen that little she-devil?" I heard, and looked up to find Becky glaring from the doorway as the devil in question just giggled.

"I should've known," she muttered before adding, "You spoil her too much."

"Yep, and you should have," I couldn't resist saying.

"You shut it, boyo," she said before saying, "Come on, Daniela, let's get you packed and ready."

"K, mum," she said as she gave me a kiss and then one to her Uncle Tilden, before scrambling down and running off to where Becky stood waiting.

"Well, come on, Mum," she told her, as if Becky had been holding things up, as I began to snicker.

"You just wait," she muttered before disappearing back in the bedroom.

"You guys are too much," Tilden said, laughing.

"We are, are we?" I said, reaching down and beginning to tickle him.

"Hey stop, quit, please!" he cried, wriggling around desperately trying to escape my fingers.

I finally did and then thought to yell back, "Hey, Dani, don't forget your diapers."

"I won't." I heard in reply. then Becky yelled, "It's Daniela, D-A-N-I-E-L-A! That shouldn't be too hard even for you bloody Yanks."

I smiled at Til and then replied, "That's a good girl, DANI. and yes, BECKY dear!"

Tilden was laid out on the couch by this time, laughing his head off, as Becky and Dani came out from the room and Becky stood glaring down at us.

"It's R-E-B-E-C-C-A, and just because you lot insist on bastardizing the English language doesn't mean you have to corrupt our daughter's language or name, not to mention mine," she said, huffing.

"What's bas...bast...What's that mean, mummy?" Dani asked, which got us laughing again.

"Bloody boys," she muttered before saying, "Never mind, sweetums, mummy's just annoyed with the way your father speaks."

"What's wrong with the way Daddy talks, mum?" she asked.

Becky just looked back and forth between us for a moment before saying, "Never mind."

"K," she said, before running over and jumping up in my lap.

After I got hugs and kissies from her, she went over to Til and proceeded to give him a full dose, before hopping down and running back to Becky.

"Let's go, mummy," she excitedly said.

"Okay," Becky said, but Til stood up and said, "I can take her, I'm heading out anyway to see what Richard, Gabe and Tyce are up to."

"You sure?" she asked.

"Yeah, no problem," he replied, which got a little girl running back and jumping up into his arms.

After plenty more kissies and hugs to and from everyone, and admonishments to be good for her Uncles, it was just my big angel and I left.

"So do you think this bloody Yank boy can have a bit of fun tonight with a hot British lass?" I said softly, smiling at her.

"Oh, depends on what the bloody Yank boy has in mind," she replied huskily as she moved towards me.

"Well, I can think up a few things," I said, grinning as she met up with me and our arms wrapped around one another.

We both loved Daniela more than anything in the world, but it was nice to get some time alone once in a while.

As great a kid as she was, she just didn't understand private time all that well, that or as I suspected, she enjoyed interrupting it.

After a very long and very nice kiss, coupled with me telling her some of the things I DID have in mind, she murmured softly, "Hmmm, you may not be able to speak proper English, but you DO have a good imagination."

"Oh yeah," I whispered in her ear, as her hands moved down where I REALLY wanted them.

"Mmmmm" came from both of us at the same time as a piercing two tone alert sounded from the overhead speakers, followed by Dailess's voice.

"Strike Team Charlie Alert Level Two, CIC! Strike Team Charlie Alert Level Two, CIC," followed by three short tones. (Deet, Deet, Deet)

"BOLLOCKS!" Becky almost growled as I just said "FUCK!"

"Not bloody likely now, is it, luv?" Becky said, moving back from me while shaking her head as I reached out for her.

"Does he do that on purpose?" I groused before saying, "Ah, Beck, we have time," which came out more of a moan, thinking level two gave us twenty minutes to be in the Command Center, which would work.

"Let's go, lover boy," she said, moving off towards the bedroom.

I quickly followed her, smiling, thinking it wasn't going to be a total loss, and wrapped my arms around her from behind, only to be just as quickly thrown over her shoulder and onto the bed, looking up to find her grinning down at me.

"Not that!" she said, turning to the closet and beginning to remove her clothes, quickly pulling her uniform out to put on.

"But Becky, you can't leave me like this," I whined, hoping she'd take pity on me.

About that time she turned around and, smiling sweetly, said, "I can fix it for you, luv, if you really want me to?"

As she said it she began moving towards me, and I yelped and jumped back off the bed away from her, saying, "No, that's okay."

She just laughed, muttering, "Just because you can't see it on a girl," and went back to changing.

Damn, she could be mean sometimes.

I gave up, telling Junior to settle down, 'cause he wasn't going to be any more happy than I was, as I began to get dressed as well.

Time for work.

As I got dressed, I checked in with the other team members to make sure they were all getting ready and would make muster on time.

I was just strapping my gun into place when I finished with them, and picking up the MP 5, slung it over my shoulder and closed the weapons safe, to find Becky standing there waiting.

"Finally, I don't know why you boys all take so long to get ready for everything," she said before turning quickly and walking off towards the living room and front door.

I knew better than to answer her, as she was pissed over being interrupted; I just followed her out and towards CIC.

I felt sorry for whoever or whatever our mission concerned, because if it involved someone who could get hurt, then she was probably going to be the one to do the hurting.

I knew it wasn't an emergency, since it was a level two alert, and that we would be getting our mission briefing in the Command Center, but that was all I knew.

If it had been level one, then we would have had to be there within ten minutes and it would mean that it was close to an emergency; an actual emergency would have been a code red alert.

The Tiny Terrors had a code red the other night up in Maine. Stupid people thought to mess with the Clan, and they'd had to go back up Sammy's brothers over it, and pull a couple injured kids out of there on top of it, so at least this wasn't that bad a situation we'd be walking into, but level two meant it wasn't all that good either.

We met up with Bryan, Clare, Malinda, Tilden, and Evan as we approached the Command Center, and ended up all entering together, coming to attention and saluting as I barked out, "General Chipmunk, SIR! Strike Team Charlie reporting as ordered."

"At ease," Alvin replied, standing and walking towards us.

"Search and destroy, guys, literally," he said, stopping to look at us.

"What and where?" I asked.

"We got a Ped down in Louisville, go in, look for any kids as well as any evidence of other kids he's gone after who may not be present, and specifically look for a boy named Peter, known as "Little Pete," who is most likely with him now. That's the search part, the destroy part is to take out the perv. with extreme prejudice," he said, stopping for a moment.

I felt Becky's hand squeeze my arm, trying to comfort me, as she knew how much this type of thing affected me, but I didn't respond, I couldn't.

"This guy is bad news. He uses kids and dumps 'em when they start to grow up. We have one of his former 'special' boys in our infirmary right now. I want the boy named Pete rescued, along with any others there, and I need you to see if there are leads on any other kids he may have played. Any questions?" he asked.

There were none.

"Good, here's the layout," he said, bringing up a satellite picture showing a very nice house backed against trees and a creek.

"That's the target. He lives there, and other than any kids present, there shouldn't be any other adults around. It's back from the nearest neighbors, as you can see, which will give you some cover. The closest house is northwest of your target, while all other directions are essentially clear for your purposes. The house is backed by the tree line, which is where you'll be inserted for cover. You should be able to gain entry relatively unobserved from the rear from that position," he told us, stopping to see if we had any questions at this point.

When we didn't, he continued.

"The property for some distance northeast of the target house, which is basically all that behind the creek and tree line, belongs to a rather large children's care facility, which is where we think he may be getting kids from. They're desperate for someone to care about them, and he plays it up for all he can, then throws them out when the hair shows up. Name of our target is Jerome Blank," he said next as we all nodded.

He filled us in on a few other things, like the background of Dan, for instance. along with PD being monitored and warned off if they became aware of the op., and finally asked again if we had any questions.

After looking at my team, I answered for everyone, "No sir."

"Good, move out," General Chipmunk ordered, and we all took our positions, weapons at the ready, as Daileass said, in what sounded like a German accent, "An-na one, an-na two," and with that we were in amongst trees and could hear a creek running behind us somewhere.

Suddenly I heard a gasp and swung around, bringing my MP 5 up to point at a kid standing there, off to the side of our group with his hands up, saying, "Whoa there!"

"Who are you?" I asked.

"Sgt. Carter," he replied quickly as I took in his uniform, which appeared to be one of ours, along with his weapons, which also matched our standard issue ones.

"Carter? I don't know you or any Carter," I said, never dropping my aim.

I noticed Bryan had an odd look on his face, almost sickly looking.

"Can't help that, I just go where I might be needed, and they thought I could maybe help here," the boy replied, grinning.

"Bryan, you okay?" I asked.

He just nodded his head rapidly, but never took his eyes off our guest.

"Do you know this boy?" I asked next.

"Yeah, Bry knows me, don't cha, Bryan?" Carter asked, still grinning.

"Umm, yeah, you could say that," Bryan said, frowning.

"Do you or don't you?" I asked, not having time for this crap.

"Yes sir, I know....Sgt. Carter," he replied.

"Paul's fine," Carter said next as I lowered my weapon.

"I don't like surprises," I told him.

"Hey, that's what makes life fun, ya know," he said, grinning.

"I don't need fun when I'm on an op., Sgt., and I sure as hell don't need surprises. If you are Special Ops., you should know that," I snapped back.

"Whatever," he said impudently as I stared at him in disbelief.

"Let me explain something to you, Sgt. I like fun and games just as much as anybody else, but when we're on an op., it's business, you got that?" I said very low as I moved up close to him.

"Yes Sir!" he said, snapping to attention and giving me a crisp salute, but the disturbing thing was his grin came back as soon as he had finished even bigger than before.

"Uh, Austin, he's cool, a little odd but okay," Bryan said, stepping in between us now.

I just glared at the boy for a few moments before turning my attention back to the others.

"Okay, Clare, Bryan, Carter, and Tilden, you have the front; we'll take the back. Set up and come in hot when we give you the word. We'll be hitting the back door first," I instructed them.

After receiving nods from everyone, I told them to move out and we took up position until they said they were in theirs.

At that point we had the most exposed route, so with care we began moving towards the back door, going around the pool and up to the rear of the house.

I gave the go order, and Becky, Malinda, Evan, and I busted in the back door and entered into the house, quickly followed by the team in front. We found two boys and a man in what appeared to be a living room off the kitchen and screaming, "DOWN, GET DOWN," as everyone fanned out and began searching the rest of the house.

I heard Bryan yelling to get down to someone a few minutes later, but was getting all clears from everyone else.

The two boys with me had started crying and begging for us not to hurt them, while the adult started mouthing off.

All of them got told to shut up, but the kids got told we wouldn't hurt them.

A short while later Bryan led another boy back into the living room, telling him to sit on the couch.

The house was clear.

"You two get up and join your friend there," I said to the two boys on the ground, and slowly and still very afraid they did.

I turned to the team and said, "Tilden, Clare, Malinda, toss this place; Evan, you have perimeter watch."

I got nods from them as they went off to do what I said, while Bryan and Becky stayed here for control, along with this Carter kid, taking up positions around the room.

"Look, I don't know what you want here, but..." the man started to say until I interrupted him. "Who are you?" I asked.

"You mean you don't know?" he said snidely.

"Oh, we have a pretty good idea; I just want to hear you say it yourself," I told him.

"My name is Jerome Blank, and you've picked the wrong house to rob," he said, starting to get up.

"Did I say you could get up?" I snapped as Becky moved forward from behind him and planted the muzzle of her MP 5 into his back.

"Please don't hurt him," one of the boys begged.

"What are your names?" I asked, turning to the boys now.

One by one they told me their names, the first being Shannon, a cute boy about nine or ten, while the second was about ten or eleven named Marshall; the last to speak was the one we were looking for, Peter.

"We're not going to hurt any of you kids; don't worry," I said.

"If you're not here to rob me, then what the hell are you doing in my house?" the man snarled now.

"Take him," I ordered, and Becky told him to get up.

He did, and Bryan moved quickly over and secured his hands behind his back, not without him thinking he was going to put up a fight, though, but then again a muzzle buried in your throat tends to change attitudes rather fast.

"Well, Jerome, you see, we're The Unit..." I started to say when he interrupted me to tell me, "And that is supposed to mean something to me?"

"Speak again without being asked, and I'll change you from a rooster to a hen," Becky said softly, pressing the point of her knife into his groin, which got a strangled cry out of him.

"Now, as I was saying, we're the Unit, which is the Special Forces Division of Clan Short of Vulcan. Do you know who that is?" I asked.

"I heard something about some bunch of kids on the news the other day, think they're all hot shit or something. Got your asses handed to ya up in Montana, from what I heard, though," he replied.

That got the point pressed home, as Becky said, "Those asses were my family ya bloody git."

"You want to do something with this bitch before she does something you'll all regret?" he said, looking at me now.

"Oh, I doubt we'll regret anything," I told him as Becky replied, "You haven't seen bitch yet, mate, just wait."

"You have no idea who you're screwing with, kid," he said now.

"Actually, I know exactly who I'm screwing with, a sick child molester who uses kids to get off with, that's who," I told him.

"That's a lie!" he yelled, which got the knife pressing in again, which calmed him down a bit.

"He ain't no child molester, mister, he never'd hurt us," Peter stood up and said.

I hung my head for a moment before looking up and at the boy, who was all of ten, maybe eleven barely, and said, "Yes, he is, Pete."

He was shaking his head and saying, "No, he didn't do nothing to us."

"Pete, yes, he did," I told him.

"No, HE DIDN'T! He loves us, he don't hurt us none," Pete yelled at me.

I shook my head and turned back to the man, who was smiling at me.

"Whatcha goin' to do? You don't have any witnesses, so you don't have a case. My lawyers will eat you alive," he said.

I had to laugh before I could answer him and say, "We're not police and we don't have to deal with the BS they do. Oh, and we do have a witness by the way. Name of Dan ring any bells?"

Jerome's face went pasty white at hearing that name, and I smiled, knowing I'd scored a point.

"Dan?" I heard, and looked back at Pete, who had spoken, and just nodded my head.

"He ran away. Do you know where he's at?" he asked.

"He didn't run away, Peter, he was sent away" I said, but he was shaking his head no.

"No, he didn't, he found a girlfriend and left. He didn't want to... I mean, he just took off," he said.

"He didn't want to do sex stuff anymore, that's what you were going to say, isn't it?" I asked.

"No, no, that's not what I meant," he quickly tried to say.

"You see, though, Pete, that isn't what happened. Dan didn't want to leave, Jerome kicked him out," I told him.

Pete was shaking his head rapidly from side to side as Jerome decided to be stupid again.

"That's not what happened. He found some tail and took off," he told the boy

"Look, either you shut up or I'll gag you," I said, sparing him a glance before turning my attention back to Pete.

"Pete, he grew up, and people like Jerome don't like their kids growing up. All the stuff that comes with puberty turns them off, and once Dan found you, Jerome didn't need him anymore and kicked him out," I said softly.

"No, that's not what happened, it ain't like that," Peter tried to say.

"Listen to the kid," Jerome said this time.

I stood up and walked over to him

"Why don't you have the decency to do something FOR a kid for once, and tell the truth?" I asked him, looking intently at him, hoping against hope that maybe he would.

"I don't know what you're talking about. I do lots of things for kids," he replied.

I just shook my head.

"He loves us and cares about us," the boy next to Peter said now, as the other two nodded their heads in agreement.

"Guys, I know it seems that way, but it isn't. What he's doing to you is using you for sex. That's all he cares about. If you didn't give him that, then he wouldn't have anything to do with you," I said.

"YOU LIE!" Peter screamed at me now.

"No, I'm not. Think, I bet there have been kids who have come here and didn't do sex stuff with him, and suddenly they weren't coming over here anymore, think, remember," I said, hoping to get them to do exactly that.

The three boys looked at Jerome then, and I could see the wheels turning slowly, then more rapidly, in their heads, but then I saw their refusal to believe anything against the one person who seemed to care

anything about them begin to take over, as Pete looked at me and said, "No, he'd still love us if we didn't..." but was interrupted by Jerome yelling "SHUT UP!"

"What did I tell you?" Becky asked, pressing home the knife now, causing Jerome to squeal and the front of his pants to begin to turn red.

"JESUS! She's cutting off my fucking dick!" he cried, trying to back away from her, but he had apparently forgotten about Bryan behind him, not that he let him for long.

"You're lucky it isn't off already," Becky told him, smiling sweetly.

When Becky smiles sweetly, it's time to run for the hills, if it's directed at you at least.

The three boys were looking at Jerome now, and doubt was there finally.

"Don't listen to them, you know I care about all of you. They're lying! Remember I told you others would try to break us up, saying you shouldn't be with me," he said rapidly.

The boys turned to me now, and I thought for a moment before replying. "Listen to me. I'm sure he told you lots of things. Things like no one would understand the love you share, or that people would think what you were doing is bad and try and keep you apart. That he'd get in lots of trouble if anyone found out. I bet he told you that he loved you, and this is how he showed that love to you. Am I getting close?"

The boys looked at one another but finally, slowly, nodded their heads.

"Have you ever seen a fifteen or sixteen year old with him? A twenty year old? Guys, have you ever seen anyone around him like you are that's older, that has hair or a big dick? Have you ever seen anyone whose voice has changed or with hair on their face?" I asked now.

Once again they slowly shook their heads as I continued, "People like Jerome like a certain age, and anything outside that age, especially older than the age they like, they don't want to be with. Maybe Jerome likes nine to twelve year olds. Maybe he'd be okay with a seven year old or a thirteen year old, but not fifteen. Fifteen isn't a little boy anymore, it's a young adult, a teenager. Their bodies have undergone huge changes from fourteen and even bigger ones from thirteen, and a thirteen year old often has undergone gigantic changes from someone your age, for instance. They don't love children, Peter, they love having sex with children. Using kids to get off on is all it is, and they do whatever it takes to get the kid to agree to it."

The boys were shaking their heads now, but not quite so strongly, as they looked back and forth between us.

"It's not true, its not," Jerome protested.

"Men like Jerome look for kids who are hurting, who need love and attention, and give it to them in order to get sex from them. They teach these kids who are hurting that sex is how they can be loved and what they can be loved for, but it's not. It's not!" I told them, begging them to believe me.

"What else are we good for?" Shannon asked softly, but with infinite sadness in his voice.

"You see, that's just it; if he had really and truly loved you, then he would never have had sex with you until you knew the answer to that, if ever," I said gently.

"What's the answer?" Pete asked in the same tone.

"Yourself," I answered just as softly.

"What the hell do you know about it?" Jerome yelled now, earning a bit more red flowing along with a scream.

"You're going to keep a civil tongue in that head a yours, bucko, or ya won't have nothing left to die with," Becky told him.

When he'd said that, I'd stiffened up, and it took all my self control not to snap and strangle him with my bare hands.

I guess something must have shown on my face, because all three boys had taken a step back and had looks of fear on their faces now directed towards me.

I turned and faced Jerome, and after getting control of myself asked, "What do I know about it?"

He started to open his mouth, then looked fearfully at Becky, but I said, "Let him speak."

He looked back at me and finally said, "Do you think I wanted to be this way? That I asked to be born a Pedophile? I didn't, I almost committed suicide when I was twenty because I hated myself so much for my... desires. I thought I wanted to work with kids, hell, I DID want to work with kids, but instead I gave up my dreams and went into a business where I had no contact with children, where I'd never be tempted. I was born this way, it's not my fault I'm a boylover, it's not. Do you know what it's like to only be able to function with a kid? Well, it's not a hell of a lot of fun. I didn't even know these kids were here when I bought the house. I found four of them in my pool one day and things... things just kind of happened from there. These kids need someone and I'm there for them. Sure I get sex, but they enjoy it too, no matter what you say. So we both get what we want, they get an adult who cares about them and shows them love, and I get kids around me, which is what I need, and we both get sex out of it. What's so wrong with that? Without me they'd have no one and nothing."

I just shook my head, trying to contain my anger, he had no clue.

"You're not a boylover or a pedophile, you're a child molester and nothing more. You're in this for sex and nothing else," I said.

"That's not true," he protested.

"Then why was Dan about to jump off a fucking bridge because the one person in this world he thought loved him and who he loved kicked him out?" I yelled now.

He hung his head down before looking back up and finally said, "I can't help it. I... I... just don't like them when they get older, they don't attract me any longer, I can't help it, I'm sorry."

"That's why you're nothing more than a child molester, because it's about the sex and nothing else," I said sadly now.

"And what the hell would you know about it?" he said, raising his voice now and staring at me challengingly.

It was my turn to hang my head then, until a small voice said, "Tell them about your father," and with those words my head snapped up, eyes locking on the newest addition, who was looking at me calmly.

"How did you know about that?" I asked, noticing Becky's eyes also boring holes into the new boy.

"Intelligence, I make it a habit to know things," he said, smiling sadly, then "You need to tell them, especially the boys," he added.

"What is he talking about?" I heard Pete ask.

I was fighting back the tears that Carter's words had brought to me as I was forced to think about the one person who I tried so hard *not* to think about.

"He's talking about my dad," I finally answered as I moved over to the boys and knelt down facing them.

"Your dad?" Shannon asked.

"Yeah, and I think he's right, I do need to tell you about him," I told the three boys, before looking back at Jerome and saying, "That way you'll know just what the hell I do know about things, and why dealing with people like you is so hard."

"Let me guess, you were molested by a pedophile like me," he sneered, but I just shook my head sadly and said softly to him, "No, Jerome, I was never molested and never hurt by anyone like you," before turning back to the boys.

"I was seven years old, and me along with my mom and one year old brother moved into a new apartment complex. She was a hooker and on drugs too, not to mention that she drank a lot. We had a shitty life, and mom never wanted us for anything but the food stamps and free housing she could get because she had us. That's all we were to her, more benefits from social services. She always kicked us out so she could have her tricks in for the night, which got her money to buy drugs with. Sometimes we'd be outside all day and night with no food or nothing. Like I said, we had a shitty life, but hell, I was seven years old, you know, not like I knew anything different, at least 'til we moved to that new place." I stopped for a moment to catch my breath, then went on.

"We moved in and actually got to spend the first night inside for a change. I always had to take care of my brother Jordan because mom didn't. That meant feeding him and changing his diaper, when we had food or diapers, that is, and watching him when she had men in, which was all the time. The next morning, though, it began like it always did and the next and the next...."

"Get your asses outside 'til I come get ya,' Mom said, as I carried JoJo out the door, trying not to drop him."

"Don't cause me no trouble now, ya hear,' she yelled out after us like she always did as she slammed the door."

"At least we'd got to eat first, mostly 'cause I got up early and fed Jo and myself before she could get up and kick us out, and I'd grabbed a couple diapers too, which is all we had left for the baby."

"We'd been in the apartment for almost a week now, and so far it wasn't too bad."

"Some of the older kids would pick on me when they saw me, but I guess they felt sorry, with me having the baby and all, 'cause they soon stopped."

"I took Jordan out to the playground and let him roll around in the grass like we always did."

"He liked it 'cause he didn't know no better, I guess, and I just sat there and watched him."

"We'd spend most of the day out there, or on the baby swings, which Jordan really liked, and if no one else was around, I'd let him sleep in it for his naps."

"It made things easier 'cause he'd get all grouchy after a while, especially if I didn't have no food for him, which I usually didn't."

"Guess he got as tired of drinking water as I did to get full, and it made him pee a lot too, and he didn't like having a wet diaper."

"Then again, I suppose I wouldn't really like being wet all the time too, but there wasn't nothing I could do."

"Me, I just went in the bushes, or sometimes sat on the ground in the grass and pulled my wee wee out through the opening in the leg of my shorts and went in the grass if no one was looking."

"Kinda depended on who was out at the time, sometimes a grown up would want to know what you were doing in the bushes if they caught ya, and it was better to just go off in the grass facing away from them and do it that way, instead of getting in trouble."

"When I was little before JoJo was borned, I went in the bushes one time and when I came out, this lady asked me what I'd been doing in there."

"I didn't know no better and just told her, but she got all mad about it and grabbed me and took me home to mommy."

"Mommy thanked her and said she was sorry that I done that, playing all nice and all, but what was I supposed to do anyway?"

"If I had come home, she would have gotten real mad at me."

"Anyway she took me inside and pulled my pants down and beat the crap outta me, 'cause her boyfriend had run out the door when the lady knocked on it, and mommy was real mad now 'cause I costed her money, she said."

"So I made sure I was real careful 'bout stuff from then on, and did it wherever I could when I needed to go peepee."

"The day went on like it usually did, which means slow and boring, and when Jordan started crying 'cause he was hungry and wouldn't drink no more water, I gave him little blades of grass to chew on, which helped."

"You might think it weird, but chewing on a blade of grass can make it seem like you're eating real food, and it lasts a long time if you find the right kinda grass, you just had to make sure the baby didn't choke on it, like he tries to do sometimes."

"A little later, the water wasn't doing it for me anymore, either, so I found some grass over near the building and stuffed some in my pocket and put some in my mouth too."

"It wouldn't look weird for a baby to have some, but it would for me since I was a big boy, so I made like I was chewing gum, and that always worked. Course I almost never had real gum to chew on, but everyone thought it was gum."

"It had started raining a while ago and now was getting late and starting to get dark, when I realized something wasn't right."

"My tummy was feeling funny and soon I knew I had to go poop."

"I tried to hold it, but it wasn't long before I knew I couldn't, and my tummy was hurting now, not just feeling funny."

"I knew I shouldn't go home, and usually I tried to go poop real good before I left so this wouldn't happen, but now it was."

"I pulled JoJo out from under the stairs where we'd been keeping dry and hiding, and went home anyway< trying the door to see if maybe I could sneak in and go, but it was locked."

"I really, really had to go now, and my tummy was hurting super bad, so I knocked on the door."

"There was no answer, so I knocked again, calling 'Mommy!'"

"Then the door opened and she yelled, 'What the hell are you doing here?'"

"My tummy hurts real bad and I gotta go potty,' I said."

"I don't care, get your ass away from here or you'll get it good,' she told me."

"But mommy, I gotta go poop and...' I tried to tell her, but she just yelled 'GIT!' and slammed the door in my face."

"I felt really bad now, and turned to head out to the bushes to go there, but I didn't get far before this horrible pain came to my tummy and I fell down to my knees."

"We had just got back by the stairs we'd been hiding in earlier when I fell, and suddenly as I went to my knees, it came out everywhere."

"It seemed like it was never going to stop, and I could feel it running out my shorts and down my legs. but it was my tummy that took most of my attention."

"It felt like it was on fire, and I didn't really care about the poop right then."

"When I could, I crawled, dragging JoJo with me, back under the stairs out of the rain, and just kind of fell over, and that was the last thing I remembered, really, until someone else was in there with us talking to us."

"It's okay now, little ones, come on, come with me and I'll take care of you, and everything'll be all right."

"Huh?" I asked, looking up at a strange man who had came under the stairs with us."

"I knew I should be afraid of this strange man, 'cause you're not supposed to talk to strangers and all, but something about him and when he spoke made me not be."

"It was dark and I couldn't see real well, but he just said, 'Shhh, it's going to be okay, my name's Max,' and then he picked me up."

I stopped and looked at the three boys before smiling and saying, "He took me and Jordan back to his apartment, and once there into the bathroom, where he got us undressed and carefully put the both of us into a tub filled with hot water. I told him my stomach hurt really bad, and he said he'd make it better in a bit, but first things were first. I'll never forget that bath. It was the first time I could remember anyone bathing me ever, and he was so gentle and nice. He washed every inch of both of us, and never did anything he shouldn't if you're wondering. When he was done, he dried Jordan off first, and put him in a new diaper from somewhere and took him out, then came back for me. He was so nice and gentle; that's what I've always remembered most. The bath and drying us, then asking me if I needed to go poop anymore. When I told him yes, he picked me up and put me down on the toilet, and held me while I went, then ever so gently cleaned me up before picking me up and taking me into a bedroom, where he laid me down on a bed with real sheets and a blanket. He told me to wait, and when he came back, he had a cup, something he made me drink, saying it was medicine. It made me feel better right away and also put me to sleep."

"What's this? Some do gooder asshole you want to tell us about?" Jerome said snidely.

I turned to him and said, "You wanted to know what I knew about anything, then you can shut up and listen."

I looked back at the boys and went on with my story. "I was sick for several days, Max told me later he thought the grass I had eaten might have had pesticide on it or something that made me so sick. All I know was, I woke up next screaming with the pain in my gut and spewing out of both ends now, and

Max was right there holding me through it all. He took me to the bathroom when it was over and bathed me again before putting me back in bed, telling me there was a bucket by my bed to use if I could. I never was able to, though, and he never got mad, just held me through it, telling me it was going to be all right, then cleaning me up when it was over each time. This went on for three days before I actually started to get better, and then it was another two of almost constant sleeping; the only time I woke was when he changed me and fed me soup. I'd stopped doing everything but peeing, but that was enough to need to be bathed and changed regularly, and Max, like everything else, did it with nothing but caring in every touch. This was a new thing for me, because up until then no one had ever cared about me or touched me except to hit me."

The boys were just staring at me, listening intently to my story, and I knew I had to go on, no matter how many memories it brought back, no matter how much pain it brought with those memories.

Carter was right, they needed to hear about Dad.

"Wake up I did finally, and I stayed awake, although it would be another week before I actually wasn't tired out all the time and falling asleep more often than not. The first thing that hit me was where was I and where the hell was JoJo, as I pulled myself out of bed and went looking for answers. I was naked and had wet myself again, because the wetting was not all because of being sick, I wet the bed back then. I didn't stop 'til I was ten, almost eleven. When I had woken up I'd heard kids, so there I was heading for the door starkers and dripping piss everywhere, but I needed to know where my brother was. He was all I had in this world, you see, or at least I thought so at the time," I said as Marshall asked, "Was he all right?"

"Oh yes, he was more than all right, he was doing great, and if you want to be truthful, probably better than he'd ever done before. I came out of the bedroom and walked down the hall towards the sounds, only to walk into a living room filled with kids, who all stopped what they were doing and just stared at me. I guess the silence got Max's attention, because all of a sudden I heard, 'Okay, someone want to tell me why it's gotten so quiet all of a sudden?' as he walked into the room from somewhere else I would learn was the kitchen."

I stopped again to smile and say, "You see, when you have a group of kids all together and the noise stops, you should get worried usually, very worried."

They smiled back and I went on. "He stopped when he saw me and smiled, asking me how I was feeling, and when I said okay, he came over and picked me up, pee and all, and told me his name and asked mine. See, he didn't care about any of that, he just wanted to show me someone cared, that he cared. Once I told him, though, I asked where JoJo was, and he took me into the kitchen, where Jordan was sitting in a high chair with an older boy feeding him. Once I had seen he was all right, I let him take me down the hall and into the bathroom, where he ran a tub and bathed me again. At first I didn't want him to, but then I remembered he was the one who had been doing it and how much I liked it; this time was no different. He got me some clothes when the bath was through, and then brought me back out to the kitchen, where he fed me some more soup and crackers. He told me how I had to eat light for a while since I'd been sick so I wouldn't get my stomach upset again. I didn't tell him I usually ate quite light anyway and this was wonderful; well, I told him the wonderful part," I said, smiling.

"I didn't find out the whole truth for a long long time, but Max had went to my mother and told her what had happened. Her response was, just as long as he stayed away from the apartment was all she cared about. Max had asked if we could stay there with him, and she told him she didn't care. She'd ne-

ver asked if I was all right or anything, just wanted to make sure I was out of her hair. Max had been a paramedic for a long time when he got hurt on the job and had to quit. He had gotten a settlement from the accident, but it wasn't all that much, and mostly he lived on disability. He also loved kids, and since this was a public housing project, there were always plenty of kids who needed to be loved. Max had no problem doing that. He took them in and got the food stamps from the parents to use to buy food with for us. I went with him a few times when I was a lot older, and he basically said, play ball or he'd call social services and have the kids taken away, or the cops and have them, the parents, taken away. Hell, the parents didn't care, free babysitting and no kids around to cramp their style, they loved it," I told them.

"Max took in kids basically and gave them a home, no drugs, no drinking, and you went to school. He was the only parent many of us, maybe even all of us ever had. He'd lived there for a long time and had raised a lot of the kids there, including a bunch that had grown up and moved out. He made us do our homework and helped us with it, he kept us clean and fed, taking us to the doctor and wiping our butts when we were sick. He was a dad to a lot of us. We basically lived there like a lot of other kids did, and the thing I remember most was him telling us WE were our own family now, each of us brother or sister to the other. He taught us to look out after each other and the littles at the same time he showed us what being loved was supposed to be like. He showed us what having a dad meant and what it meant to have one. None of the kids in that place had a father, and what they had for a mother for most of them was shit. Don't get me wrong, there were some good moms there, trying real hard, but there were far more like mine, and it was those kids who were lucky enough to find Max. He kept the older kids out of gangs and in school, kept them out of trouble and gave them a future. Sometimes it was a belt on their ass and ours too, but mostly it was hugs and kisses which did it," I said, stopping for a moment as the memories overwhelmed me.

"It was such a change for me, you have to understand, someone wanting to know where I was and always keeping an eye on me. Worried if I didn't come back when I was supposed to, or come looking for me when I didn't. No one had ever done that before, so it was more than strange to me. He *Wanted* me at what I soon came to call home. He'd have cookies for us when we got home, and home cooked meals each day for every meal. On rare occasions he'd save up his money and buy us pizza, but usually it was stuff he made at home. He'd be there as we came in the door once school started, wanting to hear how our day had gone, and he really was interested. We could come to him if we had problems and he'd listen, even if he didn't always have the answer, he did always have a hug for us. He simply loved us," I told the kids, who were listening with rapt attention.

"Did... did he..." Shannon started to ask.

"Yes and no," I replied, which got confused looks on their faces.

"You see, he wasn't in it for sex, but I came to learn that, if a kid wanted to play that way and Max agreed, then he loved them like that. He once told me that it wasn't right for every child, and he was always very careful about which children he'd agree to love like that."

"Why?" Pete asked.

"Because of what I said earlier, not every child needs to be loved that way or should be. A lot of these kids, like you guys, were starved for love and attention. Max gave them that, but he was very careful

not to confuse it with sex, and to make sure the kids knew they were loved just because they existed, not just for their bodies," I told them, which got thoughtful nods from them before I continued.

"I, of course, didn't know this back then when I first came there, because Max didn't try anything and whatever might have been going on was done in private. He didn't try to get in every kid's pants like this one probably does. He bathed a lot of us and took showers with some who wanted to, slept with usually at least one kid, if not more, in his bed, but he didn't touch anyone that way. I never knew about the stuff he did because he never made a big deal out of it, because it wasn't, to him. He loved us, not sex with us," I told them, stopping to see if they got it, and I thought they just might have.

"That was what I think of as the beginning of our lives, that year when I was seven and JoJo was one. The beginning of a life like a kid was supposed to have, and an end to whatever you want to call what we had before that day. The day a man with a heart that knew no bounds took in a dirty sick kid and his baby brother, for no other reason than they needed someone to care, to love them. He simply was there for us, for me and Jordan and for a lot of other kids too. Over the next couple of years I found out what it was like to have a family, and to be loved for the first time in my life. I had Christmas presents for the first time and birthday ones too. Oh, they weren't fancy or expensive, but they were for me, from him and from my adoptive brothers and sisters, from their hearts. It might be something one of the kids had made in art class, or a card drawn with crayons, but it was for me from them, and it was more special than I can ever explain. When I was eight he gave me a toy train set. It was used and he'd worked on fixing it up for a long time, but it was something I'll never forget, scratched and scuffed up as it was. It was my first ever present." I had to stop for a moment to get control of the tears that were trying to escape, there'd be a time when I wouldn't, but I'd never get through this if I let them out now.

Finally though, I went on. "He hugged me and spanked me, he taught me to read and spell. He was there every day helping with my homework, along with the rest of the kids'. He made us take baths and cleaned our clothes, buying us more from Goodwill when we needed them. It wasn't fancy and he wasn't rich but he made do. We ate a lot of spaghetti and stuff, but he always made sure we had carrots and spinach with other veggies too. He was our dad, that's the only way I can say it," I said softly. "He was our dad."

Pete moved over and crawled into my lap, hugging me, and I stopped and just hugged him back for a moment or two.

"I'd play the violin, kid, if my arms weren't tied. What's the point of this anyway?" Jerome asked sarcastically.

I had to sigh and shake my head, but finally I said, "Let me finish Jerome and maybe, just maybe you'll see the point finally, before you die."

"I guess I should move this along a bit. It was when I was nine that I suppose the first thing occurred that most would think was wrong. I told you how we'd take showers with him sometimes, and since we lived there we saw him naked too, although he didn't do it on purpose. It's just that kids will walk in on grown-ups, and sometimes those grown-ups aren't dressed. So I'd seen his dick before, all of us had, but now I was curious about it like a lot of kids get. Don't get me wrong, I'd messed about some with some of the other kids over the last year or so, but this was a grown up, and all of a sudden I wanted to see it, and more I wanted to touch it, feel it. One night I hopped into the shower with him and he was washing me when I just reached out and grabbed it. I was scared to death he'd be mad, but I really had been wanting to feel it for a while, so I took the chance. He just stood there and let me. It got hard and that

fascinated me as I felt it and looked closely at it. He never stopped me or yelled at me or anything, but he didn't do anything to encourage me either. He just let me explore, and when I was done I let go and we went on and finished our shower. After we had gotten out we went into his bedroom, and I was scared but asked him if he was mad at me. I told him I just wanted to see it, and he told me that kids get curious and that was normal. Most of all, he told me he wasn't mad at me, and I hadn't done anything wrong at all. We talked a while and I asked him some questions about sex, which he answered, and off I went to watch TV. He made something I thought of as a really big deal into something normal and not frightening at all," I said to the group.

"That's all?" Marshall asked, and I had to laugh as I said, "Hold your horses, there's more."

That was a favorite saying of Dad's, and it made my throat tighten up at saying it, but I did go on. "I don't know how to explain it, I'm sure you know by now that he had to have been hot from my touching and rubbing on him, but he never did the slightest thing to get me to keep touching him to make him feel good, to get the feeling or nothing. Was it sexual? I guess, I know I was hard as a rock when I was touching him, hell, I was that way before I started, just thinking about it. When he washed me and got down there, it felt so good, and sometimes if I had been rubbing on it, which I did, you know, then by the time he got to it and washed it, I ended up getting the feeling from his hands, but he never tried to give it to me. It didn't happen on purpose but by accident. I was already close before he ever got there and when he did, ooh la la," I said to laughter.

"No, Max never took advantage, but you know I would have kept touching him that day if he'd said the slightest thing. Heck I even thought about doing it because I knew it would feel good to him, but I didn't, and he didn't try to get me to either. I also know now that if I had asked and he thought I was ready, he would have made me feel good as well. I didn't, though, and he didn't. I know now I had to have got him hurting from how much I touched him then and other times, but he never once tried to take it farther," I said, as I was asked, "Why not?"

"He told me once because I asked him. He said it had to be about me, the kid, not the adult. If I was wanting to or asking, that was one thing, it meant I wanted to do something, but if he asked, then it would be him getting me to do things when I didn't want to, because if I had, then I would have tried. That's the point here, I think any of us would have jumped to do anything he asked of us and he knew it, which is why he was so careful to never do anything," I told them, as I stopped to watch those wheels turning again.

They were thinking, which was good, very good.

"That time when I was nine was the first, but there were several more times, mostly in the shower, where I examined him, but there were also a few times out of it. I kind of liked playing with it and making it all hard, teasing him, I guess. Only one time did anything really sexual happen between us and it was very special to me. I had asked to sleep with him and we were in bed when it happened. I had pulled his out and had been touching it, but mine was hard too. I had one hand feeling him while I played with mine. He was holding me like he always did, rubbing my stomach, which he also always did, when I grabbed his hand and put it on me down there. He felt it and when I said it was hard, he gave it a squeeze and told me he could tell as he laughed softly, then he moved his hand back. I had laid back and grabbed his hand, putting it back on it and asked him to rub it. He just asked me if I was sure and I said, 'Please' to him. He told me I didn't have to do this and could stop whenever I wanted to, and that he loved me no matter what, and whether we did this or not. I just told him I know, and would he plea-

se rub it. Well, he did, and that night it seemed better than it ever had been when the feeling came. I don't even remember what happened after that it was so good. He told me I passed out and just fell asleep afterwards. All I know is he never tried to get me to do anything to him, and that one time was it," I told them, as three boys said "Wow" almost together.

"Yeah, it was definitely that," I said, smiling gently at them, the memory still alive for me.

"I don't know why we didn't do more, I'm sure he would have if I had indicated I wanted to, but I didn't for whatever reason. It was special, I think, and I knew that. Time went on and we didn't do anything, not even the exploring stuff, as I turned ten. Eventually eleven came around, and with it the time before puberty hit with all the feelings and stuff. I had a million questions a day, it seemed like, and my little guy was hard more often than soft, it seemed. He was there to answer everything, sometimes for the millionth time too, but he never lost patience with me. Jordan was five now and had started kindergarten. Because of Max he knew his ABCs and could even read a little bit, and write his name and some simple words like dog and cat. Max was so proud of him, just as if he was his own son; hell, Max was that way with all of us. We did good in school because we wanted him to be proud of us and we wanted to do good for him. Don't get me wrong, he always tried to tell us that we should do it for ourselves, and eventually we figured that out, but we never did stop wanting to do it for our dad." I stopped for a moment as Paul handed me a glass of water from somewhere, and I noticed Bryan looking at him strangely again, but figured I'd ask about it later.

He'd been acting strangely since Sgt. Carter had shown up, and I wanted a private word with him to figure out why, and I wanted it soon too.

"Well, that was when it happened," I said, to questions of "What happened?" and "When what happened?" from the boys.

"Well, give me a second and I'll tell you," which got nods from them as I continued, "I was eleven and a few months, maybe eleven and a half when I realized the curiosity was back and then some about a grown-up, and I knew Max would let me see. There were so many things going on with my body, so many changes happening, and here was an adult who I could see and feel that was what I would someday become. So once again I waited until one night, when just before he went to bed, I asked if I could join him in the shower, and he said yes like he always did. Once again I asked him to wash me, and I think he knew something was up, since I was before I even got undressed," I said, as the boys broke out giggling.

"Yeah, I know, funny but true. If I thought that night when I was nine was special, it was nothing compared to this. He washed me slowly from head to toe, and even though I asked him to keep washing me there, he didn't. He just gave it the same attention as everywhere else. I also reached out and found him, and once again he let me feel it and rub on it. Only this time, I knew I wanted more than to just explore, I wanted to make him feel good, and I wanted him to do the same for me. I was nervous and knew this was something different than before, something wonderful and special but also a little scary. He WAS an adult and I WAS a kid, after all, but he made it seem so normal and so right. We washed and got out. where he dried me slowly and gently, just like he always did, but tonight there was something different, something more in every touch, every second, even though nothing was outwardly different. I knew it inside that it was different, and I think he did too," I stopped, I had to, so I could take a deep breath.

Could I tell this part and what happened after?

I didn't know and was beginning to have doubts.

"You need to finish it, all of it," Carter said, smiling gently at me as I looked at him.

"He's right, luv," I heard just as softly from my angel, and looked over to see her looking at me with a gaze filled with love and support.

"Sorry, this is kind of hard on me," I told the boys, and the other two finally came and cuddled up to me on either side in support.

"Thanks, guys. That night we went into his bedroom and crawled into bed where I cuddled up with him like always and told him I loved him. He said he loved me too, and as usual his hand was rubbing gently up and down my back, making me feel so good. It had never got soft from the shower, and I gently pushed it into his leg, as my hand moved down to his and took hold. Once again he asked me if I was sure, and once again I told him that I was. Again, just like the last time, he told me he would always love me, and I didn't have to do this, now or ever, and could stop any time I wanted to, and again I told him I knew and asked, no begged, 'Please'. I won't go into details but his hand moved to the front and once again took me to places I'd never been before. I touched him and asked questions now and then, but this time I didn't stop until he got the same wonderful feeling that exploded within me a short time later. Making him feel good was as important to me that night as him doing it to me, I wanted to show him my love and he showed me his, both of us in a very special way. That night is one of the most special moments in my life and close to the most special," I said, looking over at Becky, who held the title for most special of all that first time.

"What made the difference, and what he told me later on, was that I knew I was loved. That I was loved unconditionally, and that the sex was an addition to that love, but not in place of it or instead of it. He never asked for it from me in all those years before or after that night. He'd always be there if he could, when I went to him, but he never came looking for me to do anything. Again it was supposed to be about me, and he made sure it was. I don't agree with him completely on that, because I think a kid can have a say, but I do understand what he was talking about, and all in all I guess it's for the best to do it his way, that way no kids get hurt," I said as they looked at me with their full attention.

"We loved one another like that for several years and it was amazing. He taught me a lot about my body and another's as well. I'd like to say that while we did those things, he taught me what love truly was, but it wouldn't be true, you see, because he taught me what it was long before we had ever done anything, and he kept teaching me after we pretty much stopped. I was twelve, and I'll never forget the first day I made sperms. I'd jacked off at lunch during school 'cause I'd had a boner for half the morning, and by that time I was doing it four or five times a day. Suddenly out came this stuff when I got the feeling, and at first I was totally freaked out, but then I realized what it was and was so happy. It's a big thing when a boy gets their first sperms, and I told all my friends about it at school that day, and couldn't wait to get home to tell Max. When I did get home, I ran inside and grabbed his hand, pulling him to the bedroom, and shouted, "I got my sperms, I got my sperms," and just had to show him, so I pushed down my pants and made 'em come out right there, yelling. 'Hold out your hand, hold out your hand' as they squirted. He made a huge deal out of it, like it flooded the whole room or something, even though it was barely a drop of this clear stuff, but he made it like everything else, special for me. It was also embarrassing, kind of, because I had yelled so loud when I went back there, when I came out all the older kids were clapping and yelling congratulations to me. I still liked it and Max made my favorite for dinner that night to celebrate. I remembered all my brothers and sisters laughing and clapping me

on my back, telling me way to go and other stuff like that. The little ones were kind of confused, but then again they just thought all big kids were weird anyway, so this wasn't all that much different than usual. I did have to deal with Jordan asking me what sperms were later, though; that was embarrassing at first, but I remembered how Max had talked to me about it, so I'd taken him into the bedroom and explained it all to him. He thought it was weird, but finally just shrugged his shoulders and went back to the living room to play," I finished as I looked at them, smiling fondly in remembrance.

"Well, that night I made him make them come out, and oh, did he, but as all things, the time came when like most boys, I began to be interested in girls. I was thirteen, almost fourteen, when that happened, although I didn't stop loving Max that way, at least then. I think Max knew, though, but he didn't push anything, just like he always hadn't. By the time I was fourteen, I was starting to spend less and less time with my friends doing sex stuff, and that also meant less time with Max doing it too. That was one thing Max insisted on, and that was that I keep doing things with kids my own age and not just come to him. I think it made the times I was with him even more special, but now I just wasn't really that interested in it anymore. I was really worried about that, and if Max would be mad, but I should have known better by then. Finally one night we had just loved one another when afterward...."

"Max...' I whispered softly."

"Yeah, baby boy,' he answered just as quietly"

"I... I don't know how to say this,' I finally got out, but I should have known he would, as he replied softly.

"That you're growing up and don't find yourself as interested in this type of thing as you used to be?' he asked gently."

"I just about jumped out of the bed at hearing that, but he just laughed kindly."

"ow... I mean... Ah...' I stammered as he whispered, 'Ah, baby boy, you're not such a baby anymore.'"

"I felt him moving around, then the bedside lamp came on as he turned back to me and ran his fingers down my cheek lovingly, as he'd done since he found me."

"Little boys grow up, Austin, and this is part of that growing,' he told me."

"I thought for a moment before saying, 'You mean you knew?'"

"Yes, little one, I knew. The time when a boy is interested in this type of love is fleeting, and as time moves on, so do that boy's fancies. My love for you was there before we ever did anything, and it will be there long after we do it for the last time, never fear that, my love,' he told me."

"You're not mad?' I asked to be sure."

"He chuckled and told me, 'No, I'm not mad. This has always been yours to give or not as you see fit. That's why I always told you that you could stop anytime, and it's why I told you one day you most likely would not want to do these things any longer. That day has come, I think, even if you never did believe me that it would.'"

"I just looked at him and the love that was shining from his eyes for me, and realized just how lucky I was to have been found by him, and not some perv like some of the kids had had happen."

"I love you, Dad,' I whispered as I leaned forward and kissed him."

"I love you too, and I always will, baby boy,' he replied."

"We just held one another for a few moments, and I felt so warm and safe, so loved right then, but soon enough I felt something else that was getting a little bit more than warm, as I whispered in his ear, 'Maybe that day will come, but not right now,' which got some more laughs as he made what was warm sizzling hot."

I had stopped again at the wide eyed looks on the boys' faces, then went on.

"That day did come kind of when I pretty much stopped doing anything like that with Max, but he still loved me just as much. Oh, we did stuff now and then, I think more for old times' sake, really, than anything else. I wasn't interested in guys anymore, but with Max it was different, it was a special thing for us, between us, something special to show our love of one another, so every few months I found my way to his bed, and he always seemed to know when I needed that special loving, and he didn't have a problem giving it to me. Fourteen had passed and I was just fifteen when it all ended, the day I lost my dad," I said, but had to stop as my throat closed up with emotion.

Damn, this was hard!

"You don't have to tell us if you don't wanna," Peter said, seeing how much this was hurting me, but his caring made me take a deep breath and respond, "Yes, little one, I do."

"I was fifteen and at school when I heard my name on the loudspeakers telling me to report to the Principal's office. The whole way there, I was wondering if they had found out who had put Ex-Lax in Mr. Arnold's tea, or maybe who had put the picture of the giant dick in old Mrs. Hendricks' planner. God, she had screamed so loudly, and it had just made all of us the more sure she'd never seen one before," I said, but had to stop at all the laughter coming from the boys, as well as not a few of my team.

"You didn't?" Shannon asked in disbelief.

"Of course not," I replied, trying to look innocent.

"Yeah, right," Becky replied, where she was still keeping a sweating Jerome silent with her blade.

"Hey, I'll have you know I would never do something like that, I was an honor student," I tried to say, but Becky just looked at me while the boys giggled.

"Ok, fine, don't believe me," I mumbled to more giggles, but it had taken my mind off what was coming, so I suppose it helped.

"Okay, guys, this is the real tough part. That day when I got called to the office, I got there and was told to sit down in the outer office and wait. About fifteen minutes later, the Principal came out and took me back to his office, only there was a woman there and two police officers. Now I was scared,

and when they asked me if I knew someone named Max, I got even more so. I told them yes, and the minute I saw them look at each other, I knew something bad was going on. It got worse as they told me I was going to have to come with them. I tried asking why, but they wouldn't answer me. I found out the lady was from social services, which made my stomach feel like heaving all over her. Everyone knows they are bad news for kids, and to have one coming to get you at your school was not good, only I didn't know for a while just how not good it was going to be. Finally it was the Principal who said they knew what had been going on, and what Max had been doing to kids at the apartment. I was shaking my head and saying 'No' when the lady told me there was no use denying it, that Max had admitted to everything. I screamed that they were lying and I ran like hell. They chased me but I lost them quick. I wasn't thinking; I just had to get home to Dad," I said, stopping now to take a deep breath as I realized that I was breathing as heavily as if I was running again, out the office and down the street heading home as on that day.

As the boys hugged me tightly I went on. "I got home, only to find police in the apartment and no Max anywhere, no kids either. Everyone was gone. They of course grabbed me right away, but there wasn't any fight left in me, just tears. As I had entered his apartment, I had just fallen to the ground crying, and they quickly grabbed me. I was taken to a children's home for abused kids. That was a laugh, all the years I'd been an abused and neglected kid, the social workers never gave a damn about us, but now that I had a home and was loved as well as taken care of, they all of a sudden did. All because somehow they found out Max did sex stuff with some of us. The shithole I found myself in was just that, a warehouse for children where no one cared about anything, other than if we were causing trouble or not. The other thing was that Jordan wasn't there and no one would tell me where he was. As time went on, I found out what had happened to Max and why we were now in hell. One of the boys had met a kid who was being fucked with, and one day at lunch took him aside to talk to him in private. They thought no one could hear them, but there had been a teacher in the room nearby with an open window when they began speaking. The kid from our house had told this boy that what was being done to him was wrong, and he told him about Max and how it was supposed to be. How it was supposed to be about love and not hurting a kid. The boy ironically had agreed to come over and see Max to try to stop the abuse that he was suffering from a child molester, but sadly the teacher hadn't listened enough, or more likely hadn't really cared about what she had heard. She called the police and they called social services. All the kids from the apartment complex who had anything to do with Max were taken away and taken to separate places, foster homes, children's centers, and some to children's psychiatric facilities as well. Max, trying to spare us having to be interrogated and brainwashed by the cops and shrinks, not to mention having to testify in court, admitted to whatever they said. The worst part is that except for court, we had to undergo everything else he was trying to protect us from. Our world ended that day, and it's never been the same since," I said, stopping now again to calm myself down a bit.

When I could, I finished up the story for them and hoped it helped.

"I never could find out what they did with JoJo, although I tried as hard as I could. Me, they made go see a shrink, who informed me I had been 'groomed' by Max so he could abuse me. For some reason he didn't like it when I just laughed in his face at that. You see, this idiot tried to tell me from the moment Max had pulled me and Jo from under the stairs, it was all some plan just so he could force us into having sex with him. Didn't much care for it when I told him Max wouldn't have had to force anyone into anything, that we would have done anything he asked, except he never did. He told me he knew I thought I wanted to do the things we did, and didn't like it when I told him I did. He said every hug, every present, every single thing Max had ever done wasn't because Max loved or cared about any of us, but instead was just part of the plot to get us to agree to sex stuff, to make us think we wanted to do those things. It was unbelievable, and the scary thing is that he just kept on like nothing I said made any

difference at all. He tried to make me question everything that ever happened between Max and I, from that night when he got us inside when I was seven and gave us a bath onward. He even brought some guy in who was about twenty, who told me he too had been in a relationship with a man from the time he was nine til he was seventeen, and finally came to realize what had been done to him. Now, he said, he had a lot of problems and had tried to kill himself three times already. He told me if I didn't accept the fact I'd been abused, I'd end up the same way as he did. I finally asked him when he started having problems with it, and told him it sure sounded like about the time he made his 'realization'. He actually said he didn't have problems before because he didn't know how bad he'd been hurt. For some reason he didn't like it when I told him that maybe the reason he didn't have problems before was because he hadn't been being hurt. The whole shrink thing didn't work out very well, not that they gave up trying to get me to hate Max, they didn't." I stopped there for a moment, then went on.

"Not much more to tell, I spent about six months of that bullshit before I split for greener pastures, and after a few months on the street in Utah, I got found by Jack and Dave.

I've been with them ever since. I met Becky and fell in love, then found a daughter to love, and I spend my time trying to help other kids now. Dad, he was sentenced to over one hundred and fifty years in jail for taking care of and loving kids no one else ever did. Something is very wrong with that picture. So that's what I know about it," I ended looking at each of the boys before moving from the pile, setting Peter down and standing up to face Jerome.

"You wanted to know what I knew about anything; well, I hope that answers your question. You see Jerome, THAT is a true pedophile, not you. Do you even know what the word actually means?" I asked, but he just stared at me.

"It means someone who LOVES children, Jerome, not someone who uses them. That is why every time I have to deal with the likes of you calling themselves pedophiles, boylovers, girlovers or childlovers, it makes me sick to my stomach, because you aren't any of those. You're nothing but scum who uses kids for their own purposes. Max never threw a kid out because they got too old, and yes, Jerome, he had his age he liked too, just like you do, but the difference is that he loved the kid and it didn't matter what age they were. Some of the ones who had grown up would come back to visit, and he'd hug them and love them just as much as he loved on us. I know of at least one who he loved that way too, and he wasn't gay, but that's what one of his kids needed, even though he was all grown up, and Max was there for him just like always. Just like he was for everyone. And you know something else, Jerome? Every single one of us knew, and I mean deep down knew, still do, that if no kid ever did any type of sex stuff with him, Max would still be there and still love us just as much. Can anyone say that about you?" I asked, but again got no answer.

"That's the difference between loving a kid and using a kid," I said now softly, sadly.

"Is that all we were to you, just someone to suck your dick?" Peter asked, moving up to stand next to me.

Tears were running down his face, and I put my arm around his shoulder, pulling him close.

He didn't answer, and Peter screamed, "IS IT?"

Jerome just stared at him before saying, "Look, kid, we all have our needs, and I cared about you, no matter what he says. You got your hugs and I got what I needed; didn't feel too bad when I did the sucking, either, did it?"

What happened next shocked me, as suddenly Peter screamed, "YOU FUCKER!!!!" and I felt a tug at my waist.

It happened so quick, but seemed to take forever, as I realized the tug was Peter pulling my gun from its holster and raising it towards Jerome.

Becky screamed my name, while others of my team yelled "GUN!" as I moved between Peter and Jerome.

"No, Peter, put down the gun," I said as calmly as I could.

He was shaking and crying so hard, I didn't even know if he could see Jerome, much less shoot him.

"No... he... he..." Peter was gasping, while I watched his finger, which was on the trigger.

"Don't do it, Peter, don't let him turn you into something you're not," I tried telling him.

"I'm gonna kill him," he finally got out.

"No, let us do it; it's our job and why we're here," I said, still trying to calm the child down.

The hurt and betrayal was enormous, and he'd snapped at finally realizing he meant nothing to someone he had given his love to and who he thought had loved him in return.

"He didn't fuck you, though," Peter replied, and I had to wince at that.

"You ain't got the balls, you little shit," Jerome had to choose now to say.

"I don't," Peter said, but what scared me was how he said it, calmly and with a smile on his face.

A smile that reminded me of my little brother Juan.

With that, though, I could see his finger tightening on the trigger, and I moved, grabbing the gun, only I wasn't in time as it went off.

Becky was screaming and Peter just crumbled, while I expected to feel agony in my gut, but instead felt nothing.

I figured it'd taken out my spine, but it took me a moment to realize that Carter was standing next to me smiling and I wasn't falling.

"What?" I asked, stunned, looking down and checking my intact stomach for a wound that wasn't there.

"I don't understand," I finally said, looking up at everyone around me.

Carter held up his hand, and in it was a cartridge as he smilingly said, "I ain't gonna be the one to tell that little ball of fire of yours that you up and died on her."

I reached out stunned and slowly took the bullet from his hand, asking, "Who are you?"

"Told you, Sgt. Carter, Special Ops," he said with this big grin on his face, before it disappeared and he looked down at the sobbing boy curled up on the floor.

I dropped down and started to pull him into my arms, but he began to fight me as I tried to calm him, Carter forgotten for now, at least for the moment.

"It's okay, it's okay," I said repeatedly.

Peter just kept repeating, "I'm sorry, I'm sorry."

"I know, I know, but it's all right now," I told him.

When I got him calmed down some, I sat him back with the others, who were scared to death, and it took me a few minutes to convince them that everything was going to be all right.

Then I stood up and faced Jerome.

"For your crimes, you are sentenced to death, sentence to be carried out immediately," I said without formality.

I wanted this over, and over quickly; these kids needed to be gotten out of here and somewhere away from this place.

He looked stunned and started to say, "But... but you can't..." but Becky drove the point home quickly that silence was golden, and simply said, "With pleasure."

We were all surprised when Tilden stepped forward and said, "You can't."

"Excuse me, Sergeant," I said loudly.

"Umm, sorry, sir, but you can't do that," he repeated.

"In case you missed our orders, it was a search and destroy mission, Tilden, and that fucker is the destroy part," I told him, my voice cold.

"I heard our orders, Sir, but this man's crimes, *as far as we know*, do not qualify him for a sentence such as you have imposed," he said, standing at attention but with a look of steely determination on his face.

"I don't know what you're smoking, Sgt., but they do in my book, not to mention our superior officers', and in case you've forgotten, it won't be the first time the Unit has taken out someone for abusing kids, now **STAND DOWN SOLDIER!**" I finished up yelling, furious that he'd question my orders on a mission, so it was with some surprise when he didn't.

"No Sir, I will not! This order is illegal and I can't allow it to be carried out," he said, refusing to back down.

He was standing up to me, of all people, and Til and I were close, very close, so this shocked me even more.

"Illegal? Are you out of your mind? Our commanding officer gave us an order we've had before. He's admitted to abusing these kids and from statements made here alone, he's guilty of oral copulation and sodomy with multiple children. He's used them and thrown them away like garbage. That's more than enough for any judgment to be rendered by any member of the Unit, and you damn well know it," I said, furious as hell at this point.

"Yes Sir. You are correct that this more than meets the criteria for judgment under Unit guidelines but..." he was saying when I interrupted him.

"Then why the hell are you interfering and disobeying your commanding officer?" I asked him.

"Because it doesn't meet Clan guidelines for the imposition of a death sentence, Sir," he replied, never once backing down.

"What?" I asked in disbelief.

"Sir, we're not just the Unit anymore; we're Clan now, and we operate under their policies and rules. The threshold for a death sentence is higher under Clan law than we are used to operating under," he said.

"Look, we're not on a Clan mission here. We're on a Unit assignment under Unit Rules of Engagement, and that means we're under our usual operating procedures," I replied.

"Respectfully, sir, no, you're not, we're not. Any time we act now, we're under Clan SOP, not Unit anymore," he told me.

"I think I'll have to have a little talk with Adam when we get back, because scum like this aren't going to be allowed to just walk," I said.

"I understand that, Sir, but we can't execute him," Til replied.

He was right and I knew it. The big speech about us being all one group now meant we had to follow their stupid ass rules, at least for now.

Oh, it was going to be a long talk for damn sure.

"So we just have to let the bastard go?" I asked, not happy now.

"No, there are other remedies, and if you would allow me to do a telepathic scan, I can ascertain the extent of his crimes to ensure an appropriate punishment under Clan Short guidelines," he replied.

I nodded, and he walked up to Jerome and placed his hands on along either side of the man's head, standing silently for several minutes as we all watched.

Finally he let his hands drop, and moved back from the smugly smiling Jerome to stand facing me again.

"Upon telepathic examination, it has been determined he is guilty of multiple offenses including murder, and meets the criteria for a capital sentence," he said.

"Murder?" I asked, stunned, and looking at the now white faced Jerome.

"Five years ago, he attempted to throw away another boy by the name of Grant Abscom, who was thirteen. Grant loved him and was devastated to be kicked out of Jerome's life. In an attempt to get Jerome to take him back, he threatened to tell what had been taking place with Jerome for the past few years, and Jerome told him he could return. I can provide the details if you wish, Sir, but the short version is, thinking that Jerome actually wanted him, Grant came back and once he got here, Jerome killed him and drove the boy's body out into the deep woods outside Mannsville, Kentucky, where he buried him, then returned home," Tilden reported calmly.

"He... he killed somebody, a boy like us?" Shannon asked into the silence.

"Yes, one who had grown up on him and was no longer desirable," Tilden replied.

All three boys were looking at Jerome with horror on their faces as I said, "Carry out sentence."

"Yes Sir," Becky replied as she and Bryan hauled the now crying Jerome from the room.

There was silence after they left until we heard a single gunshot, which caused all of us to jump, the boys more than us, but still all the same, we realized that a life had just been ended, and on my order.

It was never easy, no matter how much the person deserved it, but then again I guess it wasn't supposed to be.

Becky and Bryan came back in, and I quickly walked over and wrapped both of them in a hug, telling them, "Mom when we get home, no arguments." They nodded their heads and Becky softly said, "You too."

"Yeah, me too," I replied.

We were brought out of it by a small voice asking shakily, "What's going to happen to us now? Do we have to go back *There*?"

I turned and started to answer, when Carter walked between us and stood looking at me. "I think Peter, and maybe these guys too, could use a dad."

"Yeah, well, there are a few thousand other ones right now that could use one too, and we're kind of short of parents for any of them," I replied, knowing he was right, but also knowing it wasn't going to happen.

He smiled and said, "No, I mean they could use a real dad, yours."

"What?" I asked, stunned.

"He's what they need, especially after what they've been through," he replied.

Even though I knew he was right, there was no way it could ever happen. "I guess you didn't hear me when I said he's in jail and he'll never get out," I said sadly.

"Oh, I heard, and you're right; he never will until his son goes in and gets him," he said, smiling again.

"What?" I said again, not believing what I had thought I had just heard.

"It's time you had your father back, and it's time Max did again what he's destined to do, which is love kids," he told me.

"Who the hell are you, anyway?" I finally asked, shocked.

"Told ya my name is..." he started to say, but I interrupted and said, "Carter, I know, but somehow I don't think so."

"Oh, I don't lie, Austin, that is my name," he said, grinning.

"Regular soldiers don't stop bullets with their bare hands," I replied, looking steadily at him.

"Never said I was a regular soldier, now, did I?" he said, only now the grin had changed to one of pure impishness.

I shook my head and asked again, "Who are you?" then turned to Bryan, who was looking anywhere but at me at the moment when he saw me looking his way.

"Paul Carter, as I said," he replied.

"Bryan?" I asked.

"Well... ummm..." he stuttered.

"Wait a minute," Becky suddenly said as she walked forward, looking intently at Paul now.

Then to my surprise she laughed and turned to me, asking, "Austin, what is Paul in Spanish?"

"Spanish, how the hell should I know?" I grumbled as Carter giggled.

"Well, second languages are important, you know?" the boy said as he finally added, "Maybe this'll help," and suddenly a glow appeared around him, along with a pair of golden wings.

"Holy shit!" several voices could be heard to say, including mine, as the angel boy said, "Well, I guess it would be now, wouldn't it?" which got everyone either choking or laughing.

"Pablo," I whispered in shock.

"At your service, Lieutenant," he said.

"But..." I started to say, but stopped as he looked at me and told me, "My full name is Paul Shannon Carter, or in Spanish, Pablo Shannon Carter. I was born and raised in South America to an English father and American mother, but since I lived down there, we just took the Spanish form of our names. I have a brother named Steven or Esteban, and another named Mike, or Miguel as he's called."

I nodded and finally said, "Thank you."

"No problem; now let's see about your dad; he's been in that place for way too long," he said and waved his hand.

With that, we were in a beautiful meadow, grass, trees, and a stream wandering gently through it.

Kids could be seen off in the distance, playing and laughing as they should be.

"Are you really an angel?" Shannon asked.

"Yes I am, and you're safe here," he told them.

"Where is here?" I asked him.

"It's a special place for kids who need a safe Haven," he replied, looking out at the distant kids playing and having fun, before turning back and saying to the three we'd just picked up, "Why don't you guys go and play for a while. It's safe here and no one will hurt you; there's even deer that will let you pet them."

"Really?" they asked.

"Yep, really," he replied, smiling.

They looked to me, and I simply nodded my head and off they ran.

"You ready?" he asked, and I returned my gaze to see him minus wings, glow, and back in uniform.

"You think it's that easy?" I asked. "He's in prison," I added.

"Yeah, I know, but you're Clan Short now; you outrank anyone on this planet. Start using it." He grinned impudently at my shocked look, and I finally said, smiling, "Yeah, let's go get my dad."

With smiles and nods of approval from the others, he said, "Ready, then, one, two and..." suddenly we were in a lobby as the word "Three" left his mouth.

An alarm started going off, and all of us had our weapons at the ready as guards came from everywhere, but they were all unarmed.

"HOLD!" I yelled.

"My name is Lt. Austin Casey of the Clan Short Special Forces Division, and we're here to pick up a prisoner," I said as they all looked at us warily.

"You can't have weapons in a prison," an older man said, moving to stand slightly in front of the others.

"Well, you got 'em, and they ain't going nowhere, so get used to it," Pablo said now, and I shot him a glare, but just got that impudent grin in response.

Great, now I know why they called him a devil, and I'll be damned if I didn't hear him giggle softly.

"I'd like to see your warden, if I may?" I stated politely, and at that moment a heavysset man pushed his way through the guards to the front and identified himself as said person.

After re-introducing myself, I told him, "We're here to pick up a prisoner you have in custody."

"Oh? I've heard a lot about you and your Clan, and I must say I'm so happy you've come into existence. Children need you and what you can do for them. It's a real shame no one until now has ever really cared for kids. We'll do anything we can to assist you, Lieutenant," the warden gushed.

"Excellent, then I would appreciate if you would bring a Max Anderson to us immediately," I told him, trying not to be sick with his kissing of my ass.

"Anderson? Excellent; he's a child molester, and finally he'll get the justice he deserves. I've heard what you Clan kids do to people who hurt little kids, and it's high time too; we certainly can't do anything to him like he deserves. We'll get him right away for you," he said, and I had to do everything in my power not to rip his head off.

"Thank you," Becky finally managed to say sweetly to him, because I couldn't by that point.

He gave instructions, which someone left to carry out, and we were left with him and his going on and on about the Clan.

It was when he started on Dad again that I almost lost it, but Becky, grabbing my arm, stopped me from killing the son of a bitch.

He let us know that while he couldn't really do anything to Max, he had also made sure that if other prisoners happened to, there wouldn't be much complaining from the staff.

As he put it, "It's only justice to pay him back for some of what he's done to all those innocent kids."

If I hadn't seen a commotion from the back about then, even Becky wouldn't have been able to stop me.

Suddenly, though, Dad was being led through the assembled group of guards as the warden was announcing, "Well, Anderson, you'll finally get what you deserve."

Dad came to a stop staring at me with shock and disbelief written all over his face before he said slowly, like he couldn't believe it, "Austin?"

I felt the tears falling from my eyes as I said, "Yeah, Dad, it's me," and then it was like I was a little kid again as I ran to him and wrapped my arms around him.

"Oh GOD, DAD!" I cried and just lost it.

I heard the warden asking, "What the hell is going on here?" and Becky's reply of "Just what we told you," but all my attention was on the man I hadn't seen for two long years now.

"Are you okay?" I asked into his ear.

"I am now, I've seen one of my boys," he replied huskily, and pulling back, I realized he was crying too.

"Let's get out of here, Dad," I said stepping back but not letting go of him.

"I want an explanation," the warden demanded, moving towards us, but Pablo's MP 5 in his mid-section convinced him to stop rather suddenly.

I looked up and said, "Exactly what you said, warden, he's going to get exactly what he deserves."

"But you called him Dad?" he said.

"Yes, I did, because that's what he is. I'm one of those horribly abused kids you were going on about," I told him.

"What are you going to do with him?" he asked, not looking happy now.

"I'm going to give some kids the best dad in the world," I told him, enjoying the shocked look on his face before I said "Let's get out of here," and we were.

This time we appeared on a beach somewhere, which was deserted as far as the eye could see, and Pablo was back to full angel form, glow, wings and all.

"What?" Dad asked, stunned, looking at Pablo.

"Don't ask," I replied to a "Hey!" and it was my turn to grin.

"Austin, I..I don't know where to start. Are you okay, son?" he finally asked.

"I am now, Dad," I replied.

"But...how? What?" he asked still stunned

"It's a long story, Dad, but I'd like you to meet Becky, the one I'm going to marry," I said, pulling Becky forward.

"It's Rebecca, sir, and it's an honor to meet you," she told him, shooting me a dirty look, to which I just smiled.

Matter of fact, I couldn't seem to get it off my face at all since we had got here..

"When we get home, you'll find you have a granddaughter too, Dad," I told him, smiling at his stunned look.

"A granddaughter? But you're so young, the both of you," he said with concern, looking at each of us.

"She's adopted, Dad, I didn't forget about the birth control lessons you taught me," I said.

"I should hope not," he replied, but then looked down before looking back up at me, "What about the others, Aussie?" he asked.

"I...I don't know, Dad, they took all of us and..." I said, trailing off at the end.

"I think when you get home, you'll find that Daileass now has an encrypted eyes only file for you, Austin, that will answer both your questions," Pablo said smiling.

"My brother?" I breathed, hoping against hope.

"Him too, Austin, all of them," he replied.

I moved over and scooped up the little angel boy in my arms and hugged him hard as I said, "Thank you."

"You need him, and so do a lot of kids," he replied as I let him go, then he walked over to Dad and placed his hand on Dad's chest.

I watched as a glow grew and expanded from his hand for a minute or so, then faded away.

"That'll do it, sir," he told Dad.

"What did you do?" Dad asked in wonder.

"Healed you, of time and disease," Pablo replied, and I noticed Dad seemed to look even younger than I remembered him being.

"Thank you, child," he said softly. "Thank you."

"You're welcome, sir, your love is needed here," Pablo replied.

"My love isn't accepted here," Dad said to him.

"It is now," Pablo replied.

"Dad, I have some things to tell you. You see, we were sent on a mission today and found three children. They were being.... And now they need someone, and I think that someone is you, Dad, \" I finished telling him the story of Marshall, Shannon and Peter.

"I know it is you, sir, they need your love and your understanding, and I KNOW you can give them the kind of love they need and will need in the future," Pablo said softly.

I still couldn't believe it, and I couldn't stop touching him, I was afraid he'd disappear again.

Pablo turned to me and said, "He won't. He's here to stay, and no one will ever take him from you or any other kid again."

"I guess we should meet these boys, and see if they're interested in an old man to look after them," Dad said, smiling as he muttered, "A grandchild," still not believing it

Suddenly we were back in the meadow, and three boys were running towards us, but they stopped as they got closer, seeing the grown up now here with us.

Pablo said softly, "Come here guys, you're safe here, remember, and I won't let anything harm you, even if it wanted to."

With the warmth and love coming from him, the boys relaxed and walked the rest of the way forward, until they stopped right in front of us.

"Hello, little ones," Dad said, kneeling down as he spoke. "My name's Max, and everything is going to be all right now."

It was so much like what he'd said to me so many years ago that I felt tears in my eyes as the boys looked at him warily.

"Shhh now, come on, no one is going to hurt you again, not ever," Dad said.

"Trust him, boys, for he is what you need to heal your soul, and you are what he needs to heal his wounds. He'll never hurt you, and he'll never stop loving you if you let him," Pablo said softly to the three.

The three boys looked for a long time at my father before first one, then another, let a soft sob escape from them.

Dad never wavered in returning their gaze, and as those sobs became more and louder, suddenly he had three little boys in his arms, crying and holding on for dear life.

We all stood silently by, watching this, until the boys quieted and settled in my father's arms, content at last.

I knew of course there would be hurdles, but a big one had been crossed now, and I could see the hope in three sets of eyes now, where before there had been none.

"You all ready to go home now?" I asked them.

"Yeah, if it's to yours," Peter replied.

"No ,Peter, it isn't to mine, I'm sorry," I said sadly as panic began, but before it could take root, I smiled and said, "It's to *ours*," which got smiles on their faces.

"What about the home?" Shannon asked.

"Home?" Dad asked.

"They're from a children's home, Dad. We'll have to check it out and let them know we've got these three, but first let's check in at HQ."

With everyone agreeing, I turned to Pablo, who smiled and, glow, wings, and all disappearing, said "Abra Kadabra," and with that we were back at the Unit Command Center.

"WHAT?" followed by "Oh no, IT'S YOU!" suddenly came from Alvin.

"Hey, Alvin, what's up?" Pablo said giggling.

"Oh no," Alvin repeated.

"Oh, I can't stay, things to do, ya know, just wanted to say hi, after all can't come by and not say hello to one of my favorite brothers, now, can I?" Pablo said, grinning now.

Somehow I got the impression from the look on Alvin's face that he wouldn't have minded overly much if he had 'forgotten' him this time.

"See ya later, guys, and enjoy your new home and your new dad," he said and disappeared, just as I was saying "Thanks again."

"Oh, Alvin, say hi to Khan for me, and tell him I'll stop by soon to say hi, I really miss the big puss." Pablo could be heard from somewhere giggling, then added, "Oh, and Bryan, we're REALLY gonna have to have a long talk," then more giggles followed by silence, although Bryan looked a little faint.

"Welcome home, Dad," I finally said into the silence.

Welcome home.

\*\*END FLASHBACK\*\*

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"...And,, well, that's the debrief, sir," I ended my statement, looking at his impassive face.

To say my nerves were on edge is an understatement, as that look had been present for much of what I had told him.

"I see," he finally said into the uncomfortable silence.

"Umm, yes sir" was all I could think to say in reply.

Before anything else could be said, there was a quick knock on the door and then it was opening.

Every one of my team swung around, and hands dropped to our service weapons until we recognized who it was, and seeing the pasty look on the one boy's face, I also knew he knew just how close he'd come to being shot.

Suddenly two boys were each screaming the other's name as both bolted up, one from his chair and the other from his wheelchair, which had been pushed into the room moments before.

Each screaming one word, a name.

"DAN!"

"PETEY!"

Then they were in each other's arms, sinking to the floor, each trying to talk over the other, as Tony, who had wheeled Dan into the room, watched with a smile on his face.

I had to admit we all had them on our own faces as well at seeing the tears of happiness washing both boys' faces.

A throat being cleared brought our attention back to our Executive Officer, who was watching all of this, and I quickly said, "Excuse me, sir, the boy who came in is Dan, the reason for our mission, while the one who brought him in is Tony, on loan to us from Northeast Division. The other boy is of course Petey," I said.

"The Pete from your debriefing, the one you pulled out?" he asked.

"Yes sir, but Tony, how did you find out about us?" I asked.

"Dailess told me," he replied.

"Dailess?" I asked as giggles filled the air.

"Gotta anticipate your commander's wishes, even if he don't know he's wishing it, ya know," the imp replied, giggling still. "As a matter of fact, I let them listen in the entire time, so they know what's going on."

The General just looked at me, and I realized I had better make some introductions.

"Ummm, sorry sir... This is Shannon," I said, pointing to one of the boys, then the other, telling him, "And this one is Marshal."

As his gaze went to the last person in the room, I took a deep breath, and walking over to stand alongside him, introduced him to my Commander.

I could see my entire team holding their breath with me, as I didn't know what to expect, but then he surprised me by wheeling himself forward with a big smile on his face, hand outstretched and saying, "It's a pleasure and an honor to meet you, Max."

With a big smile on my face, I couldn't help saying, "Dad, I'd like you meet my dad."

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#### AUTHORS NOTES:

Well I hope you enjoyed the scene above. It covered some material that some may object to and if you are one of them then I am sorry. It's a controversial subject and for many a hot button issue but one that I thought was something to be addressed. I hope I did it in a way that shows not all people who love children in such a way are, as the popular media and culture like to portray them, evil. Many would die before hurting a child in any way, shape or form. It also realistically tries to portray the children who contrary to the same mentality may be interested at times during their lives in playing like that or being loved like that. We in this country and many others have decided that no child could possibly like or want to experiment sexually with anyone the slightest bit older than they are and that's just not true. We have allowed that an eleven year old might want to experiment with another eleven year old but if the other person is sixteen we somehow insist that there could be no desire present unless there was something wrong with the eleven year old. That's nothing but harmful to the child as for him it is usually natural curiosity that propels his experimentation. The things which I spoke about in this chapter happening to the boys after the discovery aren't made up sadly, I wish they were. The kids in these situations are told the things Austin got told by his "Therapist" The brainwashing does occur and the whole "Grooming" bullcrap they've come up with does get perpetrated upon these poor kids. The children of these relationships suffer more at the hands of their supposed rescuers than they ever did at the hands of their so called abusers. Children may and often are in loving relationships with adults which would be considered perfectly normal by anyone and they are in these relationships for years before anything else enters into them oftentimes at the child's instigation. Sadly though if it gets discovered the child is entered into therapy where he/she's told that the entire relationship was nothing but a scam to end up abusing the child in the end. There is so much real abuse going on it seems a complete shame to me to foster even more and from those supposed to be helping the truly abused recover. We've allowed millions of our children to be abused by this system and I regretfully do not see any change coming instead fostering this mentality in each successive generation to an ever greater degree. I will hold out hope that someday people will come to realize not only the truth but the harm that has been allowed to flourish, harm greater than most of the supposed abuse that it is supposed to help with.

This chapter is dedicated to J and M, two people, who lived Max and Austin's dream and like them had it shattered. May their outcome be as good as that of Max and Austin. Those of us who knew you will never forget you and our prayers are always with the both of you.

For legal reasons I nor anyone here is encouraging, endorsing or suggesting that anyone break the law.

Until next time.....Dark Star

## Chapter 12

Thursday... twenty-three-hundred hours (11:00pm)

Adam was sitting in the main command center going over what the intel. team had been able to find so far. It was amazing how much those boys could come up with in a short amount of time. In less than an hour after the meeting with all the military members of the Unit, Daileass already had two satellites over the site and was working on three more. Adam already had a report in his hand that was so detailed it gave him the average yearly power usage of the base.

Right now, they were working on figuring out an exact number of guards and kids. So far every number they had gotten out of Adams had been different. Of course, it didn't hurt that Jason had ordered his Starship, the VHC Yoshuhlnak, into orbit above the enemy base, and it was also sending down information for them. It is that ship that Adam is expecting to be able to give exact numbers.

He was sitting there reading the last report when Jason walked up to him with a somewhat disturbed look on his face. "Adam, I just got a report from Telez on the Yoshuhlnak. He says that the base has a Starfleet-style sensor dampening field in place. We can defeat it somewhat, but not enough to give anything very reliable. We also know that the base has an anti-transporter field in place." He stopped as he dropped the report in front of Adam, who just looked at it and sighed.

Before Adam could say anything else, the door opened and the three 'Chipmunks' came walking in; fully geared and ready to go. They walked up to Adam and saluted. When he returned the salute, Alvin stepped forward. "Sir, we are ready to head out. Any last minute orders...? We've already seen all the reports, as well as the latest from the Yoshuhlnak."

Jason grinned, "I see Daileass is still all wrapped around Draco's processor."

"Not what I needed to hear," Adam said, a slight smile on his lips. He then looked at the three small eight year olds, "No further orders. You know what you have to do."

"Oh, just one thing," Jason said as he sat on the edge of Adam's desk and smiled at the three boys before him. "Adam, I'd like to send one of my people with these three. That way, we have a VSO perspective as well, should we need to infiltrate with force."

"Ummmm...." Alvin said while squirming a bit. "No offense, sir, I am sure your guy is good, but we work best when it's just the three of us. Our bond and all makes it so we don't really have to talk to each other, plus... well... we'll probably be spending most of our time in either the sewers of the place, or the air ducts. Not to mention... We don't really know what kind of training this person has, and don't know how to work with someone who isn't trained like we are." Alvin blushed as he rushed to get the last bit out. He really didn't want to upset the older boy.

Jason smiled. "Okay. One, it's my son, Oliver; Ollie, normally. Code name 'Fire Eagle'. He's black level VSO, so has been through the Fire and is cleared for front line work. Infiltration, assassination, espio-

nage, sabotage, intel. gathering... he's also the Captain of our Psy-Corp. He's a full telepath, so he'd link well with you three head-cases." He then grinned evilly, "Besides, if it's his qualifications that concern you, he's already in the room. Turn around."

All three boys spun around, but no one was there. They turned back as one, and looked confused at Jason. Alvin opened his mouth to say something, but all that came out was a loud, extremely high pitched, scream of surprise.

"Fuck," Adam said as he wiggled a finger in each ear. "That could have shattered glass, Alvin!"

Alvin wasn't concerned about shattering glass, nor his commander's eardrums. He was more concerned with the fact that his balls had been forcibly pushed back inside his groin when his Mickey Mouse boxers had been pulled up almost to his armpits by hands he couldn't see.

"Ollie," Jason said reprovingly. "Now, now, cariad. Play nice with the natives!"

"But they're Earthlings, Dad," Ollie said as he disengaged his cloak, while still holding the back of Alvin's underwear. "We Colony Rats have to show who's best, don't we?"

Alvin was busy trying to shove his boxers back down his pants, while both his brothers were standing there with shocked looks looking at the boy that had just appeared out of nowhere. "How'd you do that?" Simon asked.

"Stealth belt," Ollie said as he casually pushed down Alvin's combat fatigues, helped the boy adjust himself, then pulled them back up again. "Standard VSO equipment."

Theodore, meanwhile, looked at Adam with huge puppy dog eyes. "Adam... Can we get some, or... do we have to see if we can sign up with them for the cool toys."

Jason glanced at Adam, who shrugged as if to say 'it's your show, bro!' "Well, you're trained to infiltration standard, and you have your own unique advantages... yeah, I think I can let you three have these three belts I just HAPPENED to have Ollie bring me earlier!" Jason giggled as he held out three belts that had been in the pocket of his robe .

"COOL!!!!" All three boys ran over to Jason, hugged him, and grabbed a belt. As soon as they had them on, they all looked at Ollie with a silent plea to tell them how the belts worked.

Ollie just stared back at each for about ten seconds a piece. Alvin nodded silently, and held his arms loose at his side. Ollie came over and pressed a button on the boy's new belt and a shimmer went over Alvin's body. "The belt is attuned to you now, Alvin. When it's active, you are invisible when motionless, but when you move a fleeting shadow can be seen. Normal stealth is still needed. However, there is a dampening field with them, so your footsteps won't be heard, unless you run. You can speak normally, but you can't make a noise by clapping your hands nor stamping your feet, unless you do so VERY hard," Ollie explained. Then he set up Simon's and Theodore's belts. "The button on the left activates the cloak. The others are only used if you're in full VSO uniform with the other 'toys'."

Alvin stared for a second, then fully understood what Ollie had just said. "Other toys? What other toys... can we have the other toys?" Simon jumped in right away. "Yeah.. can we.. we wanna know what they do." Theodore was right there too. "PLEASE!!!!!"

Ollie looked with appeal at his father, and a slight tightening happened around the edges of his eyes. Jason sighed, "You need to be VSO for most of the rest, guys, and..."

"Adam? Can we? Please? Oh, come on, Adam!!" Theodore pleaded as he rushed to the desk to look into Adam's eyes.

"Jason?" Adam asked, his one word loaded with concern.

Jason's eyes went blue for a second and the three chipmunks all felt a movement in their minds. "They have the training. Most of the Oaths are the same as their personal honor and loyalty to the Unit – and the rest I can impart by telepathy, and accept the same way. They need only the Trial," Jason said after a moment. "To be 'Of the Black' is not easy, boys. But, if Adam accepts, then you three can go through the Trials."

"Adam? PLEASE!" all three chorused.

"I'll talk with Jason," Adam said after a moment's pause, for the feelings he could pick up from the Welsh Commander was setting his own on edge. "After this mission, we'll decide. Until then, I need you three, and Ollie, focused. Okay?"

Simon was about to protest, when Alvin touched his shoulder gently. The three boys locked eyes for a moment, and the childish pleading looks on their faces vanished, to be replaced by steely determination. They all turned back to Adam, and nodded. "When we return." All three of them said in one voice, then turned to look at Ollie. "If you're ready to go?" Simon said speaking for all three of them.

Ollie rolled his eyes, then stared at them. All three giggled, and Simon said, "Yeah. Mind to mind is easier! Come on!"

As they turned for the door, they all linked arms so they were in a chain. Then, "Weeeeeee're OFF to see the Wizaarrrrd! The wonderful Wizard of Ozzz...." they sang as they began to skip out of the room.

"Putting my horn-dog son with your crazy three chipmunks is a tactical blunder, I think," Jason stated as Adam tried to pick himself up off the floor where he had fallen while laughing. "Did you see Ollie take that chance to see as much of Alvin as he could? Now he's singing god-awful songs!"

Adam just shook his head and picked up the paperwork again muttering under his breath, "and to think.... they all came from Logan...."

"That explains the 'crazy' then..." Jason grinned as he leaned over and kissed Adam's cheek. "Good match for you, big bro. Okay, I'll go check in with Tel again... see if we've broken through the dampening field around the soon-to-be-dead-Arse-Wipe's base..." he added as he stood up and walked out, leaving Adam to roll his eyes at his back and then continue with his planning.

Adam was just finishing up the preparations for the first of several Command Staff meetings. He had gotten all the satellite photos put up on the board so people could look at that; however, they still were not able to get an exact number. Best guess they could make on how many bad guys were at the base is between twenty five hundred and three thousand.

Jason came in, and handed Adam the latest report from Telez. They still couldn't get through the sensor dampening fields, so while they were not flying blind, they would have to wait for the first report from the munchkins. He was hoping that would come shortly.

Sammy and his crew came in for the meeting and shortly after, many of the others started to come in. Sammy and his whole crew took time to look over the photos, and everything else that Adam had put up. Finally Adam had given Chang as much time as he could; he needed Chang right now.

Adam's eyes went wide when he realized that Chang was blocking him. 'I guess with what he's been though, I should have expected that.' It was something new to Adam, never before would he not really be able to fell Chang, but because they are both now N-Gen, Chang could block Adam totally with no way for Adam to know if he was dead or not. With a sigh, Adam called out softly. "Daileass... Can you ask Chang to join us in the main conference room? I understand that he needs some time, but I really need him here."

"Sure thing Adam." He got as the reply, then went back to working on the briefing. Daileass got back to him a few seconds later, but it wasn't what he expected.

"Uhhh... Adam... He's not here?"

"WHAT?!?!? Where the hell is he?" Adam asked in a loud voice while coming to his feet.

"I... I don't know. His tracking device is in his room, but he's not there." Daileass's voice was full of fear and regret.

"Fine.. where's Korris?" Adam asked... a sinking feeling in his stomach. He barely noticed that all noise in the room had stopped, and all eyes were on him.

"I can't track VSO members, Adam," Daileass near trembled. "Draco won't give me the codes... sorry..."

Adam spun towards Jason. "Where's Korris?" Adam almost demanded.

Jason's eyes went distant, then he murmured, "Korris is blocking me. Without knowing where he is, I can't break through his blocks - I taught them to him." He pressed his comm, "Draco - Track and Trace on Blade Master."

*'That cannot be done, Division Commander. Blade Master's codes are on Lock Out.'* came the response from the Vulcan AI.

"On whose authority?!" Jason almost shouted, his face beginning to flush.

*'Dragon Lead Seven - Talons.'*

Jason's eyes went wide as he met Adam's gaze. Then he tapped his comm again, "Talons, get your Klingon arse in here RIGHT now, or I'm going to be fucked off royally... and I'm just a few steps from there now!"

Adam was beginning to pace with sheer irritation, and Jason hoped that his little brother would answer fast. However, with such a breach of protocol, would Koth be responding now? He should have already told the other Dragon Leads that he had done an override...

"I'm out here, J...Jace," came a tearful voice from outside the doorway. Koth hadn't used the comm.

Adam spun at hearing the young boy's voice. "Where... is... Chang?" Adam asked in a very measured voice.

Juan was shocked to see his boyfriend looking like such a small boy and crying. At first, Koth would not even raise his head to meet Adam's eyes; when he did though, he spoke in a very soft voice and only said three simple words. "The Unwinnable Battle."

"THE WHAT?!?!" Adam said, then stopped short. Klingon Honor. He knew about Klingon honor. Adam fell on his ass as the realization hit him like a ton of bricks. "Nooooo." He moaned out.

Jason's face had paled at the same time as Adam had fallen over, and he ran over to pull the now heavily weeping Koth into his arms. He didn't know what to say. So, instead, he too started to weep – which quickly brought Sammy over and into their now three-way hug.

"What's happening Jace?" Sammy asked softly, yet loud enough to be heard by the rest of the room.

Since Koth was now too far gone to answer, Jason found his voice and fought through his own tears to say, "The Unwinnable Battle. When a Klingon's honor has been stolen or lost through no fault of his own – or if a loved one died NOT in battle – they can regain it – by trying to win a fight or a battle that cannot be normally won. Most of the time they die in it, but in doing so, they regain their honor. Sometimes, and only rarely, do they survive – only the greatest... and in recorded history, only the sons of Kahless managed it... Chang is married to Korris now... meaning Chang is Klingon, and can therefore regain his honor in a hopeless battle – and since Korris' own honor is Chang's... they've both gone... to die..."

"Die?" Sammy half yelled, and his own voice was drowned out by the rest of the room exploding with the same exclamation. "We HAVE to stop them!" Sammy said urgently.

"No," Koth squeaked. "We can't. I'll kill you first..."

"We can't," Jason said as he held Koth tighter. "If we did, then Chang's only OTHER option is to commit suicide... this is their ONLY chance of life...."

Through all this, Adam felt his eyes tear up and threaten to break loose, and he was fighting to hold them back. He sort of missed what Jason had said, and so jumped to his feet once he felt more in control. "WATCH ME! Daileass... Move us to Def Con Alpha... we go wheels up in ten minutes! I don't care what it takes."

Adam was about to continue when a voice from behind him caused him to spin. "Dailess... do NOT give that order."

Adam's eyes were wide as he looked at the older man standing there also with tears in his eyes as he leaned on his cane. "Master?!?!!" Adam was so shocked that his master would countermand his order; he didn't know what else to say.

"Adam-kun, you must not let your emotions lead you to something reckless."

Adam didn't like where this was going already. When Master Takamura used that form of address, he was about to tell people something that they didn't want to hear. His heart was pounding and he was not going to give in to Master. This was his command. He was not going to lose any more of his brothers.

"Master, with all due respect this is my command. I am not going to lose another brother this way. I will be..."

Takamura looked at Adam with an impassivity that made the room fall completely silent. He shifted on his cane and seemed to literally expand in stature. Takamura's presence suddenly became very intimidating. It wasn't as if he changed the look on his face; if anything his face was more compassionate. The silence was deafening.

"Adam-kun." Tears began to fall freely from his eyes. "Your brother was moments away from taking his own life. Do you understand what I am saying? He will commit Seppuku if you interfere with what he plans. He may very well die, but this is the only way he has a chance to continue living. You know you will never change his mind. Do you think you can?"

Adam felt a rage build up. He was close to losing it. Logan put his hand on Adam's shoulder and started to say something. Adam slapped the hand away and replied angrily, "No! I don't want to hear it. We've lost too many as it is! I am going to save him, no matter what it takes." He immediately regretted his actions because of the hurt look on Logan's face, but he was not going to give in.

"Master, you are not going to stop me."

Adam and Takamura stared at each other for what seemed like forever. The tension was so thick it could almost be seen. Adam launched himself across the room. Not everyone could see what happened. As soon as Adam was close, Takamura sidestepped. He planted a series of kicks and punches. Adam went down hard. He was unconscious before he slammed face first into the wall.

It was lucky that Sammy was in a three way hug with Jason and Koth, for the brown haired boy started raging, and reaching for his holstered gun. He never found it, for Koth had taken it, just as Jason gripped both sides of Sammy's head and captured the furious boy's gaze with his own.

The Trinity, however, had no-one near to stop them training their weapons on Takamura. "Move. Please. Give us a reason," Kevin said in a deathly quiet voice.

"Holster those weapons!" Will ordered as he made to stand in front of the three boys. "Now!"

Torn between obeying their friend and 'avenging' their other friend from a perceived attack, the Trinity hesitated - which was all Takamura and Jason needed - Takamura telekinetically removed the weapons from them, then levitated them over to Jason. The three boy's faces were completely shocked, but they seemed to calm fast as Jason joined them into the mental conversation he was having with Sammy.

Brian had been disarmed by KT, who was whispering fast into his ears, leaving Vish to stare intently at Sammy's motionless form.

Juan looked at Jory, then jerked his head at Takamura, "Did he just take their weapons away?"

"Yes," Jory said, his face unreadable.

"Did you know he could do that?"

"No," Jory said, again his face unreadable.

"Fuck..."

Jason, while still talking to the four boys mentally, sent to Takamura, 'Master - Grandfather Sarek told me of you. You are my family, in a way, for Spock is my A'nirih. Please, explain to the others if they need it - I'll explain to these four.... ummm, can I call you Grandpa?'

Takamura sent back, 'We shall talk more on that later... grandson.'

Logan had moved over to where Adam lay prone on the floor. He was about to pick the bigger boy up when Takamura placed a hand on his shoulder. "Please... let me. Adam and I have much to talk about when he wakes up."

Logan nodded and moved back. The older man pushed his cane under his arm, then bent down and easily picked Adam up off the floor. Then, without any problems at all, he carried the unconscious boy out of the room.

As the doors closed, all eyes were now on Jason and Logan. Many of them were hoping for some sort of explanation.

Logan looked at Jason, who rolled his eyes, "Looks like Master Takamura WON'T be explaining, then... I'm still talking with these four, guys. Koth knows all about it, though. Just... go easy on him, please?"

Koth looked up from the mass hug around Jason, his eyes looking lost. He slowly stood and was immediately grabbed into Juan's arms. With Juan now wrapped around him from behind, Koth started to explain. "I was with the rest of you when the Vulcans were helping your brothers and sisters. Kevin, Joel's Kevin, came running in and stood by Poppa Spock and was there when Adam told my Poppa about some other Genesis base. Then, Kevin's eyes seemed to get larger and he came running to me. He said that Joel wanted me to bring the information about the other base to him in Chang's room. So I did... and..." the Klingon boy stopped talking as huge, heart rending sobs started.

Logan wasn't going to just let that slide. He and the others came and surrounded Juan and Koth, and all were whispering to him soothingly.

After a few more minutes, Koth felt he could continue. With his voice thick with tears he said, "I found just Chang and Kor there... they were suiting up in their Vulcan made armor, and looked... serious. I kinda guessed when I saw the lost look in Chang's eyes. I had that look a long time ago when my family was made outcast and dishonored in the Empire... Chang needed to regain his honor. There is only one way – to Win the Unwinnable Battle, or to die in the attempt..." Koth's voice broke again, but he continued brokenly, "I f...fixed them in my mind... there, in their armor, looking proud and s...strong... I'll never see my b...brother again... he's going to Sto-Vo-Kor. Ch...Chang too... they can't s...survive the Unwinnable Battle - only sons of Kahless can... I'm gonna lose my brothers... But - they h...have to go, or Chang'll just kill h...himself anyway, and K...Kor would as well... Whatever happens, I'm g...gonna lose my b.brothers..."

"Wait a minute?!?!" Austin, the commander of Strike Team Charlie, said as he looked around at everyone else there, not many people understanding what was going on. "You mean that Chang has to die for some stupid reason?"

"Honor is everything to a Klingon. It is our life, our air, our food, our death. Everything," Koth said, his tears stilling and his voice becoming hard. "And your brother Chang is a Samurai... they live and die by the same type of honor. It is NOT stupid."

"Fine... I can understand Honor, but... but why would he have to kill himself. It wasn't Chang that killed Mom and Dad, it was Adams! Chang shouldn't have to die for something that fuck face did!" Austin was talking for almost everyone at that point...at least everyone that did not understand Chang and Korris.

"Chang believes so. It IS so. He was used dishonorably, and he is therefore responsible for what he did according to honor. He lost himself in a battle – an utter and total DEFEAT, and he couldn't DO ANYTHING to prevent it," Koth said slowly. "By Samurai tradition, he has to either avenge AND die, or just die. He has no other way out by purely Samurai tradition. However, he is ALSO Klingon as he is bonded to my brother. WE have a way out, with just a slim chance of survival... but in my brother's case and Chang's, it's STILL death... but it is a death with ALL Chang's honor restored."

"So you're saying that because someone used Chang to do something bad... Chang has to kill himself. That makes no fucking sense. I'm sorry but it's still stupid!" Austin had no clue about their Honor, and this made no sense to him.

Koth's eyes went flat, and he pushed out with his arms with surprising strength, throwing Jory, Will and Logan away; only Juan, who was around his back, remained. "Stupid?!" Koth yelled as his Me-k'leth blades seemed to flash into his hands. "STUPID?! HOW DARE YOU! HOW...." he continued to rant as he threw off the stunned Juan's arms from around himself and leapt for Austin.

Austin managed to duck out of the way, but only barely. Then he ducked again as a chair came his way, followed by a snarling and spitting, massively pissed off Klingon ten year old.

"Logan!" Austin called out, "Get him off of me!" He ducked again as he used a chair to fend off the twin blades Koth was using to slowly reduce it to splinters. Austin was trying to fight back, but he was no match. Austin was fully trained, and damned good at what he did, but he did not have the training or

the ferocity of a highly pissed off Klingon. Some of the others started to move in to help their UNIT brother, but stopped dead in their tracks as a loud booming voice was heard in their heads. "BACK DOWN!"

What shocked them the most was who had said it. Very few people actually knew that Logan was telepathic, he was more than content to let Adam be the telepathic power in the UNIT.

Logan then turned to face the boy who was quickly losing parts of the chair he was trying to use as defense. "Why?" Logan asked, his face flat and void of all emotion. "You have insulted my brother's honor, Koth's brother's honor, and by association, Koth's own honor – not to mention Juan's, Jory's, Will's, Adam's and my own."

Juan added, his voice barely holding in his fury as he watched Koth finally remove the last pieces of chair from Austin's hands, "Just because you don't 'get' something, it doesn't mean you should call it 'stupid'. I don't 'get' what you see in girls, but you're living with one. Do I call her stupid?"

Koth wasn't listening to any of this. He was in a blood-rage, and all he knew was the scent of his prey before him. As he backed Austin into a corner, he bared his teeth, fully intending to sink them into the seventeen year old's neck as he eviscerated him.

It was this moment that Jason felt he should step in.

Austin closed his eyes, fully expecting to be dead in a few seconds.

Koth leapt at the seventeen year old, snarling as he did so... and stopped midair.

Logan swiveled around and saw Jason standing there, Sammy and the Trinity watching without expression, and Jason's eyes were shining a deep, powerful blue. "Calm thyself, my brother," he said to Koth in Klingon as Koth started to float towards the Welsh Dragon Commander.

Koth was fighting the hold his brother had on him, but that was impossible. "He... he said... he SAID..."

"I know," Jason said, still in Klingon, "but he is ignorant. He shall learn hereafter. This time, I stand as thy elder brother. Thy honor is MINE to avenge. Will you permit me to do so?"

"I..." Koth trembled in rage as he hung there before Jason, his eyes locked with the Welsh boy's. "Yes, brother; I cede vengeance to thee."

"However," Jason said as his eyes flickered at the now pale faced Austin, "Should he or any other in this room make a stain on our honor again, I grant thee the right to avenge yourself. They now know better. Agreed?"

"Agreed," Koth whispered, his rage slowly draining. Grief for his brother's fast approaching death came flooding back, then, and as Jason lowered him into Juan's embrace, he burst into racking sobs once more.

"Logan," Jason said formally in English, "may I speak to Second Lieutenant Austin?"

"You may. Please do not put him out of action nor kill him. We need him tomorrow. However, should anyone here insult MY Klingon brother's honor again, then he can kill them," Logan said, his voice flat with implicit threat of painful death.

Jason nodded, then walked towards Austin. "Attention, soldier," he ordered shortly.

Austin's eyes, wild at the near death he had experienced, became a bit harder. "I take orders from..."

"Your leader, Adam Casey, is a Commander in the Clan Short Fleet. In the Vulcan hierarchy, I am a Division Commander. Since you are now Clan Short as well as Unit, you are therefore under Vulcan Ranking, Lieutenant. Ergo, I can assume command should Vulcan's interests be involved. COMMANDER Koth, and LIEUTENANT Korris and LIEUTENANT COLONEL Chang Casey have each had their honor besmirched by you. In American Military, that is enough for a severe penalty. In Klingon society, that is enough for death. In Vulcan – we are logical. We find you ignorant of the codes of honor Chang and the Klingons live by, and that plus your fear of losing Chang is accepted as reason for your continued use of insulting phrases. You said that Chang was dying for a stupid reason, and Commander Koth was good enough and diplomatic enough to explain it to you. However, you then continued to call it stupid. Had you simply said it was not understood, that would have been fine. But to call another's honor into question – I will be placing into your mind a brief look at the lives both Korris and Koth have lived through since their parents were murdered. That, plus the recent 'show' you have experienced, should be enough for you to understand."

Jason's eyes blazed out brilliantly for a second, and Austin crumpled to the floor in tears. "Now you understand," Jason whispered softly, gently. "Don't call something you don't understand 'stupid' again, my friend. It may be to you, but to others it is life. You have been punished enough for your insult. You also now have knowledge you did not have before. No other chastisement is required. On your feet, soldier, and do your duty with honor."

Austin got to his feet, his legs trembling and tears still flowing down his face. He fumbled a salute, then stumbled over towards Juan and the still crying Koth. Using the brief experience he had just received from Jason's mind-dump, he laid a hand on Koth's shoulder and whispered in Klingon, "I am sorry. I shall never call thy honor into question again. My life is now thine until my debt is paid."

Koth looked up through his tears, then closed them. "You can hug me and Juan on your lap... til I stop crying..." the grieving boy whispered. "Then, when I get the message that my brother is dead, will you make the Call with me?"

"I don't know how to make the Call, but I am a fast learner," Austin said, his eyes still streaming tears at the memories he was still seeing in his mind. "I shall stand with you." He then drew both boys closer, moved to a chair to sit down with them both on his lap.

Jason then looked around the room, and took in the shards of the few chairs that had either been thrown against the wall and shattered, or ripped apart by the pissed off Koth. "I think this place needs a makeover. Is there another conference room in which we can debrief everyone on the current situation?"

Logan nodded, then ordered a few of the kids still standing around to transfer everything to Conference room 2, which was just down the hall. Then he made his way over to Jason. "Jase... do you have a minute?"

Jason nodded his head, and together the two boys moved away from everyone else. Logan took a deep breath when he was sure no one else could over hear.

"Daileass, could you please start recording?" Logan asked in a quiet whisper. He didn't wait for an answer... he knew that Daileass heard him and was doing so. "As of this moment, I am assuming command of the Special Forces Division. Until such time that Adam is awake, and has his senses back, I do not feel he is in the right mind set to lead. Do I have your backing on this?"

"Confirmed. As of this time, Logan Casey is de facto Commander of the Special Forces Division," Jason said in Patriarch mode.

Logan nodded then hesitated. "There is one other thing. I need to take care of something else... can you cover for, at most, thirty minutes?"

Jason grinned, "Sure, Logan. I'll explain what we know so far to the rest; you deal with whatever you need to, bro."

"Thanks man... I'll be back just as quick as I can." With that Logan headed out of the room, obviously on a mission of some sort.

"You'd better, or I'm recalling the Chipmunks and putting them in charge!" Jason giggled at Logan's re-treating back.

Logan just shook his head, grinning to himself.

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Friday 0030 Hours (12:30AM)

Logan wasn't sure if it would work, but if it did, His idea would give them a major advantage in the battle coming up. He stopped by the command center to make sure the intel. team knew what they had to do, then walked into his office. Once there he talked to Daileass for a few moments, before he was beamed out.

Logan walked into CIC and was only somewhat surprised to see that there was indeed someone working the main communications board. "Hey there," Logan said as he walked in.

The boy in the seat turned and looked at Logan with a smile on his face. "Hey... you're Antony right?" Logan said with a tired grin.

"Yup, nice to see you again. What can I do for you?"

"Well, I wanted to find out who I would have to talk to about trying to get our guys those sub-vocal communicators."

"Well... you just happen to be in luck. Hey Javyk, you got a moment?"

On the other side of the room a brown haired boy, who was working on what looked to be a door frame mounted on the wall, looked over at Antony. For a second he flashed Antony an almost annoyed look, but then his purple eyes softened and he sighed, "Sure, Antony." He then set down his tools and walked over to join Antony and Logan. "What can I do for you?"

Antony smiled, knowing that Javyk took his work seriously. "This is Logan; he's the Intel. Head of the Special Forces Division. He needs to talk with you about getting subvocals set up."

Javyk looked Logan over for a second before finally replying, "Sure. I'm just about ready to test the door, so I suppose we can be the guinea pigs for that, since we have to go back to Ark for me to get what I'll need. Do you have somewhere in mind to set up a receiving station, or will you be relying on Ark to do all your receiving and handling for you?"

"Well, if it's possible, I would love to be able to have Daileass... our AI... handle the communications. I mean, there's no reason to bog down Ark any more then she already is," Logan stated.

"Bog down? Bog down?! You're kidding, right?" Javyk almost laughed. "You poor thing, I assume no one's told you about Ark. Ark could process more than your brain can, and do it twice as fast."

"Be glad you got the short answer... Ark makes the Federation Mainframe look like an Apple II!" Antony giggled.

<I was thinking that I make the Federation Mainframe look like a basic calculator, but I will settle for that comparison.> A voice said from all around the room.

"Ummm." Logan kind of stumbled on his words. "No, not really. All I have been told, really, is the Ark is some type of super computer AI, that sits there and records everything that's going on.

Logan looked up like he always did when speaking to Daileass. "I meant no offense, Ark, it's just that no one has explained to me exactly what you are."

<I would be happy to give you an exact description sometime in the future, but if I were to take the time now, Javyk might get upset. Let us just say that I have been around for over sixty thousand years and I have such a complex system that you might only be able to dream about such things.>

"How about I just give him a tour while we're down there," said Javyk as he started walking towards the mounted door frame again. "Follow me, please." Logan simply followed Javyk as he walked towards the doorway.

Javyk picked up his tools and then spoke out loud, "Okay, Kendall, I'm ready to go on this end." He paused for a second before continuing, "Yes, I aligned the buffers." Again he paused. "No, I won't be sticking my hand through this time. I'll be walking through." Javyk frowned, "Yeah, I remember what happened to my hand last time, but I fixed that. It should work just fine this time. Just please turn it on."

Suddenly a light on the door frame turned green and Javyk smiled, "Now we just need to turn it on from our end." Logan simply raised an eyebrow, and thought it best not to say anything. He wanted to ask about the hand, but then thought to himself, 'maybe I don't want to know.'

"Hey," Logan said as he held out his hand for the boy to shake, "This is a hell of a place you got here." Logan's eyes hadn't really settled on the boy, but were darting around from one place to another.

"You could say that," Kendall grinned as he took the offered hand. "So what kind of system are we setting up for you exactly?"

"Well, I was hoping to get subvocal communicators for the Special Forces division. I guess from what Javyk said, we could have the control device wired into our AI. I'm pretty sure we've got enough spare servers that could handle the extra load it would take."

"What type of terminal is that exactly?" asked Javyk.

"He wants to know what specs your servers have," translated Kendall. "If he doesn't think your computers are good enough, he'll want to install one of our terminals to handle it. It might just be best if I get what we'll need and meet you both there. Javyk'll assess what you need and will be able to tell me what to bring."

"Well, if we go back to CIC, Daileass can transport us, or perhaps Ark could send us right to the server room in the Unit base." Logan wasn't really sure what was going on, but these guys were part of the Clan, so he wasn't going to question.

"Ark, you heard the man; take us to that server room," replied Javyk. "Kendall, we'll contact you in a few minutes."

Kendall nodded and then before anything else could be said, Logan and Javyk vanished.

The next thing they knew, both of them were standing in the heart of Daileass's server farm. Peter nearly jumped out of his skin when they showed up. No one was allowed to beam into this room. Peter realized then that they didn't beam in; they came in by the Ark teleporting.

"Hey, Peter..." Logan called out. "Sorry to startle you."

"No prob... what's going on?" The young eleven year old clone of Logan said.

"Well... first, this is Javyk... he's gonna look into setting up a system so that Daileass can handle the subvocal communications. He just needed to take a look to see what we needed."

Javyk looked around a little, "So, where are these servers you were talking about?"

"Ummm... No offense, Logan, but I kinda figured if you brought him here, he'd at least know something about computers." Peter looked a little lost, and just a bit annoyed.

"Wait, so you mean that these are the computers that you were talking about?" Javyk said gesturing to the servers in the room and trying not to laugh. "What are you running this AI of yours on, binary?"

"Well... DUHHHH... what else do you think we're using?!?!" Peter asked, looking at Javyk like he had two heads.

"Umm, perhaps something with more power behind it, like trinary," replied Javyk. "Everything Ark runs on, from its hardware to its software, is all trinary based. I've been creating technology more complex than simple binary systems since before you were born. I wouldn't even use binary to program a toaster."

"But... but... Trinary doesn't exist in anything other than theory... and even that's not all that developed yet. How could you have been using it since before we were alive?!?!" Peter asked, Logan simply snickered... a few things made more sense to him now.

"Having been a part of a society that existed about sixty thousand years ago, technology was a bit different," Javyk said as he started eyeing the computers again. "We had much more advanced tech than this entire cycle seems have."

Peter sat there with his mouth moving, but nothing was really coming out. Logan couldn't help but laugh. "Hey Peter... you better calm down there, or the positronic matrix in your head might start to smoke."

"Well, Logan, if you want my opinion of your systems, I think they all need to be either upgraded or replaced," Javyk said as he shook his head. "IF all you want is the communications system, then that's all I'll set up, but I could fix this mess if you want me to. Chances are I could add a few other little things you might need too. I can have Trevor down here to help me with Archive controls, Kendall could set up hardware, and I could work on networking and interface. It'll probably take about four hours."

Both Logan and Peter had their jaws on the floors. It was Daileass that asked the next question. "Javyk... This is Daileass, the AI that operates these servers. I would only ask one question, about what you would like to do. Would I have to be off line during that time? We are currently planning a massive assault. Not to mention it's my programming that operates the lighting and ventilation in this base. All that would have to be taken into account if your proposed upgrades were made. If it could happen that I would not have to be taken off line, then I would ask that you do as much as you can. I have been in contact with Ark many times, and know a small amount of what it can do. I would be eternally grateful for whatever assistance you could give."

"I suppose if you still needed some of your systems, that would slow us down a little," Javyk said slowly. "But if that's how it has to be done, that would be fine. It'll only take two more hours than it would have if we can't take everything off line. Although, if I just ask Stepan to help us out and that'll shave us back down to four hours; yeah, I don't see that as being a problem."

"Then by all means, please do what you can." Logan said, knowing that Daileass had already made his desires clear.

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Friday 0100 (1:00AM)

Adam woke up with a start. His head was ringing. He knew that attacking Master Takumura had been a mistake, but there was no alternative. He sat up and tried to get his bearings. Master had taken him

down hard. If he hadn't been genetically altered, he would be dead now. Adam was painfully aware of this.

"Ah. Adam-kun it is nice to see you up finally. We have some things we must discuss," Takamura said, completely taking Adam by surprise.

Adam was at a loss. He spluttered for a moment before he finally exploded at Takamura.

"You! You son of a bitch! You are going to let Chang die! Why! I can't lose him now. I... I... need him Master. I can't lose anyone else, damn you. Why do you want him to die!?!"

Adam eyed Takamura with some hatred, but it softened as Takamura did nothing but look at Adam with compassion.

"Master I.." was all he got out before he was interrupted.

"Adam-kun. Just call me Isamu. You and your brother's are all very precious to me. I am so proud of all that you have accomplished. I do not wish to lose any of you."

Adam looked at his Master's face and broke down crying. He could not help himself. He hadn't felt this helpless in a long time. Takamura moved over to Adam and took him in his arms. As he did so, tears began to stream down his own face. He rocked the boy in his arms as they cried together.

"Adam. You and your brothers are my family. I want only the best for you. Do you think I want Chang to die?"

Adam looked at the old man. He knew that his words were true. Master had never done anything but help. At times his help was hard to swallow, but it was always with their best interests at heart.

"No, of course not, Master."

"Adam. Please call me Isamu, my son. We are past such formality now. You are part of my heart. You are a very remarkable and special young man. I am so proud of you and all that you have accomplished. I wish us to move into a new relationship. Chang is the first person I have ever let call me father, and he is the first I have ever called son. I never want you to doubt my love for you, Adam. You and your brothers have transformed my life. I want all of you to know that you are my family now. Do you understand me?"

Adam was too choked up by this point to speak. All he could do was nod his head and sob into Takamura's shoulder. For his part, Takamura was not much better off. He was feeling the dread of losing Chang and he clung to Adam as well. Finally he collected himself and started to speak.

"Adam. I am in turmoil over your brother's path, but you must realize how important this is. If you wish to blame me, it is not without merit that you should do so. I am the person who trained him in the arts and ways of the Samurai. But I want you to know that it was imperative that I do so. I had to give him the skills to resist what that waste of a life had planned for him. He is far too special a young man, like you, to let become a monster. He needed something that would allow him to survive and even thrive in the difficult circumstances that you boys found yourselves in. I gave all of you a piece of me," he

said, tapping Adam on the forehead with his finger, "to help you survive the trials ahead of you. I could see in each of you that you would all become fine young men with destinies far greater than those your keepers had for you."

Takamura paused for a moment to collect his thoughts. His iron will, and the discipline that created it, were all that was keeping him from being reduced to inconsolability. He was old, very old, and sometimes he felt that the weight of those years was going to crush him. He had seen so much, but it wasn't that. It was the crushing reality of how truly incomprehensible it all was. There were never any real answers, always more questions and the striving to learn more questions. It was wonderful and horrifying at the same time.

"My son. You are still so young, but you have taken on so much. I think it is time I tell you something. This is something that I never thought I would be sharing with another soul."

"Mas..." began Adam, only to stop as Takamura looked him in the eyes. "Isamu. You don't have to tell me anything. I trust you more than just about anyone else."

"My son, you need to know, and in order to understand, I must explain some things to you. My honor is tied to you and your brothers, and not just because I am the one who taught you to fight. We are both telepathic and I could just 'dump' everything from my mind, but there are things that I have experienced that are not for most to know. So for now at least, be patient and let me explain what I feel I can."

Adam nodded his head and sat back, waiting for his Master to begin. He knew that Takamura was about to share something that most would never know. He could tell that this was very important. He would not interrupt.

"Some three thousand or so years ago, I was born in the mountains of what is now known to you as Japan. We were a strong family and we had a strong clan. My father, Ikaru, was the headman of our clan. I had an older brother, called Kasai, and we were close when I was little. However, by the time I reached my fifth birthday, I had managed to surpass my older brother in many ways. My body seemed to stop aging at that point, and I was far stronger than any other child in our clan. My brother began to be jealous of me. By the time I had reached the age of seven, it was obvious to everyone that I was "Special." I could sense the truth in people, and know what they were planning before they spoke. Many took to making signs of protection when they saw me, but just as many saw me as a blessing to the clan."

Takamura took a pause and then spoke. "Daileass, would you please have someone leave some tea for us outside the door; just let us know when it has been left. We don't wish to be disturbed for any reason."

"Of course, Master Takamura; I will get someone right on it."

"Thank you, my friend. It is much appreciated."

He turned his attention once more to Adam and the task at hand.

"Things didn't get really bad between my brother and me until dad began bringing me on his trading trips to ensure that we were not getting ripped off. As more and more was asked of me, my brother became increasingly antagonistic. He began to hang out with people in the village who saw me as some

kind of evil spirit. You have to understand that being the first born son back then was everything, but my strength and mental acuity were fast making him a second son in his eyes. I was able to beat boys that were twice my age in both strength and skill. I could learn just about anything taught to me almost immediately."

"You must understand that my brother was a remarkable child in his own right. He would have been the envy of anyone. He was one of the fastest runners, could wrestle and fight like no other, and had a very gifted mind as well. He felt that his spot had been taken by me, and to be blunt, in lots of ways it was."

Adam could only nod as he listened to the tale unfolding before him. His mind was still numb with worry for his brother, but he could tell that this was something very important. Master had never gone into any sort of personal stories, except in a roundabout way, in the entire time he had trained him. Adam had not even realized at the time that they were personal stories until after his escape. As the saying goes, "Hindsight is always 20/20."

"Let's just say our rivalry grew as we did. I began to actively compete with him by the time I was ten years of age. Still, I looked like I was a child of five, my brother found it unbearable that I could best him in combat and most other things. My mental abilities had grown considerably by then. I had realized that I could move things with my mind. My brother was good, but he didn't stand a chance when I could toss him not only with my strength, but also my mind."

"Sorry to disturb you, Master, but they have left your tea outside the door," Daileass quietly informed the pair.

"Thank you, Daileass, I am so glad that I have the chance to speak with you once again. You always brightened my day when we speak."

Adam began to say something as the shock that Daileass was known to Takamura began to sink in, but just shook his head instead and went to the door to get the tea. Outside the door he found a tray with everything needed for a Japanese tea ceremony. Adam smiled to himself. Daileass must have told them to do this.

He set the mizusashi (a stoneware jar containing fresh water) that represents purity next to Takamura. He lit a candle since he didn't have a fireplace to represent Yang. He then set the chaire (a small ceramic container with the matcha or green tea) in its shifuku (silk pouch) in its proper place in front of the mizusashi. He sent a silent message to Daileass and had him toll a bell seven times.

Takamura smiled and made for the facilities with Adam where they purified their hands and mouths. Takamura then seated himself on the floor, while Adam retrieved the chawan (tea bowl) that contained a chasen (tea whisk), chakin (tea cloth), and the chashaku (tea scoop). He set them carefully in front of Takamura in their proper places. The chawan represents Yin, which is set next to the mizusashi, which represents the sun and Yang.

Adam purified the tea container and the tea scoop with a fine silk cloth. He filled the tea bowl with water and rinsed the whisk. Next he placed three scoops of the tea into Takamura's tea bowl and ladled enough water into the bowl so that he could make a fine paste with the tea whisk. He continued to add water until the tea was the consistency of a creamy soup. Adam passed the bowl to Takamura who tur-

ned the bowl around in his hand to admire the bowl as is custom, then he drank from the bowl, wiped the rim, and passed it to Adam, who did the same. Then Adam rinsed the bowl, cleaned the tea scoop and container, and gave them to Takamura for examination. Upon receiving them back from Takamura, Adam cleared the tea ceremony out of the way and returned with a pot of tea and some small tea cups.

The sadness and worry had not left either of them, but they did feel calmer than before. Ritual has that effect, and using ritual in this way was one of the many things that Takamura had imparted to the members of the U.N.I.T. Yes, even Juan used a ritual to calm himself. Disassembling, cleaning, and reassembling his guns was one such ritual, and sharpening his knives was another.

They settled back with the tea and Takamura continued on with his tale.

"I will skip ahead several years. Over time it became apparent to my brother that I was not going to age in a normal fashion at all. He also began to note that members of our family were considerably longer lived than most of our clan. Our grandparents and their parents were still alive, which was almost unheard of in those days. You were an old man if you lived to be thirty, and ancient if you made it to forty."

"My brother came to me one day, and told me that he'd been the recipient of a vision the night before. He had seen us standing together triumphantly ruling over all the lands. He said that we were destined to rule the world. Now keep in mind, Adam, that three thousand years ago the world was a much smaller place to us. However, I had no interest in his plans for conquest."

"We fought soon after that. It was a bitter fight, and in the end I hurt him severely. My brother had formed a plan in his head already. It would still be many years before I would discover what had begun back in our village. He had already convinced several members of our family as well as several people from other families to leave our village and strike out on their own. The day after I defeated my brother in combat that is just what they did. It was nearly sixty years before I learned what my brother had begun that day."

Adam was spellbound at this point. He could not believe what he was hearing.

"My son. We do not have the time for me to tell you like this. May I speak mind to mind with you, for I must tell you about who I am, and ultimately who you and your brothers are. As I said earlier, I cannot do a full mind dump as some things are too personal, while other information, you are not ready for."

Adam nodded his head. He and Isamu looked into each other's eyes and Adam was amazed at the power of the mind he encountered. The intelligence, scope, and discipline were immense. Adam felt the bond with his teacher and it brought tears to his eyes as he shared his sorrow and grief over Chang with the man who had given him what he needed to survive. Suddenly, as if a floodgate had opened, he remembered the first time he had met Isamu. It was as if a veil had been lifted. He had been a scared little boy alone in a frightening world of painful tests. Isamu had placed a piece of himself in his mind. It was what he needed to not just survive, but maybe even thrive in the harsh world of the lab. Adam was shocked. Why hadn't he remembered this before now? Then Isamu began to send the story, and Adam's mind focused on the information he was being given.

\*\*\*\*\* *Sibling Rivalry in Takamura Birejji - Bamboo Grove Village* \*\*\*\*\*

Kasai followed his brother as he made his way toward his Uncle Hanza's home. The young man had grown quite fond of his father's youngest brother. The man was a quick wit and more than a match for the boundless energy that Isamu exhibited. More importantly, he did not seem to mind that Isamu always read his thoughts and exhibited other strangeness. In fact, Hanza seemed to encourage Isamu to explore these things.

Kasai had a purpose in following his younger brother today. The little brat had turned him down flat. He needed to be shown that it was the only way they could proceed. The very fact that they existed at all was the proof needed that they were destined to rule over the cattle and sheep that made up the bulk of the populace. They were short lived, prone to disease, and basically stupid. No one in their family got sick for the most part. They lived three or four times the usual lifespan. Their whole village was way ahead of what was going on outside their mountain and this valley.

The masses needed a God to look up to. It was so obvious. But his little brother could not see that. He was tied into the restricting and outdated notion of working for the greater good. Why should the gifted and truly special work for the meager and useless masses? It was the masses that had to serve and follow the orders of the gifted. Today he would make his little brother admit the truth.

Isamu was aware of his brother following him. He could always sense the malevolence and bitterness of Kasai whenever he was near. He could not read his thoughts, though. Kasai was one of the few in the village who had learned the trick of keeping their thoughts private from Isamu. However, if Isamu was able to touch his brother, he could still read him as easily as a scroll.

Isamu decided that he didn't want to see Kasai after what had been said the other day. He broke from the path and bolted for the woods. Kasai realized that he had been found out and gave up all pretense of stealth. He called out to his brother, asking him to stop. Isamu was not about to listen to him. He plunged forward, determined to elude his brother.

Kasai was very upset now, but he knew something that his little brother did not. The direction he had chosen to travel in was going to lead him to a grove with a waterfall and only one way in or out. The best part was that Kasai knew a much quicker way to get there. He made his way a bit further up the path and took the well hidden trail. He knew that he would have to hurry even though this path was half the distance. His little brother was impossibly fast.

To Kasai's relief, he made it just before Isamu plunged headlong into the grove. Kasai placed himself between his little brother and the exit of the grove. Isamu turned and looked his brother in the eyes. His gaze was measured and distrustful. Kasai sighed, but he knew that years of treating his brother poorly were to blame, and he knew it would take time. His brother was one of the special people, so he would eventually have to accept the truth that was being brought to him.

"Isamu my brother. Do not run from the destiny that I bring you. Look around you. How many like you are there in this world? That is right. As far as we know there is only one, only you."

"Kasai, I do not care about these things that you speak about. What do I care for conquest and power? I have no ambition to put my effort toward these hollow things." Isamu had assumed a defensive posture.

"Hollow? How can the destiny of leadership be hollow? We are the way we are for a reason, my brother. Destiny has taken us by the hand and is leading us toward conquest. We are superior to most of

the world in every way. Powers greater than us have marked us to be special. We should not shy away from that gift. Through our superiority we will bring about a perfect world. We will weed out the weak and corrupt, and bring about a paradise. You, my brother, must see your role in this and grasp your destiny with both hands. We will make them serve as is their proper place." Kasai was so impassioned he did not see that Isamu had edged around and made a break for it. It was just enough time for him to slip past his older brother.

Kasai realized his mistake very quickly and was just five or six strides behind his little brother. Isamu went full tilt, and began to pull ahead. It was going to be hard, but Kasai would not give up. Isamu sensed the intent from his older brother and decided to change tactics. With no warning at all, he reversed direction and charged straight at his elder sibling. Kasai was taken off guard as Isamu landed six rapid hard kicks to Kasai's head. He went down hard. Isamu didn't break stride at all and was on the move as soon as his feet touched the ground. He could hear his brother's cursing as he sped off...

\*\*\*\*\* *Adam's Room* \*\*\*\*\*

It was nearly thirty minutes later before Isamu and Adam emerged from his room. Adam had a look of determination on his face. He looked somehow a bit older and more mature. Adam didn't break his stride as he said, "Daileass, where is Logan? I need to find him right away. Also, have the plans for the base and all the data we have ready and waiting in the Command Center. I want the whole of the Intel Team to report to Logan and me immediately. It is time to set our brothers free!"

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Friday 0130 (1:30 AM)

Juan was in a panic. Rambo was AWOL. Tears were streaming down his face. First Chang and Korris, and now this. He had just gotten his buddy back. He couldn't lose him now. Not with everything else. He had just gone to take a shower. Rambo had been chillin' on the bed. Now he was gone.

"Rambo... Where are you?" Juan was thinking the worse. Rambo must have been kidnapped. "Daileass. You gotta help me. Rambo's gone missing. Some one must have kidnapped him! I need the intel team here ASAP! While your at it get me a security detail, and file a missing persons report for me. Did we get a satellite tracking chip installed in Rambo yet?!?"

Any other time Daileass would have had to fight to suppress his giggles. With Chang and Korris going off to die it didn't matter how ridiculous what Juan was saying sounded. Of course Juan was deadly serious.

"Juan calm down. I know where Rambo is right now. One of the little guys wandered in here and picked him up."

"What?!? Where are they? I am going to kill that..."

Juan was derailed as Daileass provided a feed from the location of Rambo and his kidnapper. A boy who could not be more than three or four was sitting on the floor of one of the pods. He was busily talking to Rambo while nodding or shaking his head.

"...kid..." Juan finished lamely. *'Oh God. Cute. Real cute. NO FAIR. TOO CUTE! Man I have got to remember to use the cute thing to my advantage more often'*, Juan was thinking to himself. His anger quickly melted away to nothing as he listened to this little boy pouring his heart out to Rambo. As he continued to watch the boy interact with Rambo an idea began to form in his devious little head.

"Daileass you need to do me a favor. Can you make it sound like the bear is speaking? You know, not my voice but what I say." Juan had a gleam in his eyes, and a wicked grin on his face.

"Sure I can Juan. Uhm... Are you sure about this?"

Juan scowled. "Daileass, just do it. When have I ever done anything to hurt one of the little guys?"

"Uh huh." The boy said as he shook his head yes at Rambo. "Eyes Bobby. Whad youw name Misdew Beaw.?"

"OK Juan. You just say it and I will relay it so it sounds like Rambo is saying it." Daileass sounded a bit unsure.

"My name is Rambo Bobby. Why did you steal me?" Bobby's eyes got wide and he looked around the room then back at Rambo.

"No. I din sdeaw you." Was all the stunned little boy could get out.

"Bobby you didn't ask if you could take me. That's stealing." Rambo said.

"No I din. No. I dhinged yous wooged wonewy Misdew Beaw." Bobby was almost crying when he said this. Juan was quick to comfort the little boy.

"I know you didn't mean to steal me Bobby. I can tell you are a very good little boy. Why do you think I was lonely?"

Bobby took a moment before answering in a small voice. "I nowd id, 'cause Eyes wonewy doo."

Juan was touched by this little boy. He typed a message to Daileass on his terminal. "Daileass, please get me everything you can on his case, and let me know who is supposed to be in charge of his pod."

"Why are you lonely Bobby?" Rambo said in a kind voice.

Bobby looked at his feet and fidgeted in the manner of all small children. "Eyes wonewy 'cause Papa gown."

"Where is your Papa Bobby?" The small boy began to tear up. "Come over here and give me a hug buddy, and tell me what happened."

Juan was typing away furiously on the keyboard as he spoke with Bobby. "What do you mean they have no one in charge of his pod yet. The oldest kid there is twelve!" The more information he got on what had happened the angrier he got. This boy's care was not what it should be. It was not coming clo-

se to the standards set by the U.N.I.T. or Family Clan Short of Vulcan. He was pissed and going to get to the bottom of it.

Bobby tears began to flow freely and he started to cry for real, but he grabbed Rambo in a fierce hug and began to tell him about it. "Mama and Papa Awways yewwed each odhew. Papa din' wige Mama dagin' hews medsin. Papa say id bad. Papa viggded widh dhe guy Mama ged medsin. Papa veww down de sdaiws. He nevew ged up. Mama veww sweep. My bwuddew god mad ad dhe guy. He huwded my bwuddew bad. Misdew Pedews camed ovej dhen man wan away. Misdew Pedews cawwed vone an peopwe came. Daged my bwodhew gone. Mama no waged up. I aww awone. I no see bwuddew." Bobby said this almost in one complete sentence and was in tears and sobbing by the end. If Juan hadn't been so used to the little ones from when he and Jorry hung out with them he would have been clueless.

Juan typed into his terminal again. "Daileass you speak for Rambo and transport me outside his room now!" Seconds later Jaun was standing outside the room. He took a few seconds to calm himself. He didn't want to scare the kid. He stepped into the pod.

"Rambo. There you are. You shouldn't wander off like that. I was scared I lost you, or you had been kidnapped." Juan was smiling, and trying to resist his desire to hug his missing friend, but he was more concerned about Bobby right now.

"I am alright Juan. My new friend Bobby just took me to his room because he thought I was lonely. He didn't mean to steal me," Rambo said as Bobby's eyes got wide. Bobby was sure he was in trouble and going to get a spanking.

"Well if you vouch for him Rambo he must be a good kid." Juan held his hand out to the frightened little boy. "Hi. I'm Juan. Rambo is my buddy. I am so glad I didn't loose him."

Bobby was unsure what to do. Rambo suddenly spoke up. "Go on Bobby. He wants to shake your hand."

Bobby grabbed Juan's outstretched hand and blurted out. "Eyes sowwy. I din' mean sdeaw Wambo."

'Yep', Juan thought to himself, '*too cute*'. Juan picked the little boy up in his arms and gave him a big hug. "I know you didn't mean to steal him buddy. It's OK. I am not mad at you and you are not in any trouble. You know lets keep it a secret that Rambo can talk. Just between us OK?"

Bobby still wide eyed and a bit disoriented just nodded his head and settled into Juan's hug contentedly. Just then a door opened and a sleepy boy came into the common area.

"Bobby?!? What are you doing out of bed? I thought I told you to stay in your room."

"Sowwy Joey," Bobby said hiding his head in Juan's shoulder.

Then the boy addressed Juan. "Who the hell are you and why are you in our Pod?!?"

"I am Juan Casey, Joey, and that is my friend Rambo that Bobby is hugging right now. Looks like he got up and wandered into my Pod and took him because he was lonely. Just so you know, I am one of the guys in charge here." Juan extended his hand to the boy.

"You're younger than me. How can you be in charge?" The boy was giving him a disbelieving look.

"Daileass. Can you inform Joey here about just who I am please?"

"Certainly Juan. Joey, this is Captain Juan Casey. He and his brothers Colonel Adam Casey, Lieutenant Colonel Chang Casey, Captain Jory Casey, and Major William Casey make up the members of the original U.N.I.T. They are in charge of the Special Forces Division of Family Clan Short of Vulcan. Juan is specifically in charge of the Heavy Weapons Section of the U.N.I.T."

"Oh. They told us about you when we first got here. Uhm. Nice to meet you," Joey said as he gave Bobby's hair a tussle. He looked up at Juan again.

Joey gave Juan a questioning look. "Uhm. We really don't have time for explanations right now." Joey shrugged, but still seemed curious about it. "I'll tell you what Joey, how about you come with me, Rambo, and Bobby and I will show you what this little kid can get done."

"Its OK. You don't have to tell me if you don't want to." Joey was looking at the floor when he said this.

"No Joey. It's not OK. I don't mind telling you, but I don't have a lot of time right now. We have a mission, and I have to see to this little guy first. So tell me what is up with Bobby here wandering around alone?" Juan was trying not to sound as pissed off as he was. He didn't want to scare this kid. Joey seemed like a good person, and Bobby seemed to like him.

"He goes to bed before the rest of us. I read him a story and then I go back to my room when he falls asleep. Well, he misses his big brother, but we can't get anyone to let Bobby see him. He keeps having nightmares, and he has wandered to other pods several times." Bobby for his part had his face pressed tightly against Rambo.

"I see. Well I will get that taken care of right now. Daileass where is Bobby's brother being taken care of?" Juan was not happy. This boy should never have been kept from his brother and someone should be helping him to deal with this.

"He is in our medical facility right here Juan. Room 12D, he has been moved from the Critical Care Unit for quite some time now, and his charts indicate that he has been in a condition to receive visitors for several days. In fact as soon as he has a Pod assignment, he can leave the medical section"

"Thanks Daileass. Joey, why don't you come with me and Bobby to see his brother? I am sure they can't wait to be reunited."

"Uhm. Sure, whatever you say. There is not really anything I can do about it anyway if I did object."

Juan looked at the young man for a moment before replying. "No Joey. You are dead wrong. That is not how things are supposed to work around here. When I get Bobby here settled, I would like to talk with you, but only if you are willing. I will not force you to, or anything like that."

"Uh... Well. OK, I Guess," Joey said as he looked at Juan with his confusion clearly visible on his face.

"Thanks Joey. Trust me, you will be happy with what happens after we talk. Lets go. I want you to meet my boyfriend. Watch what a little kid can get done!" Juan took the boy by the shoulder with a hand and looked him in the eye. Joey could feel the confidence radiating from this kid. His eyes were different colors.

"You ready to see your brother Bobby." The little boy just nodded his head as he clutched Rambo tightly. Juan was beginning to be concerned about getting Rambo back, but he had to take care of Bobby now. He would deal with the Rambo situation later. "Lets get to work Joey!"

A half hour later, and a serious dressing down of the people in charge of medical, Bobby was laying in the hospital bed next to his older brother. He was asleep. Juan, Joey, and Koth, who had joined them while Juan was dressing down the medical staff for not setting up family visits, were talking with Bobby's older brother William.

"Papa used to fight with Mama about the drugs a lot. The last time that guy came over Papa had a bad fight with him. He gave mom something that made her really sick. Mama wouldn't wake up and Papa was really angry. The guy tried to leave, but Papa grabbed him at the top of the stairs. The guy hit Papa with something and Papa fell down the stairs. I got real mad at him and I tried to get him, but he beat me up real bad. Our neighbor, Old man Peters came out with his gun and the guy ran away."

"You are a fine warrior William. You have fought for the Honor of your family. You are as brave as any Klingon warrior." William had tears in his eyes, but the young Klingon's words brought a small smile to his face and his chest expanded with pride. Just minutes ago he was sure he would never see his little brother again but here he was. "Qu'raki, may I speak to you outside please." They excused themselves and left William and Joey talking about Bobby.

"What is it Teddy Bear?" Juan asked as he melted into Koth's eyes.

"What are your intentions regarding Bobby and William's situation?" Koth had an intensity in his eyes. "We must see to it that this type of situation does not continue. That boy is very brave. I also want the honor of hunting down the man who killed his parents. When we get back from our mission, we need to put something in place to keep this type of thing from happening."

Juan met Koth's gaze with a fire that was if anything more intense. "I already consider Bobby my 'little bro' Teddy Bear. I know just the place to have them stay. They will be very good for them. I have already asked Dailess to have them meet us here. They should already be on the way. What I found was that the U.N.I.T. members that were in charge of intake were called away, and the civilian side of things had not been set up to pick up where the U.N.I.T. left off. Actually as mad as I am I have to admit that the civies haven't done too badly under the circumstances. If anything this is our responsibility and our fault. I am one of the core members and a leader. I think it is time I did just that."

Koth smiled. He knew what his Qu'raki did already. He had joined him and Jory in their care of the little ones. They saw to it that the little ones were protected, had adventures, and knew that they were loved unconditionally. The G-Cats were also frequently involved with the care for the little ones. God help anyone who threatened them. It was very much like his family in the VSO. They both operated differently than Family Clan Short, but the truth was that when it came to family, they had more in common with Family Clan Short than was apparent at first glance.

About three minutes later a large black woman with humongous breasts, wearing a bright orange Hawaiian style mu mu, came striding up the hall. She was followed by an elderly black man, with salt and pepper hair that was high and tight. The woman completely ignored the nurse who tried to ask her what she was doing, and where she was going. She just held up her hand and gave her the look. The nurse sat back down at her desk, and looked offended. The man stopped and addressed the nurse.

"My name is Sam darlin'. You will have to forgive my Martha, Ma'am. She heard that there was a couple of little ones here that need a grandma and she is on a mission. No one can stand between her and a child in need of lovin'." He let out an infectious belly laugh. He gave the nurse a disarming grin and a wink. She blushed and said something about it being no problem at all.

"Where's my little Juany boy?" Martha exclaimed as she swept up to the couple in the hall. Juan blushed as she gathered him to her ample bosom. She turned to Koth. "Juany, who is this handsome young man?"

"Granma Martha, I want you to meet my Teddy Bear, Koth."

Martha's eyes lit up as she took Koth in her arms and crushed him to her chest. "I always knew Juany had good taste, you are quite a catch. If I was thirty years younger and single..." She gave Koth a wink and kissed him on his ridges. Koth was stunned. This elderly woman, was brash and outspoken. She reminded him of the Klingon women he had known. He found that he approved of her immediately. "Kothy boy, I would like you meet my husband Sam. You can call him Granpa ifn' you want." Koth winced at the name, it was so close to what his brother called him.

Koth was met by an elderly black man. He was obviously ex-military, his 'high and tight' salt and pepper hair gave it away. He shook hands with Koth, and gave him a warm hug and pat on the back. "It is nice to see someone has tamed the wild boy's heart."

"It is my pleasure to meet you sir. My Qu'raki speaks very highly of you both. We have need of someone to comfort our little brothers. They have been separated and caught up in red tape that we don't find appropriate for our care. We feel that you will provide what these boys so desperately need."

The four spent the next several minutes outside the room discussing the situation. Finally Juan made his way back to Bobby and William. They woke the sleeping little boy up. At first all he did was clutch Rambo, which made Jaun's stomach do flip flops. Then the little boy remembered his big brother and threw his arms around him. William let out a gasp of pain, but was all smiles at his little brother.

Juan explained that he wanted William and Bobby to be placed in a pod together, and he had the perfect place for them. On cue, Martha swept into the room. A few hugs, a Werther's® Originals candies which she made a big production out of not letting Sam eat because he had to watch his diet, and hugging the boys to her ample breasts was all it took to get the boys calling them Granma and Granpa.

Juan explained that they had to go because they needed to do some things before they went on a mission to save some boys. Juan asked Joey to join them, because he thought that he would find what Juan had in mind interesting. Joey for his part agreed. He was bemused, and wanted to see what craziness the slightly younger boy would cause.

As they made to leave Bobby called out to Juan. "Yous gods dage Wambo. He needses yous."

Juan went up to the little boy and took his buddy from him. He gave Bobby a fierce hug and a kiss on the cheek. "You be a good boy little bro. I love you and your brother."

Juan exited the room and took off at a run. Once outside the hospital area he stopped. Koth and Joey found him clutching Rambo and sobbing. Koth immediately took Juan in his arms and held him. Joey felt awkward. He didn't know what to do. He laid his hand tentatively on Juan's shoulder and suddenly found himself in a three way hug as Juan sobbed.

Forty Five minutes later Juan and Koth were introducing Joey to a man named Ken, his three sons, two other boys named Chris and Gordan, and a wild long haired blond man with a long mustache named Terry Gene Bollea. Joey could not believe how his day had turned out. This morning he was helping Bobby change his urine soaked sheets, and now...

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Friday 0400 (4:00 AM)

Adam was sitting in his office trying hard to concentrate on the planning of this mission, and not on his brother. He had no idea right now if Chang was even still alive or not. That was probably the worst part. He was calmer after his talk with Isamu, and the planning they had started after that, but he was still worried. Adam was told by Rainer, one of Logan's clones, that Logan had ordered a satellite moved to cover the base that Chang was attacking. While it also had the sensor dampening fields that the other base had, they could tell just from the pictures that something was going on there. The fires and explosions told him that Chang and Korris were definitely making a fight out of it, but...

"... so in other words, we don't have shit for helicopters." Will said, and Adam had to shake his head.

"Sorry bro... I zoned out for a second. What was that?" Adam said, without any of his normal energy,

Will looked around at everyone seated in Adam's office, his brothers and his parents; by now, they all included Jason and Koth as their immediate family. They all had a very sympathetic look on their faces as they watched Adam still struggling with everything that was going on. Before Will could repeat what he had just said, a knock came at the door.

Adam jumped to his feet, while calling out, "COME IN!"

Adam's face fell when he saw it was Uncle Mike and Uncle Tom. He had been hoping it was someone with news on Chang. Mike came into the room, and went immediately to Adam, pulling him into a hard hug. When Adam broke the hug, Mike stepped back and put both hands on the boy's shoulders. "I heard about Chang. He chose the only course he could, and I think you know that."

Adam slowly nodded while tears fell from his eyes. He was sure he was cried out, but obviously he wasn't. "I... I know. I am so proud of him... but it still hurts so much."

"I know it does, but think of it this way, at least now we'll have someone who might be able to control Pablo." Mike said with a small smile playing on his lips.

Adam couldn't help but laugh at that, even through his tears. "I don't know who to feel more sorry for." For once Adam was hoping that the young foul mouthed angel would show up. Adam was sure that he would know if Chang was dead or not. But so far Pablito hadn't shown up, so Adam still had no word.

"I know it probably won't make you feel better, but I brought you a present," Mike said as he reached his hand out, and Tom placed a large leather sack in it. Mike then handed it to Adam, who looked inside. He reached in, and slowly withdrew the head of General Adams.

Adam couldn't help but smile, and he looked at the horrified look on the General's face. Finally they had been able to put a stop to this madman's games, and save countless more people from having to go through what they had. Everyone in the room, including Janet and Joe, had looks of relief, and even some pleasure from some of the boys.

As Adam put the head back in the sack, Tom spoke up. "You know, I think that might look good mounted on your mantel piece, Adam."

"You know, I may just do that. You know anyone that would be willing to stuff a human head?" Adam asked as he cinched the bag closed, and placed it in the corner of his office.

"You know, I just might know someone who would do it. I'll talk to him if you want," Tom said as he patted Adam on the shoulder.

"We'll see after this mission is over with," Adam responded, then motioned for his two uncles to sit.

"Sorry, Adam, I have to get a few things seen to." Tom said as he started to turn and walk from the room. "Before I go, though, is there ANYTHING that the US Military can do to help? If you need it, I can have five thousand troops ready to go in two hours."

Adam smiled but shook his head. "Thanks Uncle Tom, but this is a family issue. When we joined the Clan, we gained a huge family, so we got all the help we need." Adam took a deep breath, then picked up a data padd. "However, we could use some equipment and supplies. We haven't recovered from Saturday yet."

"Anything you need, you'll have," Tom said emphatically.

Adam nodded, then got up out of his chair, and moved over to Tom. He gave him a big hug, then handed him the Padd. "This is our wish list."

Tom took a moment to look it over, his eyes getting bigger and bigger as he read. A few of the kids in the room couldn't help but chuckle a bit as Tom kept reading. After scrolling through the list, he looked up to Adam and sighed. "I can do this... on one condition."

Adam's eyebrows rose at that, but Tom continued. "The condition is this... I'm going with you."

Adam's eyes filled with tears one more time as he launched himself at Tom and wrapped him in a big hug. "Thank you, Uncle Tom... Thanks."

Tom patted Adam on the back while struggling to breathe. "I couldn't do anything less for my favorite nephews. Now... I need to get working on this. I'll be back soon." Adam let go of Tom and nodded. Tom turned and walked out of the room.

At the same time, Mike stood up. "I better go check on Sammy. See what trouble he's caused while I was away," he said while chuckling.

Jory jumped to his feet. "Uncle Mike! Aren't you going to at least tell us what you did to Adams?"

Mike turned around and looked the young boy in the eyes. He saw the Juan had also sat forward, a look of anticipation on his face. He took a deep breath, walked over to Jory and pulled the young boy into a hug. "I don't think you need to know all the details, but I will say this. I live by the Golden Rule... and General Adams died by that same rule." He then turned around and walked out of the room.

Almost everyone there had a shocked look on their faces, while both Jory and Juan looked confused. Finally Jory looked to Adam. "What's the Golden Rule?"

Adam finally was able to smile as he spoke softly. "Do unto others, as you would have done unto you."

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Friday 0430 (4:30 AM)

"Adam," Jason said softly ten minutes later as he came into the office, "I have just gotten a report from Ollie on the disposition and numbers of the targets. You don't have enough people. Not even when you were at full strength did you really have enough."

"I know, I just got the same report from the Chipmunks," Adam said slowly as he leaned back in his chair. "I am going to need help."

"Yes," Jason nodded in agreement. "Now, the VSO are not meant to be front line, but we have been trained in it, and are able to do it. I can get in over twenty-six companies between the Dragon and Sehlat – all black level operatives. And if you can do your thing at the 'front door', we can land with our two ships and slip inside those buildings. We can clear inside while you..."

"Take the heat outside and make lots of noise – we can do that," Adam said, his face becoming feral. "But remember, you need to move fast, for General Adams left orders to destroy the 'evidence' if the base is attacked."

"We move very fast. We'll be inside and with the kids before the guards are," Jason said seriously.

Adam nodded, his grin getting wider, "Great, then you can snipe from inside once you have the place locked down."

"Riti will be in his element," Jason agreed, his own grin now matching Adam's. "Glad you approve. Here's Sehlat Lead 1, the Howl of the Sehlat, Division Commander Sellik."

As Adam stood up, Sellik entered the room, followed by his large female Sehlat companion. "Greetings, Adam Casey," Sellik intoned formally as he raised his hand in the Vulcan salute. "I believe we have an interesting mission to plan for."

"Indeed we do, Commander," Adam smiled as he gestured to the chairs before him. "Indeed we do."

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Friday 0445 (4:45 AM)

"Okay, I think we're ready." Logan said as he looked around at the group of people standing around the room that housed Daileass's server farm. Or at least what used to be a huge server farm. Now it had barely half of the stuff it did before. Logan looked over to Javyk who was standing next to the main power switch. "You sure this is going to work?"

The purple eyed boy just shook his head in disgust, and flipped the switch. All around them lights came on, and the sound of computers booting up could be heard. Almost everyone there held their breath to see what would happen. Every single one of the Logan clones had complained bitterly about the link to their brother being cut off for the last hour as Daileass had been shut down and Ark had been controlling everything.

Suddenly all of the clones clutched their heads and fell to their knees as Daileass's voice came out of the speakers, shouting out in pain. "HOLY SHIT!!!! This fucking hurts! Hold on a minute!"

Suddenly the boys on the floor who had been moaning in pain stopped, and started to get back to their feet. Before Logan could ask what happened, Daileass came back over the speakers. "GOD DAMNED, THAT HURT!"

"WHAT?!?!?!" Logan asked with concern written all over his face.

Daileass started chuckling as he came back over the speakers in the room. "Talk about sensory overload. These computers were dumping info into me way too fast. I had to get in there and tweak the programming to slow it down a bit. Now I am re-routing information so it gets processed at a speed that my brain can handle. I hate to say this, Logan, but my matrix couldn't keep up with these Trinary computers."

Logan's jaw was on the floor. From the reaction of his brothers, and what Daileass had said at first, he was expecting the worst. Before he could say anything, Daileass laughed and kept going. "I can't believe how much more power are in these things. I mean I discussed this with Ark, but I never thought it could be like this. God damned, I feel good."

Javyk came over and slapped Logan on the shoulder, while the clones were all chatting with each other about the upgrade. "See, I told you it would all work out. Now if you'll excuse me, I have a lot of work to do."

Logan couldn't do anything other than nod, but Daileass was right on top of it. "Javyk, since you were so nice as to give me these teleporter systems, I would be honored if you would allow me to be the one to send you back to Orlando."

"By all means." Javyk said with a rare smile. The next thing anyone knew, Javyk and everyone else that came with him vanished.

"Now Logan... you have to get everyone equipped with the subvocals. I'll take care of the rest." Everyone could hear the grin on Daileass's face at that point. The little boy trapped in the positronic matrix had new toys, and like all kids, he wanted to play with them.

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Friday 0745 (7:45 AM)

Adam had chosen to spend the last hour alone in his office. It had been almost two hours since the last time they were able to see anything happen at the Genesis base that Chang and Korris had assaulted. Fires were still burning, but nothing had happened there in the last hour and a half, at least nothing that they could see from the satellite. He was beginning to lose hope that he would ever see his brother alive again. Silently, he started to weep again. Chang meant so much to him, that he didn't know how he would go on without his brother. His second in command... His rock.

Very few people know how close he and Chang actually are. Logan was always there to help him when he needed it, but Chang was there when he needed guidance. Chang was more than just a noble and honorable warrior; he was one of the wisest people he knew, not to mention a master tactician. Adam might be better at large scale engagements, but Chang was unsurpassed in small team combat. That was the one thing that kept any hope alive in Adam's mind that maybe... just maybe; Chang would be able to pull off the impossible.

"Adam?" Daileass's voice came over the speakers. Adam looked up, expectantly.

"Go ahead!" He said in a rushed voice.

"I'm sorry Adam... This is not about Chang." The AI's voice was full of regret. He wanted nothing more than to be able to give Adam the news he was waiting for.

Adam slumped, and sat back in his chair. "Okay... what is it?"

"Sir, there are some people outside the Command Center that wish to speak with you."

Adam couldn't help but sigh. "Daileass... I'm not really in the mood to talk to anyone right now. Can they come back later?"

Daileass didn't say anything for a moment, and Adam thought that maybe he would be left alone. But that wasn't to be the case. "Adam. I am asking you as a brother... please talk to them."

Adam closed his eyes and signed. He really would have liked to say no, but he knew he couldn't. Not when he was asked like that. He nodded his head, knowing Dailess could see him, then got up out of his chair. The door opened even before he got there, and he walked out into the controlled chaos that was the command center.

Logan started to rise out of the Command Chair when Adam raised his hand and headed for the door. Logan never missed a beat, and went back to issuing orders to his brothers, and the rest of the intel team.

When Adam walked out of the door, well, he wasn't sure what he was expecting, but this definitely was not it. Adam took a moment, and quickly counted the seventy three pairs of eyes that looked back at him. The oldest of them were about seventeen... the youngest could have been a twin of one of the boys Adam knew very well. Mark Little. Adam took a moment to get over his shock, then opened his mouth. "Okay... what can I do for all of you?"

One of the kids, about fifteen, stepped forward. "Uhh... Sir? Well, I know you don't know all of us, but we were all brought here in the last few days. You may not know this, but we've all started to lean on each other to try and make it through everything that happened to us. But... but we all know that it was you and your family that gave us a place to finally be able to feel safe."

The boy looked very nervous, and glanced back to his fellows; most of them nodding at him to continue. He turned back to Adam and took another nervous deep breath. Adam knew this was something the boy had to do, so he waited patiently. "... I guess what I am saying... what we wanted to say was... Thank you."

Adam couldn't help but smile. This is what he and his brothers had worked so hard to build, and this simple thank you... this was all he needed to hear to know they had done the right thing. "You're welcome. I am glad we could help you guys."

They all nodded, and one of them pushed the spokesman a little, and Adam knew he wasn't done yet. "Well... We also heard a bit of what's going on, and what you guys are planning. And... well... we wanna help?"

Adam's eyes rose a bit in surprise. He was not expecting that. He recovered quickly though and looked at everyone there. They all had the same look of determination in their eyes. The same look that he saw in so many other kids' eyes. Most of them of course; he would never be able to look in the eyes again. Adam knew what he should do, knew what Mark Little would want him to do, but he just didn't have the time.

"I'm sorry, guys, there just isn't the time to get you trained to the point that you could help. If I let you guys go with us, it would be suicide for all of you." Adam saw most of their faces drop, and he quickly went on. "When we get back, I will make sure that all of you get trained in whatever you want, but for now, the best we can do is have you guys help with..."

"ADAM!" A voice came over all the speakers in the base. Whoever was calling him simply hit the all call button. "Adam! You need to get up to the flight deck right now. There's a bunch of armored kids walking in... with the bodies of.. MY GOD.. with the bodies of Chang and Korris!"

Adam's eyes flew open wide, and he launched himself down the hall. Most of the kids barely having time to get out of his way, the rest just hit the ground, and Adam jumped over them. Behind him he heard many other running feet, but he was too focused on the door in front of him; the one that lead to the hanger deck.

Before it was even halfway opened, Adam was through it, and running at full speed to the other side of the hanger, where a group of kids were gathered around two forms lying on the floor.

He pushed his way through the crowd and stopped dead at what he saw before him. Both Chang and Korris were fucked up badly. Neither one of them had any armor left... just tatters. Adam knew from the style of what tatters remained that it was the Vulcan armor Chang had received the day before. But there wasn't enough of it left to cover more than an inch of the boy's body. There were countless bullet holes in both boys, and even more cuts, scrapes and gashes. Adam was frozen in shock. He never thought he would see Chang or Korris like this.

He sucked in his breath further when he saw that Korris' right arm was missing from his elbow down; cut clean off. Chang was missing an ear, and it looked like most of his left foot had been blown off. He struggled to not throw up.

Adam couldn't imagine what it would take to make these two warriors be in this bad of a shape. He was jarred back to life as he got pushed out of the way by the medical team coming in. He was lost in a fog as he heard Gordan, the doctor that ran the hospital ward, scream out for more help. Chang's pulse was fading fast, and he wasn't breathing.

Adam heard the faint but steady pulse tone from the life pack that was just attached to Korris. "FLAT-LINE!!! Does anyone here know anything about Klingon Anatomy?!?!?"

Jason ran over and pushed the doctor to one side, and started hammering on Korris' chest in a strange, alien rhythm. The tone started to beep again, but it was erratic. "His heart is lower, and to the right," the Welsh boy sobbed as the doctor took over.

Jason collapsed back against Adam's legs and just cried as he saw Korris' eyes flicker. "Hang in there... please, blood-brother... hang in there... I can't lose you..."

Adam fell down to his knees next to Jason as he heard Logan's frantic voice. "ARK! We need medical help here now! Can you teleport to your medbay?"

Adam heard Ark's voice and could even hear the sorrow in it. <I am sorry, Logan, but because of what they are, I cannot help them. They are too far gone for anything I can do.> Adam only heard Logan sob in response to what Ark had said. Then he heard another voice join the mob. It was his mother's.

Adam looked up with hope as he saw one of the kids get pushed aside as Janet came running in next to Chang. She also had tears in her eyes, but she couldn't let one of her boys go without a fight. "Start CPR and get a med kit in here NOW!" He heard her say as she started to pump on the boy's chest. "Get me a Defibrillator, and all the damned Cardiac Drugs we have. I am not going to let him die!" She said the last part more to herself than to anyone else.

Juan and Koth arrived at this moment, winded from the hell for leather run they had made to get there.

"Kor..." Koth whispered as he slid to a stop before the horror in front of him.

"I... I can't keep his heart going," Doctor Gordan spat out in frustration and sorrow as he worked feverishly on Korris' prone form. "We're losing him!"

"CHANG! Don't you DARE die on me! Don't you fucking DARE!" Janet screamed at the same moment as the equipment hooked up to both boys started to register flat line again.

Koth was at Korris' head an instant later. Pushing the doctor away hard, he held open his brother's fast fading eyes and started to roar at the heavens.

He started the Call.

A presence appeared next to him. Austin. The teen knelt and also started to roar.

And so did Jason, although each roar was hitching in his chest with his sobs.

Juan was doing the same thing for Chang, holding his eyes open; he might not be Klingon, but he was bonded to one, and come hell or high water, Juan was going to make sure that Sto'Vo'Kor and Kahless knew of his warrior brother's death. He threw his head back, and joined his crying roar in with Koth's. Moments later, Adam joined in, then Logan, then the rest of Chang's brothers. All crying, but all warning those in Sto'Vo'Kor that two warriors were coming.

Janet never stopped working. "Time... I just need more time. God DAMNIT I will not lose another!" she whispered to herself as she frantically kept trying. "WHERE'S THE GOD DAMNED DRUGS?!?!!" She screamed out looking around; never once did she stop trying to save one of her sons. She couldn't.

A massive thrumming filled the air, and a blue Police Box filled the space near to the massed group of people. Curses of shock and surprise were drowned out in hopeful wonder as the Tardis appeared, and the doors opened to let out little Joel Short, the Doctor and Levi.

"Did someone say Ti... oh... oh no..." the Doctor whispered as he looked down at the two dying warriors.

Frantically, while the roars of the children continued, the Doctor pulled out a sonic device and started scanning. "I... noooo, it's too far. They've gone too far.... Levi?"

As the Doctor turned to the small Mikyvis, he saw that it was hopeless. Levi's eyes were running tears, and he was shaking his head. "I can't. I see them, Galli. They're leaving... they're leaving and I can't stop them..." the boy sobbed.

Joel fell to his knees. "I WILL NOT LOSE YOU!" he yelled, but nothing happened. Nothing. No tremor, no thrill up his spine... nothing.

"Destiny cannot be changed this time," the Doctor whispered as he, too, broke down in tears.

Koth stopped roaring as Korris' eyes went blank. Juan and the others stopped too, for Chang's eyes were the same.

Dead. Both dead.

"I... I cannot go on without you, brother... I can't live in Dishonor alone. Not even with my heart, my Juan," Koth wept as he reached for a broken piece of his brother's Bat'leth that was still clutched in his brother's unmarred good hand. As he took it into his hands, he raised his eyes to Juan and, through his tears, saw Juan nodding back at him.

"Sorry, Adam," Juan whispered as he too reached for the hanzo sword that lay masterless by Chang's hand. "I'm Sorry..."

Janet screamed "NO!!!" and tried to lunge for Juan, but she was not fast enough. As both boys plunged the blades into their own hearts, with everyone else watching in horror, a voice was heard.

"Kahless has Heard the Call - and Kahless now Answers the Call. I have come for these four True Warriors; the last two of my House and their two bonded. All four I claim as my own. For two are my children by right of Blood. And all four are now my *Sons* by right of Honor."

As both Koth and Juan toppled over dead to lie upon the cooling bodies of their dead brothers, everyone else moved back from the seven foot tall Klingon that had appeared in their midst, and who was walking towards the horror in the middle of them all. The grieving mother would not stop working, no matter what, though. Janet moved Juan off of Chang, and was frantically trying to save them both.

His armor shone as the dawn, and the ancient Mek'leth blades on his hips spat light back at everyone, as did the two D'k tahg knives strapped to his boots. The huge, old and wondrous Bat'leth in his hands sang as he twirled it through the air, and the two crossed Yan straight-blades rode high on his back.

"Kahless has come for his sons - for the Mighty Fallen in Battle, and the Mighty of Heart not willing to be parted," intoned the greatest Warrior-General to ever walk with mortal kind:

"I, Kahless the Unforgettable, am here..."

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### **Author's Notes:**

I think it would be wisest if I neglected to put authors comments in here, and just got back to writing. Probably safer for me that way. LOL

Lord Roland

### ***Co-Author's notes:***

Evil? Us? Naaaaaaa!

Hehehehe....

Iluvantir

Editors Notes:

Ah Crap!!!! Another cliff hanger!!! I worked so hard to get to the end so I could find out what happened and now this!!! I am one upset Pupper Dog!!!!

Well, Roland has done it again. What a great chapter. We know a little more about Isamu and some idea that he has plans for or with the boys.

WOW, Daileass has an even better personality than I thought! He just got one heck of an upgrade too!!! I just wonder how many toys they did give him because I bet he really wants to show off now!!!

So, what in the heck happened over there at the base? How will we ever find out? What really happened to Chang and Korris? What will Adam do now? We just finished one funeral, now we are going to have to have another for these four boys. Damn, Juan just got himself together and got a boyfriend. This is just too much for one old Dog to handle. How about we all put Roland in the Dog House over this one!!!!

Thanks Roland and I can't wait for the next chapter! SO SEND IT NOW!!!

Boxerdude

Darryl's Notes: I'm with Boxerdude, That was quite annoying, to say the least. We have lost so many people, and all of the people here have been through so much. This really sucks.

Darryl AKA The Radio Rancher

## Chapter 13

"Damn it, get me more epi" Janet almost screamed as she kept pushing on Chang's chest. "He's maxed out", somebody replied. "Then get me...God...get me 10 cc's of Adrenaline and 3 of bicarb", she yelled, never stopping - deliberately ignoring the approaching form of Kahless.

"Janet...he's..." Doctor Gordan started to say when Janet turned on him fiercely and screamed.

"Don't you dare say it, don't you DARE! Come on, come on baby." she cried the tears running down her face, "Don't give up, you can do it." She begged as some were watching her, but most had their eyes on Kahless. Those who were watching felt their hearts breaking for the loss of their brothers but also for their mother, and what this was doing to her.

"Mom..." Adam tried, only for her to snarl "NO! Where are those damned drugs!" and kept pounding.

"They're gone, you have to let them go" Adam said tears running freely down his face.

Janet froze, her head bowing briefly before looking up at her son and saying softly "I can't!" each word torn from deep within her.

"You have to." Adam repeated with the same pain heard.

Janet just looked at him for a long moment, before looking back at the boys beneath her, taking a ragged breath, but everyone was shocked when her head came up once again, focusing on the apparition now before her.

There was a burning fire there now, a rage, unlike anyone had ever seen from her or anyone before.

If any had asked Khan or the other cat kids, only they could probably have answered the question of what everyone was seeing at that moment, a sight few ever lived to speak of, that of a momma bear protecting her cubs.

With one word that fire exploded outward as that momma stood up between heaven itself and those same cubs, screaming "NOOOO!"

Kahless sheathed his Bat'leth as he stood before the grieving and angry woman. He looked into her eyes, which were filled with pain, sorrow and rage, but saw a fierce determination there, as well. He was about to say something, when Janet quickly reached over, drew the sword off of Adam's back, pushed him away, and while uttering a savage cry, lashed out at Kahless.

Kahless easily stopped her arm in mid swing by grabbing her wrist. IT shocked Janet so much that the sword dropped from her hand clattering to the floor. Kahless looked her up and down... "You would DARE stand before me... HUMAN?!?!"

"YOU'RE DAMNED RIGHT, BUB!" Janet spat back, "you can't have my boys!"

He smiled, reached out and grasped her shoulders, and lifted her up so that he could kiss her forehead. "Warrior Mother, strong of spirit - steel your heart, Daughter, for I come to aid, not to take," he whispered to her face, so that only she heard. He then placed her to one side, and moved to kneel by the four prone boys.

"I cannot allow the last of my House to fall, nor can I allow them to remain in Dishonor forever. No-one living may Dishonor my House, and no-one dead can. Rise, Korris! Rise, Koth! Rise, Chang! Rise, Juan! The Voice of Kahless Commands it; the Blood of Qo'nos Demands it; the Honor of the Empire Wills it. Arise!"

An angry red-purple glow surrounded all four bodies, and the light from it grew brighter and brighter.

"When Kahless Calls, you come! When Kahless Commands, you rise!"

As the glow grew to a level of brightness that made even the Doctor and Levi cover their eyes, a chorus of loud battle cries started to build.

"Sto-Vo-Kor sends you home! Sto-Vo-Kor grants you glory! Sto-Vo-Kor does NOT Call for you yet! Arise!"

The battle cries and shouts, and songs and chants in Klingon built and built, until the very ground beneath their feet trembled. The sky started to split, as lightning hammered into the ground just outside of the hanger bay doors. The fury of the Elements started to spill out from 'beyond', as four great spirits were returned.

The bright glow was still there, and the ground still heaved as those spirits came through the doors - and the cries of wonder from those who could only just make them out added a counterpoint to the still on-going roars from all the Dead Klingon Warriors in Sto-Vo-Kor.

They were Spirits filled with honor, justice, glory of battle, and the most powerful thing of all:

Love!

They were the four brothers just departed... then, as they merged with the glow around the four bodies before Kahless...

"I live, Great Father," came Korris' voice, "and I answer your Command! What do you will of me?"

"I live, Great Father," Koth's voice joined in a second later, "and I answer your Command! What do you will of me?"

"I live, Great Father," Chang added immediately after, "and I answer your Command! What do you will of me?"

"I live, Great Father," came the now expected voice of Juan, "and I answer your Command! What do you will of me?... and can I make them suffer first, or is that going too far?"

"Juan..." Joel giggled happily, brushing the tears from his eyes. "My cuddly Juan!"

Janet broke down sobbing, "My boys... m...my boys..."

"Children of Kahless," the huge Klingon said as everyone saw four figures rise within the now slightly muted glow. "Stand Ready for My Commands."

Then he too entered the glow. All that could be made out was that the four smaller bodies seemed completely fine. Those injuries on Chang and Korris were gone completely.

"Armor from Armor, made as what you once wore. All the benefits of two worlds," Kahless said as the four figures before him bulked out suddenly.

"Korris - Eldest of my House. My Bat'leth is now returned to the World of the Living. Bear it with honor," he added as he handed one of the figures his great blade.

"Koth - Youngest of my House. My Mek'leth are now returned to the World of the Living. Bear them with honor," he said more softly to the small boy at his larger brother's side.

"Chang - Bonded of my House, Adopted by my Blood. My Twin Yan are now yours. They return to the World of the Living. Bear them with honor," he said reverently as he handed the Asian boy his twined straight blades.

Then, finally: "Juan - Bonded of my House, Adopted by my Blood. My Twin D'k tahg are now yours. They return to the World of the Living. Bear them with honor." The last figure reached to receive the Klingon knives.

"My Command - Regain your Honor. Fulfill the Prophecy, and Ascend the Throne of Kahless:"

"Before the Throne shall they stand,

The Great Hall of Kahless shall tremble;

Bound by oaths and power not known,

Four boys shall call and assemble."

"Ancient Weapons shall be returned,

Eyes of Fire shall blaze and see;

Honor and Battle shall fill the Land

When my Children return there for me..."

"I claim you as my own. My blood is bound to Earth, and Earth's Blood is bound to mine. Klingon all shall you be; Mind-Walkers all shall you be; Beginnings all shall you be."

Then, suddenly - Kahless was gone. The glow was gone. The rumbling ground was calm.

And, where all that had been, stood four boys in Klingon armor. Two - Korris and Koth - looked much as ever, but their eyes were shining golden blue. Chang and Juan, however...

They were now Klingon... with golden blue shining eyes, and just slightly softer ridges...

"We are the Sons of Kahless... HEAR OUR ROAR!" They roared in unison as they raised their weapons high...

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Amongst the chaotic welcoming back of the boys, Chang searches out his father's face. He finds Isamu looking at him with tears streaming down his face. Their eyes locked and Chang made his way toward the man who had shaped his life and made it possible for him to be where he is today. They stood looking at each other when Chang was within an arm's reach. Suddenly Isamu enveloped Chang in a bear hug, and crushed him to his chest. After a moment he spoke.

"My son, I am gladdened that you have returned to your family. You are my heart."

Chang began to respond. "Father, I..."

He was interrupted by his father. "Son, your honor is my honor. Never doubt that. I understand your decision, and I will always support what your heart tells you must be."

"Father, I am glad that you are here. Will you meet my partner, Korris?"

"Of course, my son."

Chang turned to find Korris already at his side. After being pulled in for a serious kiss that Chang was sure he didn't want his dad watching, he then grinned and turned back to Isamu. "Father, this is my Bonded: Korris, son of Tanos of the Klingon Empire."

"I am very honored to meet you Korris, son of Tanos, the warrior that has captured my son's heart. I am Isamu Takamura, Blade Master." Isamu said. He gripped the young warrior in the traditional fashion and gave him a head butt.

Korris looked impressed and honored. "I did not know humans knew of our customs, outside of the Division, that is. You honor me, Blade Master..."

"That's funny!" Koth giggled from behind them. "A Blade Master and 'Blademaster'... hehe..."

Korris half smiled, reached behind himself and pulled his little brother and Juan around to stand before him. "This is my little brother, Koth - Mek'leth Master... or Koth-boy if you want to tease him, Master Takamura."

"NuqneH tlhIngan maH! Cha! Koth!" Isamu greeted Koth in perfect Klingon as he gripped his arms and delivered a head butt. Juan giggled as he watched the man who taught him so much surprise him yet again. "I am honored to meet the warrior who could tame my wild son's heart."

Juan found himself blushing. Master had just called him 'son'. He was overwhelmed with emotions, and, not knowing what else to do, threw his arms around Isamu. He spoke with his face buried in Isamu's chest.

"Fath... Uh Master... "

"You may call me father if you so desire, my little warrior. For you boys are surely my family."

Juan for his part just squeezed Isamu tighter. For once, he didn't have a smart ass remark.

"He's so cute when he blushes," Koth said softly; tenderly. He wrapped himself around Juan's back as Master Takamura also pulled him in as well. "Thank you, Master. You honor me, too. I just hope that I can honor you one day," he said as he looked up at the man holding both himself and Juan close.

"You honor me every time you bring a smile to my son's face, Mek'leth Master. ...or should I say Koth-boy?"

Juan giggled as he said, "Wow, Teddy Bear, I didn't know that a Klingon could blush like that."

Koth's eyes got as big as saucers. "Qu'raki, not in front of everyone." The blush had now become even more obvious.

Chaos reigned for the next ten minutes as everyone needed to touch the four newly risen boys to make sure for themselves that they were alright. Many of them had to run their hands over the soft ridges that now adorned Chang and Juan's foreheads. Janet was probably the worst of them, not letting any one of the four boys very far from her grasp the entire time. Finally though, it was Adam's turn.

He had been hanging back, a smile on his face, the tears having dried a few minutes before, but the trail they took down his face still visible. Finally though, it was time.

Almost as if it had been ordained that way, the crowd broke, and Adam met Chang's eyes from a ways away. A large smile broke out on Chang's face, as he slowly walked to his older brother, His commander. Chang stopped a few feet away from Adam as silence descended over the assembled crowd.

"It is good to see you again brother." Chang spoke softly, but his voice still carried over the crowd. "I was afraid I never would." Adam nodded slightly, then stepped forward and pulled Chang into a bone crushing hug.

Adam would not let Chang go for almost a minute, not that Chang wasn't hugging back just as hard. Finally Adam loosened his grip on his brother, and with his head still next to Chang's ear, he spoke only loud enough for his bother to hear. "I'm glad you were able to regain your Honor... but if you ever do that again, I will personally go to Sto-Vo-Kor, and kick your little Klingon ass... you got me."

Chang stepped back, and with a cocky grin he could have only learned from either Juan or Pablito, said, "I would welcome the visit, but, remember who is the better warrior... elder brother."

Adam grinned and couldn't help but laugh as he clapped his brother on the back. Together they turned, and almost at the same time saw a small group of people standing by the hanger bay doors, all eight of them wearing full combat armor. Chang spoke softly once again to his brother. "Yes... we do need to deal with them. But I warn you, they are interesting, and just as, if not more, lethal than we are."

Adam's eyes raised as he looked questioningly at Chang. Chang simply nodded, the emotion that was playing on his face a few moments ago, now gone, and the old Chang had returned. Adam knew, simply from that, that this was going to be... interesting.

What heightened Adam's feeling that this would be "interesting" was the fact that the Doctor was busy examining the nails of one of his hands... and whistling tunelessly to himself... 'Well... this should be... exciting.' Adam thought to himself, as he and Chang started to walk towards the eight.

Juan followed closely behind Adam, a little passenger on his back - for Joel had decided that in order to keep his friend out of mischief he should become Juan's 'backpack'.

As they approached the eight figures, Adam started to notice a few things, first off, their helmets had very large protrusions in their head part. Much like what the Cats had, but much longer and narrower. Adam was starting to get a weird feeling about who these kids were. They were obviously kids, due not only to their size, but also to what Adam had been able to find out from the information on the base.

When they got closer, Adam could see that they all had tails, not the thin long ones like the cats, but these looked to be shorter, but thicker. He couldn't tell much more than this, as even the tails were in armor.

When they got to the eight armored figures, all of them went to attention, and saluted. However, it was plainly obvious that they were not saluting Adam, but Chang.

Chang just nodded towards Adam who had a slightly amused look on his face. "Just so you know, Adam is actually in charge here, not I." Chang spoke softly.

The lead figure bent his head down, removed his gloves, and slowly pulled off the helmet. Adam was slightly taken aback by what he saw. Werewolves, that was all Adam could think when he saw the face. They had canine ears and muzzles on a very human head. The muzzle was full of very serious looking teeth. The ears had large metal hoops of various sizes in them. He had no neck to speak of, and a large hump between the shoulder blades. Adam's thought was muscle, pure muscle. Their hands were similar to the G-cats, kind of a cross between human hands and paws with very formidable looking claws.

Adam was distracted from his thoughts as Amur Kahn, Thor, and Tyr all threw back their hoods. Suddenly the newcomers and the cats were both letting out low muted growls. A stare down had begun. Then Kahn put his hand up and the cats all became silent. He could be heard mumbling under his breath something about the base going to the dogs. Chang seeking to diffuse the tension between the P.A.C.K. and the G-Cats decided to say something.

"Bardolf, I would like you to meet my brothers Amur Kahn, Thor and Tyr, the G-Cats. My brothers, I would like you to meet the P.A.C.K. This is Bardolf, Ayame, Gunnolf, Makoce, Akela, AdoQhina, Okhmhaka and Accalia. Okhmhaka the youngest male member of the P.A.C.K. could be heard mumbling something about no one telling them there were pussy cats. The G-Cats and the P.A.C.K. continued to stare at each other.

Adam looked at all the new faces in front of him, four males, four females, all wolves, and obviously children. For a brief moment his shock at seeing them was overtaken by the anger he felt towards General Adams. However, he quickly let that go as now was not the time for anger.

Bardolf, the oldest looking boy of the P.A.C.K., around twelve, looked between Chang and Khan, "Uhh... Filtiarn... I mean no disrespect.. Alpha, but... your brothers are cats?!?!"

Before Chang could reply, Adam leaned in to him and spoke softly. "What did he just call you?"

Chang leaned in as well, speaking softly. "If I catch the mythical references, Filtiarn is a Celtic reference meaning 'Lord of the Wolves.' While Alpha is a bit obvious, however, why they would consider me their alpha... I am not sure."

Bardolf spoke up, causing both boys a bit of surprise as they did not think anyone could over hear what they had said. "Alpha, you are right on the reference, and you are Alpha because you are the strongest. You rescued us... well you and the Fenris. But when Freki and Luperca died to make sure we could get away, the P.A.C.K. lost its alpha male, and alpha female. It only makes sense that the two that rescued us become our Alphas." He took a moment and looked at their surprised faces, then grinned toothily. "These ears aren't just for looking good!" That got many laughs from everyone there.

Adam couldn't help but laugh along with everyone else. He finally looked over at Chang and said with a grin. "Why don't you take them down stairs and show them Pod 2A. I think that's still empty, and it will put them close enough to the rest of the active duty personnel."

Chang nodded, and motioned for the Wolves to follow him.

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Adam sighed, but with a grin, as he watched his brother lead the latest additions to the Unit, off to get rooms set up. He was just about to head back to the Command center when he saw the group that must have followed him from outside his office. Seventy three kids, who had offered to help, were now just milling about, but Adam saw something else. Two things actually, the first was that the group had grown... significantly. Doing a quick count, Adam realized they had over doubled in size.

The other thing he saw was the determination in all their eyes. He quickly sent his mind out, and read their surface thoughts. Every single one of them wanted to help. Somehow, some way, they wanted to help. He shook his head in disgust. He knew what they were feeling, and he couldn't help but be damned proud of them for wanting to help, but he couldn't do it. There was no way to pull off everything that they would need... not in time anyways.

He walked over to the group and they quieted down at his approach. All looking rather eager, and, most of all, determined back at him. Over one hundred and fifty kids stood there, abused, abandoned and without hope, and yet they stood there scared, even terror showing clearly in some faces, and offered to help.

Adam was impressed, and more he was touched by their show of love and support.

He couldn't imagine what it was taking them to stand up and do this, but it hit a place in his heart that he couldn't describe. His now misty eyes involuntarily sought out one boy in particular, the one who looked so much like Mark Little. and He found there that same look of determined love that he always remembered from Mark's eyes. It shook him to the core of his being.

As his gaze left him, went to the next one, and the next one after that, he met seventy five pairs of resolute determined looks directed solely on him. He knew this wasn't going to be easy, it wasn't going to be easy at all.

They hadn't been at CBB but mere days. Yet with all they'd been through they were here, now, standing up and willing to do whatever it took, whatever they could and for people they didn't know. Kids like they had been such a short time ago, kids who were scared, frightened, and hurt like so many of them had been just a few short days ago.

No, this wasn't going to be easy. Adam brought himself to attention as he turned to face them and snapped a salute.

"Hey guys. I know what you said before about wanting to help, and I know that those that are new to this group want to as well. Understand, I am eternally grateful that you would want to help out so many kids that you don't even know..." Adam was cut off by a kid in the back of the group shouting up to him.

"How many of us did you know before you rescued us?" Adam's eyes zeroed in on a short boy who was maybe nine or ten, who stood there almost defiantly.

He should have known even before his eyes met those sparkling green ones just who it would be.

Eyes which had seen more things than most adults had he could tell, eyes so much like another's and eyes filled with the same determination that other held as well.

Suddenly it almost seemed to be a blurring before him and another set of eyes was there, another form briefly superimposing itself over and with the one already there.

"Yes you should have" a very familiar voice said and Adam couldn't help but gasp "Mark" in disbelief as briefly two forms became one, a twinkling mixed into that gaze which was still staring back at him.

"How did you know my name?" the boy asked surprised as Adam just continued to stare at him, just one of them now, the twinkle gone but not the other which remained the same, the steely determination to do one thing, help.

"I know that you all want to do what we did, and I can't fault you for it. As a matter of fact, I am honored that you want to help, but the problem we have is simply time. We don't have the time to train you all to be able to go with us. Without that training, most of you would just be going to your deaths... we just don't have enough time." Adam was about to go on, until he heard a young boy's voice speak up from behind him.

"Time... did someone say Time?" The Doctor asked as he walked up next to Adam, patting him on the arm. "My dear child, we have all the Time in the world."

Adam looked questioningly at the boy, then looked where the Doctor was pointing. Back to the Tardis. Realization hit Adam. 'Of course... The Tardis...'

Of course, not everyone knew who or more importantly, what the small boy was. One of them spoke up. "What do you mean?"

"He means," the Doctor smiled, "that inside that box lies a world where you can train until Adam thinks you are ready - and *no* time will pass out here, or very little."

One of the little kids present held up a hand, "Ummm... how will we all fit?"

The Doctor grinned and pressed a button on his funny looking wrist-watch. "Tardis, do you have the 'level' ready?"

{Of course. You should know better than to ask by now, Gallifrey.}

"Okay, okay! Sheesh... open the door already," the Doctor giggled.

The Tardis thrummed slightly, then the doors opened...

Jay stood inside the door, passing out Jelly Babies to each kid as they walked past.

Everyone gasped, even Joel and Levi, when they saw what looked like a real meadow, with fluffy clouds in the sky, and a warm sun shining down. There were various buildings dotted about, and training grounds. And a very, VERY large hanger bay in the distance.

"Do you think there'll be enough room?" the Doctor giggled.

Adam looked around for a second, a grin forming on his face. "Okay guys, I think it's time to get this show on the road."

He spoke out loud, knowing that Daileass could still hear him. "Daileass, please transmit this to the clan on all frequencies." He waited for Daileass to acknowledge, then started talking. "This is Commander Adam Casey. We are currently setting up for a full scale Military invasion of a hostile base holding many Genesis Children. The Special Forces Division is asking for any help that can be given. Please contact Daileass with what you can do. Thank you."

Jason grinned over from Korris' shoulders, where he had been plonked after giving his blood-brother so many hugs and kisses that the Klingon had just decided to carry him. "Draco, tell all those Companies that are coming to prepare to transport to Utah."

Joel's communicator went off, and, after he tapped it, a huffing could be heard, followed by, "I-Cheya, down! Get down!" from Kevin. Then, "Sa'r? We have a few here who are coming too... can you tell Adam please? DOWN, I-CHEYA! Jeez!"

Adam grinned, "Daileass, bring over everyone Kevin Thompson says to bring. Will? Can you liaise with anyone calling from the rest of the Clan, please?"

"Sure bro," Will said, just as his comm went off. He walked away from Adam saying, "Will Casey. What's up, Skipper?"

Adam grinned, and then turned to Juan, "Gather all the guns and ammo you can get your hands on, then..."

"Oh, for the Love of Gallifrey! Just get your arses on the Tardis, will you?" the Doctor said, his face screwed up with impatience.

"I thought you had all the time in the world?" Adam asked with surprise.

"Let me re-phrase," the Doctor sighed. "In THERE I have all the time in the world. Out here, I'm as buggered as you. Just get inside. We can make anything you need."

"Doc?" Will called over then. "Can you get a medical whirly-bird inside those doors?"

"I can trans-mat it in. Tell those guys to get in, and tell Skipper not to worry about their training. Nor his. He's about to get a crash course!" the Doctor giggled. Then he looked back at Adam, "Inside. Now!"

Adam laughed, then called out to Daileass, "Tell all hands to get to the Hanger Bay right now, bro! The Time Lord is getting pissy!"

Juan was the first to run into the Tardis. "Wow, I can see behind the door I came in through, and... and... OH MY FUCKING HOLY GOD! ADAMMMMM!! THERE'S A FUCKING MECH HERE!!!!"

"Surprise," the Doctor giggled evilly at the look Adam just gave him. "I picked it up in some Universe or other a few million years back. Never used it... only 124 miles on the clock as well!"

"CAN I PLAY WITH IT?!" came the disembodied voice from inside as other boys entered the Tardis and started laughing at the sight of the half-Klingon boy prancing around the huge feet of the Mech. "HOW DO I GET IN???"

"You don't!" yelled both Adam and the Doctor. Adam looked down with yet more surprise, and the Doctor explained, "Reason I've not used it is that I don't know where I left the manual!"

"ILL FIGURE IT OUT!!!"

"NO!" they both yelled again as Joel ran up with Kevin, who had just beamed over.

"Adz? Is it okay for Kev to train too?" Joel asked, his face alight with joy.

Adam smiled down tenderly at the two happy boys. Inside, he was thinking that they'd likely never see battle, but better safe than sorry. "Sure. In you go... the bear too?!" he added as I-Cheya and Black Feet ambled passed, carrying Brant, and a number of others.

"Uh huh. He says he wants to learn karate..." Joel giggled, his eyes twinkling before he, too, ran inside with Kevin.

Adam spoke mostly to himself as he shook his head watching the little boys run in. "Well Chang is gonna want to teach his puppy's... why not Joel's bear." Speaking of which, Adam noticed that Chang was now coming back in the hanger with his Wolves behind him.. they couldn't have gotten more than a few levels away, then turned and came right back up.

Adam was also shocked when he started to see the helicopters in the hanger bay, disappear, only to reappear behind him, inside the Tardis.

Adam was watching as everyone was filing into the Tardis, when one man caught his attention. Walking in, leaning on his cane was Isamu. The man grinned as Adam noticed him and spoke softly. "You expect that I would pass up the opportunity to complete your training?" Adam could only grin.

"Besides," Isamu added, "Chang has now surpassed me in Suus Mahna. I must remedy that situation."

"In, both of you," the Doctor said as he looked at the old man and the teen. "You kids can talk inside."

As Adam was walking in, he heard one of the Wolves exclaim, "OH GOD!!! They've multiplied... There's more cats!"

Isamu raised an eyebrow at the small ten year old.

"Yes, I'm older. Let's just say I age well!" The Doctor giggled.

"He does other things well, too!" another small boy giggled as he poked his head out of the Tardis.

"Hush, Jay!" the Doctor giggled as he blushed.

The Time Lord then waited as the last of the Unit kids entered his machine, then he too entered and closed the door. Looking around at the thousands before him, he smiled, "First. In here, Time will not affect you. You will be here a while - a LONG while, however, you will remember each moment, yet it will only feel like you've been here five or ten minutes. You will not miss those who have been left outside. Okay?"

After getting the nods and verbal agreements from the massed assemblage, he then turned to Juan, "AND NO! You cannot play with my MECH!"

Adam stopped dead as he saw the number of kids wandering around just inside. Over a thousand kids had volunteered to be trained, in one form or another. Adam actually had to wipe away the tears that formed, as he walked down and started to issue orders.

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Adam couldn't believe his luck, having the Tardis here. He'd always felt that he had skimped a little on the training the first group had, now though, he had a chance to not only train them properly, but to properly train the few hundred that were going through this for the first time.

He had given everyone over a week to get settled, and then go through a sorting process that Adam had figured out. Basically, each kid would spend a few hours each day getting demonstrations, giving an overview of each field that the kids could choose from.

After that week, he had everyone choose what he or she wanted to do. Some went for "basic" strike team training, while others choose more support roles. Some went to the medical side, others to command and control, and a good number went to the 'air force' side of things, either learning to fly themselves, or how to work on a helicopter. Of course, more than one new Jory seemed to have cropped up much to Janet's dismay... when she found out after they left of course. Adam had wished that his mom and dad had come, but Janet needed some time to herself right then. Janet and Joe had asked the Doctor to set them up a place where they could be alone for some time. Adam couldn't blame them in the least.

Everyone would be going through basic training, where they would learn the basics of military life, military etiquette, how to defend themselves, how to safely handle both rifles and hand guns, and of course, physical training. The doctor had to explain to Adam that, while none of the kids would gain muscle mass, mainly because time was not actually passing, they would, however, gain endurance, and muscle memory. That was good enough for Adam.

After the six weeks of 'basic training', Adam gave them three days off, then sent them through a program he set up personally. Everyone would wake up at 0500, by 0530, they would run. Sometimes it would be a long distance run, other times it would be an obstacle course, other times it would be a forced march with full pack and gear.

An hour later, they would have breakfast, and thirty minutes to get ready for the day. By eight, they would be in their “A” schooling. That's the chosen field that they wanted to specialize in.

At noon, they would break for one hour for lunch, then they would have “practice time.” This meant that anyone who wanted to learn the basics of something could. For the pilots it would be time to practice as they took kids, who just wanted a ride in a helicopter, to have one. Some would decide to do some martial arts training, or get more training in guns. Basically, after lunch, Adam didn't really care what they did, as long as they did some type of training.

At 1730 (or 5.30pm), they would have dinner, which lasted for an hour. After dinner, it was time for most of the kids to relax and have fun. The Tardis set up many different areas to be able to watch TV, or play video games. Often Adam would organize a game of capture the flag, or something else, which would sharpen the kids' skills, while still being a fun game.

More than once, Adam had to force kids to spend the evenings doing something fun, as many of them wanted to continue their studies. Finally, after being told by one of the kids that, “you told us we could spend this time any way we wished...” Adam gave up and just let them do whatever they wanted. However, by 2200 (or 10.00pm), it was lights out, and everyone had to be in bed. Of course, some of them would find their way to someone else's bed, but Adam didn't care as long as they knew that 0530 came real early. All in all, though, Adam was really pleased with how things were going.

Adam had overheard from many of these kids, that this was the opportunity of a lifetime for them. None of them were going to pass up the opportunity to learn everything they could, or wanted to. These kids were determined to learn something that would let them help. It was actually not only very intense training, but it was also very fun.

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It was what felt like six months after arriving in the Tardis when the first really big event happened. Jory and Juan had been disappearing many evenings for a while. No one could get either of them to tell what they were working on. The only thing that they would say was that they would let people know when they were done. Well, the day had finally come, and an excited Juan and Jory found Adam and the rest of their brothers, told them they were done, and invited them to an unveiling. Neither boy would actually tell anyone what they were done with, just that they were done.

By the time the unveiling was ready to begin, they had gathered quite a small crowd. Everyone had heard and they were all excited about it. Everyone was dying to find out, so now they all wanted to come and see what it was. Everyone from Sammy, to Joel and Kevin, to some of the Vulcans from the Sehlat division. No one really knew what was going on, but it was Juan and Jory, and was bound to be big, or, at least, very entertaining.

Juan and Jory had been working very hard at their project and they were looking forward to showing it off. Juan was ready to ham it up. "Ladies and Gentleman, Puppies, Pussies, and giant Bear things. We are proud to present the best thing ever."

*Bear Thing?* I-Cheya huffed. *Juan-Boy call me Bear Thing?! Me eat him? Please?*

"Only if I get to eat you too. Do you taste like chicken?" Juan shot back with his trademark grin.

*I Sehlat. S-E-H-L-A-T! I taste like SEHLAT! NOT 'bear-thing'* I-Cheya grouched. Joel climbed onto his back and stroked his head between his ears to soothe him. Bear-Thing.... bleargh!

Jory took over for the giggling Juan. "If there is one thing I have learned in all my years of business it is this. Work at it, if necessary, early and late, in season and out of season, not leaving a stone unturned, and never deferring for a single hour that which can be done just as well now...Ambition, energy, industry, perseverance, are indispensable requisites for success in business."

A giggling Juan interjected his own comment suddenly. "Yes, and as the person Jory is quoting said, 'there is one born every minute,' or something like that."

The lights dimmed, and a pedestal rose out of the floor. The lights began to flash and pyrotechnics began to go off in the distance. It was like the fourth of July in Washington DC. The pedestal was covered with a large black cloth. Jory was vibrating with excitement. His eyes were almost rolling up into his head.

"It slices. It dices. It juliennes. It will get rid of your unwanted Nasal and butt hair. Know what I mean Master?" Juan intones over the loudspeaker as dramatic music is played.

"Nasal and butt hair? You poor humans!" Joel giggled from I-Cheya's back. "Kev? When you start growing that, I'm gonna shave you!"

"EEEEEEEEEEEEEEK!" could be heard from Kevvy at that proclamation.

Adam spoke up, really getting into things here, he had no clue what was going on, but it was certainly fun. "Will it take out the trash, too?"

"Yes sir. I am glad you asked that. It can do that and more!" Juan said as he fought off an attack of giggles.

Vish grinned as he said, "I won't mind when Sammy gets hair."

"That's cause you like hair." Randy giggled.

Vish just looked at him before licking his fur briefly and mumbling, "Uh huh!"

"It's the most amazing thing ever come up with." Juan began before he suddenly found himself being lifted into the air by his underwear, which began to cause discomfort to some rather personal areas.

Juan was looking around trying to figure out what is happening. No one was actually behind him. One foot. Two feet. Three feet. Juan suddenly realized what was happening. Master Takamura was having his revenge. He was being subjected to a telekinetic super wedgie.

The crowd was howling with laughter as Juan kicked his feet. He sent wave after wave of apology to Isamu. Finally he received a message. 'Out Loud, my son, where everyone can hear.'

"Master, I am sorry for my rash comments about your unwanted body hair." Juan found himself jerked another foot in the air. Apparently Isamu found Juan's backhanded apology lacking, because Juan found himself apologizing two octaves higher than usual.

"Yes, Juanita. I can forgive you for making disparaging remarks about my person." Isamu never stopped giggling.

"I always thought he was a girl." Jeremy snickered not so quietly. That of course, got more howls of laughter.

"I can vouch for his masculinity. I can vouch a lot... my butt is still sore," Koth giggled.

Everyone ducked as Juan let loose a few of his "toys" in Jeremy's direction.

Of course, Jeremy had to catch one, and send it back, and everyone got to see just how good Jer's training was while he was dodging the onslaught from Juan. Several people were beginning to wonder where Juan hid all those toys, and then thought to themselves that maybe it was better that they didn't know where they came from.

After the laughter died away Juan, walking a bit funny, made his way to the pedestal. He grabbed the cloth and ripped it off and tossed it to the side. On the pedestal were two Teddy Bears. One was obviously a girl teddy bear and the other was a boy. Jory looked at them with a huge grin and asked one of the Teddy Bears a question.

"Hi, Samantha. How are you doing today?"

"I am fine, Jory. How are you today?"

"I am doing just fine, why don't you and Bobby go introduce yourselves to the audience?"

Oohs and ahhs were heard as people exclaimed how cute they were as the bears jumped down from the pedestal and made their way to the audience.

"Oh, oh, oh! JuaaaaaaaaaAAAAaaaaan?" Joel squealed out quickly, as he waved his arms like he was in class trying to get the teacher to pick him.

"Yes, my little big brother," Juan said with his pride showing on his face.

"Ummm... can you... I mean, my Sehlat-Teddy... can you make him move and talk and stuffs too?" he asked quickly as Bobby the bear was picked up by Vishnu, who was purring like crazy.

"Bear thingies? Yes, we can make bear thingies walk and talk, I think. Let me ask you when they are in the woods do they..."

Juan couldn't continue for he had just been pounced by I-Cheya, who decided that Juan needed a lesson. A full bath. Sehlat style. In front of everyone.

"Well, so much for command dignity," Adam giggled as Juan's boxers hit him in the face.

"Ewww... skid marks!" Logan giggled as he tossed them off to the side.

Adam bent down, and picked up Samantha up. The little teddy bear gave him a big hug, and a wet sounding kiss on the cheek. "So what's your name?" The little girl bear asked.

"I'm Adam." He said while giggling.

"Hi, Adam. I am Samantha. Do you need a friend?" She asked looking up at him with real good puppy dog eyes.

"No, he's already got a 'really' good friend." Logan said, while kissing Adam on the cheek.

"Okay... that's good. Everyone needs a friend. That's what I am, a friend to someone who needs it." With that she wiggled down out of his arms, and went off to find a friend.

Adam walked over to Juan and pulled him in for a hug, while I-Cheya was taking a break from the 'tongue lashing.' "Where did you ever come up with the idea for this?"

"Well... it happened right before we came in here, someone stole Rambo. But it was cause he was just lonely. So we came up with the idea of making teddy bears with little computer cores in them. That way they can be the perfect friend for them. They can also help to protect their kid if they need it." Adam just shook his head in amazement. Sometimes it was easy to forget just how brilliant both Juan and Jory were. He hugged his little brother, and then ruffled his hair. He knew his brother was going to be busy for a while, so he went off to continue with the training.

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One evening, everyone got together to watch a few movies. They decided it was time to watch horror films. Since none of the Genesis kids knew anything about horror movies, it fell to Donnie to pick some out. He picked out two of his favorites, 'Chuckie' and 'The Bride of Chuckie'.

They all gathered together around the large TV that the Tardis had provided, made loads of popcorn, and, after putting the youngest ones to bed, they all sat down to watch. It was cute to see all the kids snuggled up to someone else. Koth sat against a wall with his legs open wide, and Juan snuggled up between them. Rambo was sitting contently on Juan's lap, while Juan leaned into Koth's chest.

Juan wasn't sure how to take these movies, after all Juan was an expert on horror. He wasn't expecting what he saw. He was told that these were scary movies, but so far, after watching the first half of it, he'd laughed more than he had in a long time. This movie was just hilarious to him. A psychotic possessed doll on a killing spree was right up his alley.

He started making some comments on the funny scenes he saw. He really didn't know why some of the kids always hid their faces when someone got killed... to him, it was just very funny. Finally he said something that would change the world of the U.N.I.T.

"Cool... that guy just got his face ripped off." He couldn't help but laugh as he looked down at Rambo sitting in his lap. In a baby voice, he said to the little bear. "You'd like to rip people's faces off like that wouldn't you?"

Juan responded for his little bear. "Yes Juan I would. I think it would be a lot of fun to be able to rip someone's face off like that."

Jory looked over at Rambo, then Juan, and giggled. "He is always such a polite little bear."

Juan laughed as he looked around at the kids there who were either smiling or laughing at the exchange. When his eyes met Jory's again, things changed. Suddenly, as often happened with them right before hatching one scheme or another, they knew what they needed to do. They nodded to each other and then looked at the Doctor who grinned and nodded to them. Without another word, all three boys left the room. For the next eight months they spent almost all of their free time in Juan's room.

People were very concerned. Adam, Logan, Koth, and Jay were often heard expressing their fear of what those three could be cooking up. None of the trio would spill it and Tardis wasn't saying a thing either. Whenever anyone asked one of them they would just giggle and look at each other and then burst into full belly laughs. Logan was, surprisingly calm about it. Logan suspected she knew what was going on, but all she would say when asked is that she trusted Juan and Jory. That, in itself, made Logan nervous.

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Adam, Logan, Chang, Korris, Koth, Joel, Jay, and Sammy in a pear tree entered the room and were stunned. Even after being inside Tardis for what seemed like months, walking into a room and being confronted by a village with a spooky castle in the distance was a bit disconcerting.

They made their way to the castle as spooky music played in the background. The villagers all turned their heads and muttered as they passed by. Many of them ran inside and slammed the doors and window shut. Several made signs to ward off evil. Lightning flashed striking the large metal antennae sticking out of the roof of the highest tower on the castle.

When they got to the entrance, Adam pulled on a rope and a bell made a loud clang. The Doctor looked up and shuffled down the stairs to the entrance and opened the door. He had a hump on his back and was dressed in a lab coat. "Welcome, heheheh, welcome. The Mather hath been ethpecting you. Yes, ethpecting you. Walk thith way pleathe." Everyone paused for a moment before following Doctor "Igor" up the stairs of the tower.

"I uhm... I don't think I can walk that way. Is it okay for me to walk the normal way? Please?" Joel asked as he watched the Doctor shuffle up the stairs with a stoop and limp. "If I did that, I'd be afraid of hurting myself!"

Korris looked to Adam and Chang. "Guys, do you have any idea what these three are up to? I am beginning to get a bit worried."

"Only beginning? I have been afraid since they started hiding themselves in here months ago." Adam was kinda serious, but couldn't keep from grinning.

"I have had a feeling of dread myself, brother" Chang deadpanned.

They stopped in front of a door that had a large stone sign over it that read 'Laboratory.'

"OKAY! Now I am really starting to worry." Koth said as he read it.

Doctor "Igor" opened the door and gestured for them to enter. As they passed him, he giggled and cackled. "Yethhhh. hehehe. They don't know. hehehehe. Do they. The mathter want them here. hehehehehe."

Tardis had set up the room to look like a classic horror movie mad scientist lab. There were tubes and wires running everywhere. Beakers with strange bubbling colored liquids. Large electrical components with dials and gauges. In the center of the room was a large table with a sheet over it. A large Tesla coil was emitting sparks of electricity. Juan, in a lab coat, was busily turning dials and flipping switches while Jory dressed the same way was hooking wires to whatever was under the sheet.

"Mathter. hehe. The Guethsss have arrived. hehehe" Doctor "Igor" said as he made his way down the stairs leading into the laboratory.

"Ahhh. Good. Good Igor. Have them wait at the top of the stairs. Muhahahaha!" Juan ran around flipping levers, and twisting dials, as he made notes for himself.

"Vate for the mather up here, pleathe." Doctor "Igor" said as he limped down the stairs.

Doctor "Igor" made his way to a large chain. "Ith it time, mather? Can I pull the chain, now?"

"No Igor, we are not ready yet. Muhahahahahaha!"

Lightning strikes were becoming more and more frequent and the thunder claps were so loud they were shaking the room.

"It is hooked up. It is ready!" Jory suddenly shrieked.

Sammy was looking out the window and turned to Jay. "Uhm. Should we be worried about the guys with pitchforks and torches."

Jay looked out the window and saw that the mob had brought a large tree and were using it as a battering ram. Sammy suddenly got a strange look on his face.

"I think... I think I recognize the people bringing up the catapult." His face showed utter disbelief.

Cory and Sean were leading a draft horse that was pulling a catapult to the entrance of the castle.

Suddenly Juan got everyone's attention as he yelled. "NOW IGOR!"

Doctor "Igor" pulled the chain and the table rose towards the ceiling. The lights began to flicker and pulse as the fury of the storm became more intense. The angry cries of the mob outside could be heard along with the occasional thud from the battering ram. The catapult was soon lobbing objects at the castle as well. Juan, Jory, and the Doctor were cackling like mad men. The gauges began to fluctuate wildly and the Tesla coil began to build in intensity as the pulses occurred more frequently.

Juan pulled the main switch. Lightning flashed and thunder crashed. Everything in the room went insane and Igor pulled the chain once more. The table slowly sank to the floor. Once it stopped its motion, whatever was on the table sat up under the sheet.

"IT'S ALIVE! IT'S ALIIIIIIIVVVVVVVVE!" Juan shrieked. As he began to cackle he was joined by Jory and Doctor "Igor."

As the sheet fell off the figure, everyone saw that it was Juan's teddy bear Rambo, only bigger. About two and a half feet tall. When Rambo turned to face them, they all gasped. That's when Logan figured it out, Juan, Jory, and the Doctor had made an android body for the little bear, and programmed a positronic matrix for him. Logan couldn't help but shudder at the thought of who had programmed him.

The question was answered a second later as the bear held up one of its "hands" and from it extended three very wicked looking "wolverine" style blades.

---

It had been about a week since the terrible trio brought Rambo to life, and Adam was once again looking for Juan. He was starting to get worried until he found a rather angry Doctor stalking up to him.

"Do you know what that psychotic little brother of yours is doing?"

"Ummm... I assume you mean Juan?" Adam asked, but deep down he already knew the answer... what he was wondering now, was what the hell Juan had done to piss off the Doctor.

"YES! I mean Juan. He's down there right now.... he's... well DAMN IT he's VIOLATING MY MECH!" The little Doctor actually looked upset about this. Adam couldn't help but giggle, but from the glare he got from the boy, he quickly started made his way to where the Mech was standing.

Sure enough when they got there, Juan was sitting on one of the feet of the fifty foot tall machine, Rambo on the other. Both were gently stroking the gray metal and talking in hushed tones. It would have been enough to make Adam laugh had he not been able to see the small lump that had formed in both Juan's and Rambo's pants. Adam knew this actually could be serious. Adam muttered under his breath. "Like father, like son, I guess."

"Hey, Juan. You want me to cut a hole in the leg so you can actually..." Adam started to say but got cut off as Juan jumped to his feet and yelled

"NO! You don't even think about blemishing this beautiful piece of machinery like that!" Of course Juan was dead serious, which only made it funnier for Adam.

Of course the Doctor was right on Juan's heels with his own protest. "If you even think about it, I will do things to you that this universe was never meant to see!"

"Okay I won't..." Adam laughed out, but looked back at Juan, only to see him staring lovingly back up at the Mech. Adam knew he had it bad. He was only slightly surprised when the doctor went up to Juan and put his arm over the boy's shoulder.

"Sorry Juan, but the Tardis lost the instruction book. No one knows how to use it, and they're just too dangerous to try and figure out." It was almost funny seeing the Doctor trying to console Juan over the fact that he couldn't use the big war machine.

Juan looked up in the air as if to talk to God or someone. "Damn it Tardis, where is that damned instruction book?!?!?"

Suddenly, in front of them, a large book appeared and fell to the ground.

"What the fuck, T! If you had it all along, why didn't you let me have it!!!" the Doctor yelled in anger.

{Because you are dangerous, Doctor. Even though I was not fully sentient, I knew leaving this in your hands was an unwise move.}

"Wait a minute... you mean that Juan isn't dangerous with that thing?" Adam asked incredulously.

Of course Juan wasn't paying any attention to what was being said, he was on his knees in front of the book busily speed-reading the instruction manual.

{Juan did not destroy every High Race except for himself and the Q Continuum, Adam! Juan is safe with this Mech. What the Doctor could do with it is something I could not and would not wish to foresee!}

Adam muttered "Yet!" under his breath, as he just stared at the little boy in disbelief for a few seconds. He was about to say something else when he was interrupted by the sound of a door opening. He looked over just in time to see Juan and Rambo scrambling in through a door in the leg of the Mech.

"I am going to go pout, now," The Doctor grumbled. "You're all bastards... you too, Tardis... "

Adam simply turned around and walked away muttering to himself... "kids."

---

Fifteen minutes later, Juan and Rambo were busy trying to figure out the Mech. Once they had found the cockpit, they were running all over the place figuring out what all the buttons and controls did. "DAMN DAD!!!!" Rambo exclaimed! "This things got four GAUSS Rifles! One thousand meter Range, and packed with fifty pounds of some sort of high explosive!"

Juan whistled out loud, at that, plus the other things he found. "I've got four extended range pulse lasers... whatever they are... as well as something called a Particle Projection Cannon. I don't know exactly what they do, but they sound cool!"

Rambo would have responded, but he saw something else that dropped his jaw. "Oh SHIT!!! This thing is carrying over two hundred long range missiles!"

Before Juan could respond, the Tardis spoke up once more. {I was just thinking that this Mech suits Jory better. }

Juan was instantly in tears. "But... but... my Mech..."

Tardis actually laughed. {I said THIS Mech suits Jory better. I do have another one. The Doctor is currently with it right now. Let us say that it suits you better than this one. }

"What... what do you mean?" Juan asked, tears forgotten and suddenly very eager.

{This one is a large Mech, weighting in at 85 tons fully loaded, but it is not the largest. This is what they named a War Hawk. But it is outfitted more along the lines of long range support, although it can get up close and personal. }

The Tardis paused and both Rambo and Juan were sitting there spellbound as they absorbed what the Tardis was saying. {The other Mech the Doctor 'acquired' is a one hundred ton assault Mech - made for one thing and one thing only. Death and destruction. }

Both the young boy and the young bear were stunned into silence, both fantasizing about what the Tardis was saying. {I will warn you now, though: while this one is large, it can be hidden fairly easily. It is only about forty foot tall. The other one is a bit bigger. It stands just over fifty foot tall, and is called a Dire Wolf. }

Seconds later, the Tardis had trans-matted both the boy and the bear to where the Doctor was.

"Since T has given you the other, you can have this as well," the Doctor said seriously. "However, if you misuse it, I will take it back. I'll just content myself with playing with my Bowship instead..."

{Maker help me... }

"I am your Maker, T!" the Doctor giggled.

Rambo couldn't help but speak up. "Bowship?" He asked in wonder.

"A Bowship is the most destructive vehicle in all the Universes," the Doctor giggled.

Both Juan and Rambo stood there with their jaws on the floor. Finally Juan asked almost reverently... "Can... can we see it?"

"Tardis, take us down two levels and prepare a simulation," the Doctor ordered.

{Oh, be still my beating heart...}

Seconds later, the two boys and the bear were standing in utter darkness, but they could see each other clearly. Then, around them, above them and below them, appeared stars. Then a planet off in the distance.

"Well, here we go... ready?" the Doctor giggled as Rambo shimmied up into Juan's arms, since there was no apparent 'floor' to stand on.

Juan, a little unnerved, but not really willing to show it nodded his head up and down slowly...  
"ye...yeah."

"Don't be worried," the Doctor said as an image of the Tardis appeared before them. He then said at the image, "Transform - Bowship mode."

{War-Tardis Mode engaged: Form, Bowship,} came the response from the floating Tardis.

It became huge. Massively, so. It was the biggest star-ship that Juan had ever seen, not that he'd ever seen any from this vantage point, though.

"Well, fart me a lullaby!" he said as the Tardis/Bowship moved towards the planet.

"I'll... pass," the Doctor managed to say through his giggles. "Bowship - Particle attack. Take out that 'rock' - it's in my way..."

{Acknowledged...}

\*BOOM\*

No planet.

If Juan could have creamed himself, he would have. As it was, both Juan and Rambo shuddered and passed out from a joy-gasm.

"Shame... that was just the lowest setting," the Doctor murmured as he picked up the still shuddering bear and grabbed Juan's limp, yet shaking, hand. "Tardis, take us to Juan's bedroom. I think he needs his Koth."

{What about the bear?}

"I'll give him that toy girl-bear that's knocking about in the cupboard in my room."

{You are NOT giving him Maple ! She is MINE!}

"Tough shit, T! You gave them my Mech... the bear needs fun!"

{Take your screwdriver and shove it...}

"Now, now, Tardis..."

---

Well, it was done. Three and a half years had gone by on the Tardis, although the Doctor said only ten minutes had passed on the outside world.

Adam took a moment to look back at how the kids acted when they first got here, as opposed to how they acted now. The ones, who had been with him for a while, had become even more focused and determined. But it was the ones who were new that really made all this worth it.

Everyone tried to give him the credit, but it wasn't just him who did it. It was everyone there. Most of the kids who were brand new were scared of their own shadows. A good number of them had been physically or mentally beaten down to where they thought they were nothing. Now though. Three and a half years later, almost every single one of them were walking tall, holding their heads high, and doing whatever it took to stand up and shout that they would not be pushed down any longer, and they would not ALLOW anyone else to be pushed down. The only worry he still had was for Joel. He noticed many times that Joel would defend others, but would never stand up for himself.

Adam was very pleased, he was now the commanding officer of a fully fledged Battle Battalion. He would never take anything away from those that he had trained **before**, for they were fine warriors. He always felt that maybe, had he be able to train them better, that maybe, just maybe, not as many of them would have died. As always, Logan was there to kick his ass when needed.

"I know what you're thinking love and you can just stop right now!" Logan said glaring at his beloved.

"What?" Adam asked looking anywhere but at Logan at that moment.

"You know what" Logan replied not backing down.

"I can't help but think that..."

Adam started to say, when Logan cut him off. "Bullshit! They couldn't have received better training anywhere than what you gave them. Don't you get it? You gave them all the technical skills, but you gave them all something so much more, you gave them all your love, too. That's why they fought for you, that's why they died for you, Adam, and all the training in the world won't change some things, and it won't change that" Logan told him. Adam didn't say anything for some time just looking down at his feet, thinking, remembering, but finally looked back up at the boy that meant more than anything to him.

"I know, it's..." Adam started to say when Logan finished it for him

"...It's just that you wonder 'if'"

"Yeah" Adam whispered

"That's what makes a good commander, that's what makes you the best Adam. You care and you worry, they know that and those who died <KNEW> that too. They'll always be a part of you that wonders, that asks 'What if?' but don't let it make you doubt yourself, please" Logan said almost pleadingly at the end.

Finally Adam drew himself up straight and more, proud and said resolutely "I won't"

Logan grinned and said "Good then, let's go kick some ass and rescue some kids".

"Sounds like a plan." Adam nodded and looked out over the parade field that had been set up. Someone had come up with the idea to have the entire group march out in parade formation, and 'present' themselves in front of their commander.

From there, someone decided to have all the new pilots perform an aerial display for everyone, so everyone had been very busy the last week getting everything ready.

A lot had happened to the UNIT over the last three and a half years, most of it very good. Adam had been having meetings for the last year with all the commanders, and they had come up with a new system for breaking down the strike teams.

Instead of the six person teams like they had before, they now had ten. If needed, the commander of each team could actually split into two five man teams. Each ten person team now had a commander and an XO, as well as two med, two demolitions, two heavy weapons, and two intel.

Adam had also let each team come up with their own call sign, and their own 'Unit insignia.' Also, over the last year there had been many 'Unit vs. Unit' match ups. All of them had the express purpose of bringing the teams together as one. Adam couldn't have been happier with the way things had worked out. He worked them hard, but they never once fell short of his expectations.

He remembered one time during a class that he had taught, 'Advanced Military Tactics... Command and Control' one of the kids actually asked what Adam did that made him such a good leader. Adam actually laughed for a second, then got serious. "It's simple really. The only reason I can lead is because all of you follow."

He saw that many of them were a bit confused by that, so he explained more. "If I went around the room right now and asked every single one of you why you follow me, we would most likely get as many different answers as there are people. But it really all comes down to one thing... Leadership."

He took a moment to meet eyes with everyone there, and then went on. "Leadership means many different things to many different people, but let me tell you what it means to me. Leadership is the most sacred of duties with in the military, or anywhere else. The people you lead give you their trust that you can help them make it through the mission. They look to you for orders, and expect that every order is the right one. It isn't always. We are all human, and we all make mistakes. I am no different, but when it comes to being a leader, the best thing you can do is simply do your best. I know that doesn't make much sense now, but let me give a few examples."

Adam took a moment to take a drink of water, then walked from behind the podium, and started to pace in front of everyone. "Common military thinking is that a leader's best place on the battle field is in the

back, where he can control the flow of battle. And for the most part, that is true. But let me ask you this. If I ordered all of you to march on Hell itself, is there any doubt you would all go?"

Almost as one, the entire group shouted out some form of negative. Adam smiled, he knew that they would all go if he asked them to, but now it was time to turn the lesson up some. "Now let me ask you this, how much harder would every single one of you fight if I was right up there on the front lines with you breaking down the gates of Hell and went toe to toe with Satan himself?"

There may have only been about fifty people in the room, but for a moment it was almost deafening...

Adam had a smile on his face as he came out of his memories, just as he heard the various commanders order their troops into formation. He still couldn't see any of them, but he could hear them as they all came to attention.

Adam was very pleased that the people who came up with, and organized this whole thing, he still didn't know who they were, had figured out that having this only for the strike teams would have been a bane to the morale of all the support teams, so EVERYONE that had gone through the training was involved in the parade, even down to the little kids who couldn't really be trained to do much physically simply because of their size.

On the stage with him were only a few people, Logan was there, as well as some of their 'aunts and uncles.' Mike, Eric, Tony, Samantha, and Elena. Tony and Elena's kids were out on the field, as were Mike's older kids, the younger ones all stayed with their parents.

Also on the stage were the leadership of the dragon division, save for Koth and Korris who were marching in with their bonded and their teams. Also some of the higher ranked VSO members. The rest who were not with the marchers were standing off to the side, so they too could watch the happenings.

Probably the neatest thing though was the fact that the entire group would then form up, with Adam and his brothers at the lead, and march them out of the Tardis.

It was time. Adam heard Donnie order everyone forward, and within a few moments, Adam could see the start of the lines. Broken up by their team, and division, they marched out in perfect unison.

They marched out until they were completely arranged in front of the stage, and on Donnie's order, they all came to attention and saluted. Adam and the rest that were militarily trained all snapped a returning salute, then, after two seconds, dropped it.

The kids had barely dropped their salutes when everyone heard the helicopters start their run. All eyes were in the sky as all the pilots put on a stunning aerial display of aerobatics and dog fighting. Some people might think that helicopter dog fighting isn't as spectacular as when the jets do it, but they simply have not seen the helicopters really go at it.

The display went on for almost ten minutes, then it was over. Adam was just as stunned as everyone else when it was over. Will had really done a fantastic job with the new pilots, and it really showed. They pushed their machines to the limit, and then some, and no one was more proud at that moment than Adam.

The helicopters set down a little ways away, and the pilots and crew jumped out to form up with the rest of the troops. Donnie stepped forward once everyone was in line, and asked Adam if he would take his position in front of the lines, and lead them out. Tears flowed unashamedly down Adam's face as he took position, and led them towards the door that the Tardis made to the outside world, and back to the fight they had coming up.

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Joel watched with a smile as Janet and Joe were introduced to Rambo, all the while messing with the new tricorder he had made - attempting to get the programming just so.

Once everyone started to split up to prepare for the assault, he went up to Juan and scanned him. "Mmm, works well. Says you're cuddly, Juan!" Joel giggled as Juan raised a questioning eyebrow at him.

"Thank you," Juan giggled as he pulled his 'little' brother into a brief hug. Juan then watched, with Koth now hugging him from behind, as Joel went around the small group remaining by the Tardis and scanned everyone.

As Joel came to a stop by Janet he pursed his lips. "Aunty Jan?" he looked up questioningly at her. "Umm, I think something's... wrong."

Adam looked down at Joel, then up at his mother as she took a look at the tricorder.

"Does this mean what I think it means?" Joel asked nervously.

"Yes, sweetie. It does. Who is it?" she asked gently. "We'll have to tell her carefully. She might not know yet."

"Uh... It's Adam," Joel trembled, glancing over at the black haired teen.

"Ad... ADAM?!" Janet yelled as she snatched the tricorder and re-scanned the now nervous teen. "FUCK ME!" she exclaimed before fainting away completely.

"What?! MOM!" Logan yelled as he caught her. "What the hell is wrong, Joel! What's wrong with Adam!"

"Ummm..." Joel murmured, looking completely out of place.

Kevin went over and hugged his husband, while checking out the tricorder. He then started laughing.

"What?! What's going on, here!" Adam demanded, trying not to sound as nervous as he looked.

"Well Adam... looks like you've got another Biblical name!" Kevin managed as he fell to his knees, tears of mirth streaming down his face.

"Huh?"

"Eve!" Kevin spluttered.

Joel held out the tricorder, "Seems like the bastard general put a womb inside of you... I've cross referenced with the others I just scanned... all you original guys, and the cats, have the same 'upgrade'. But only YOU are pregnant! Congratulations, Logan."

Amur Khan had to catch Adam as he fell over, while Jory gently lowered Logan's senseless head to the deck.

Juan turned around and looked at Koth. "You're cut off. No!"

"What!? I've not even got any yet!" Koth giggled.

"No!!" Juan said firmly. "Not getting pregnant! No way!"

Korris was having the same argument with Chang.

Jory was nervously looking at Tristan - who winked at him.

"Pregnant... I wonder - will Adz have to shit the baby out or something?" Joel murmured to himself as he looked around at them all.

Authors Notes:

Hey all, I wanted to take this time to apologize for this chapter taking so long in posting. It actually was just about done before Christmas, but then work started to really kill me. I know... how dare I let real life interfere... but...LOL.

Also I would like to thank Ilu, D&B and Darkstar for all their input into this chapter, and to D&B, Ranger and Gracey for the editing. LOL... I finally have figured out I need a TEAM of editors!

Anyways, would love your thoughts on this chapter.

Roland

## Chapter 14

"Sa'r?" Kevin giggled, "you do know you're the first and only person to do this - don't you?"

"Do what, Kevvy?" Joel asked with a sweet smile.

"Take out the command structure for the entire Unit in one move."

"Oh. Yeah, I know. Oh well, they'll all make great daddies. I feel sorry for you and Chang, though, Juan," Joel added, his face serious and even a little compassionate.

Juan nervously asked "Why?" while keeping Koth's roaming hands off of his butt.

"Can you imagine the pain of giving birth to a ridged brow baby? Ouchie! Anyway! I gotta go, right Galli?" Joel giggled, his eyes twinkling as Juan started to look freaked out.

The Doctor smiled and gestured back to the Tardis.

"Seeya in about an hour or so. I'll be here just before we leave for the mission," Joel smiled.

Kevin added, under his breath, "And after the abortions?"

"Could be," Joel concluded as he and the others who were returning to Orlando stepped back into the Tardis and vanished.

Chang was looking slightly disturbed by all of this, when he turned to his bonded and spoke softly. "You do realize Love... You and your brother were made to be exactly like us." He paused for a moment, to see if Korris understood. "Which means, I think all four of us will have to be careful in the future."

Korris' eyes widened slightly, and he shared a look with Koth. Koth shrugged. "Makes sense," the younger Klingon smiled.

Korris thought about it for a second more, and then smiled back at Chang, "I'd be honoured to carry your child, Chang. As I'm sure you'd be honoured to carry mine!"

"Of course I would be honored my Love. However, I must insist that since you are the head of the house, it would only be proper for you to go first." Chang said with a slight smile.

"Agreed," Korris smiled as he started to growl deep in his throat. "I'll let you impregnate me first - then, once you've finished, I'll return the favour..."

Koth giggled, then went back to trying to touch up the near hysterical Juan.

"FUCK YOU ALL!!!! OH WAIT... don't... no one is touching me EVER again!!!" Juan was really starting to freak out about this. Of course everyone else laughing was just pissing him off even more.

Finally Khan had to step in. "Juan, I think it would be best if you calmed down."

“FUCK OFF KHAN!!!! What are you worried about, you’re the only straight one here!” Juan screamed!

“Well yes I am, I have always told you that woman are good for more then just...”

Khan never got a chance to finish as Juan screamed “Oh God dammit... just... just go fuck yourself!”

Khan threw his hands up in defeat, and turned to walk away. Then he stopped and turned around looking at Juan with a puzzled look. “Hmmm... I wonder if that would work - could I get myself pregnant?” Adam and Logan, who had just woken up, both groaned hearing that.

Juan was about to pounce Khan and try to rip his face off, when they all were stopped in their tracks by Joe's voice. He had his drill sergeant authority going again.

“EVERYONE FREEZE!” Joe wheeled himself into the middle of the group, and all the boys were standing around, all eyes on him. “Everyone who is not a part of this group, go get your gear together. We go wheels up in about two hours.”

Many people wanted to stay around and watch, but no one was going to disobey Joe when he was talking like this. With in less then a minute, the room had cleared save for those now worried about becoming pregnant, or those that might make them pregnant.

Joe looked around at all of them, and then spoke softly, never loosing the authority in his voice. “I know all of you are shocked by this, I know I am. BUT... we all have a job to do, and this can frankly wait. None of you are going to give birth right now, but if ANY of you are not on the top of your game, many of these kids, and probably a lot of the kids we're going to rescue are going to die.”

He took a moment to let that sink in, and then hit them with his trump card. “If any of you think your not up to the task, or can't play at 110%, then maybe you should back out now. If you can't put the other shit out of your head, I'm sure we can find something here for you to do while the rest of us go save YOUR family.”

He looked around, and saw many angry faces, but he knew that it's what they needed right now. Truth be told, the thought of any of these boys giving birth to children really frightened him.

Jason, watching the 'fun' from near Will's Black hawk, whistled, "You, good sir, can be quite nasty - in the most logical way, of course. Guys, he's right. Think of this as a part of your training - can you function with stress. Oh, and congratulations, Adam and Logan. Now I'm going to take my two Klingons for some finalization to our plans. Koth, get your not-yet-pregnant bod over here - I need a Mek'leth Tactician for this. Kor, stop feeling up Chang's butt - I need you too."

Three minutes later, Jason and the entirety of the VSO had beamed out. The Unit boys took a few moments to compose themselves, and were about to head out, when they got a call from the command center.

“Commander Casey!” Came the excited voice of one of the Logan clones call out. “We got a large group of inbound aircraft. They're all American military... and Sir - Uncle Tom wants to talk to you.”

Adam looked perplexed, but Logan had a small smile on his face. "Put him through down here please." Adam said, a second later Tom's voice came over the speakers.

"Adam! How's my favorite little General?" Tom's mirth could be heard over the radio.

"Sir... I'm... I'm just peachy, if you want to know. But - even though I'm afraid to ask. - what's going on?" Adam's eyes were now focused on Logan who was trying hard not to laugh.

"Why don't you come outside, and I'll show you." Tom's voice was once again broken up by his laughs. Adam just shook his head, and the full group started to walk outside. Adam, his brothers, the cats, the wolves, Janet, Joe, and even Master Takamora all went outside to see what Tom had done.

---

Adam was stunned. Fifteen black hawks had just touched down, their pilots shut the birds down, and then got out. All heading to a larger transport helicopter that had also touched down. None of the pilots said a word to him, and he was having a hard time not running over there to ask questions.

Before the big helicopter took off, two more helicopters came in. One was an Apache gun ship, the other was an American version of the MI26 large transport helicopter, very similar to the huge helicopters they had. Both helicopters shut down, and the pilots of the transport ran over to the other helicopter that was carrying all the pilots.

Where as the pilots of the Apache got out and went to where Adam and the rest were standing. When they got close enough, one of them took off his helmet, and Tom's grinning face greeted them.

Adam was the first to speak up. "Okay Uncle Tom - what gives?"

Tom just grinned more. "Merry Christmas, courtesy of the United States Military."

Adam looked perplexed and Tom couldn't help but laugh some more. "Welllll. See, yesterday I got a phone call from a certain someone who told me that you guys were planning a mission, but didn't have the helicopters you needed because most of your went down during the Montana Massacre..." Tom paused a moment, not letting the emotion overcome him.

"Anyways, I pulled a few strings, and got you some presents. The transport over there," pointing to the one that had been shut down, "hold the hardware that would keep Fort Hood operational for about a year. We figured that should last you a few weeks. You'll have more then enough guns and ammo in there for the mission. As well as some other toys we were able to get in. At least I hope it will last you." He couldn't help but grin when he said the last part.

Juan was bouncing up and down waiting for Adam's okay to go look at the toys. Adam smiled and was about to tell him to go ahead, when Tom cut him off. "Oh... I'm not done yet..." Tom grinned while everyone just looked at him.

After a moment, Tom pulled a radio out of his flight suit, and spoke into it. “Tango lead, to Echo flight, your run is a go. Come in hot and fast, and show our boys their new toys.”

“Copy that Tango lead - E.T.A three zero seconds.” The voice said, and Tom turned and looked back the way they came. A few seconds later, they all started to hear the whine of helicopters come in fast. “These next two, well, lets just say we acquired them a few years ago, and never had anything we really could do with them - until now.”

As soon as the helicopters came into sight, both Will and Billy squealed out in excitement. It was Billy that was first able to make a coherent sentence. “Holy shit! Those are fucking Hind-D Gun Ships - and they're fully fucking loaded!”

Will finally was able to say something, “Oh I am SOOO going to have fun with those.”

Tom turned and grinned at them, as the helicopters came in to land. “But Will... if you claim them, who are you going to give the others to?”

Will turned to Tom with his mouth open. Adam laughed and said what Will wanted to. “Okay Tom, what else do you have for us?”

Tom grinned and raised his mic again. “Viper lead, this is Tango Lead - your a go.”

“Roger that!” the radio said again, and after just a few seconds, they started to hear something else. These were not helicopters though.

Will almost had his own joy-gasm when he saw what came over the rise, and started to make their decent. The same two Harrier Jump jets that they got to play with at Joel's party now came in for a landing.

Tom turned around, smiling, but was jumped by two very happy boys who just got their bestest birthday presents. “Thanks Uncle Tom!” Will said.

“Yeah Uncle Tom, can we go see them?!?!” Billy jumped in.

---

Bartholomew Rollins the third, more commonly known as 'runt', was sitting alone in his room. He was more than a bit depressed after leaving the Tardis. He finally got what he wanted, a chance to do the things that normal people could do, but now he couldn't anymore.

For him, normal people were the people that looked close to their age. 'Runt' was almost fourteen, but anyone looking at him would think he MIGHT be ten years old. He was only four and a half feet tall, and weighted in at a mere 76 pounds.

What he wanted to do more than anything was fly one of the helicopters. He had always loved flying with his father, but that was before he got kicked out onto the streets.

When he got here, he just kinda went along with the others, and ended up in the training. At first, he was doing it because he wanted to prove to everyone that he was just as good as the others. But then Will came looking for people to be assigned to the helicopter crews. Runt had jumped at the chance.

When Will told everyone, they would all get a chance to see if they could be a pilot, Runt's self confidence went into the toilet. There was no way he could fly one of those, not with as small as he was. He remembered every time he dad had let him take the stick in their little plane, his father had to control the pedals cause Runt's feet just wouldn't reach.

Runt volunteered to be one of the people trained on repairing the helicopters, since he figured that would be the closest he would ever get to flying one. That's when he met Brandon. He let himself drift back to the time in the Tardis

Brandon was one of the boys that came in with the medivac helicopter, and was slated to be the co-pilot. Brandon and Runt became friends, and he was the only that Runt told of his desire to fly. Brandon never said a word, but then one day, Billy, one of the instructors, called Brandon and Runt aside, and took both of them to one of the picnic tables near by.

When they all sat down, Billy began.

"Runt... I hear from Brandon here that you really wanted to be a pilot." Runt shot Brandon a nasty look, but Billy jumped right in. "Hey, you don't need to be pissed at him, I was the one who asked him." Runt looked confused now, and Billy just smiled.

"I see the look in your eyes. The look that says you want to be up there flying in the clouds. The look that says you would rather be at the controls of one of these machines seeing just how much you can push it. Seeing just how well you can make these big machines dance. You have that look, and I saw it. SO I asked Brandon about it, and he confirmed what I thought." Billy smiled as he saw that look again in Runt's eyes.

"I know you don't know this, but before I met all the kids from the clan I was stuck in a wheel chair." Getting confused looks from both boys, Billy took a moment to fill them in on why he was in a wheel chair. "...and when I woke up in the hospital, I found out I would always be in a wheel chair, never able to walk again. But when the boys from the UNIT showed up, and I met Will for the first time, I found out that even though I couldn't walk, I could still fly. See, Will modified the controls of one of the helicopters so I could control the rudder with my hand, instead of my feet." Both boys were enraptured with the story Billy had just told them, but he didn't think either one of them really knew why he was telling them this. "The reason I told you guys this is simple. Runt, if you really want to fly, I can modify one of the birds so you can. It's rather simple to do, and it doesn't matter to us if your short - it really doesn't."

So Runt got his wish, he learned how to fly, and according to Billy, he was damn good at it. Runt didn't really care as long as he got to feel the power of the bird, and feel it twitch at his slightest touch. But then their time in the Tardis came to an end, and Runt had to face reality. They only had a few helicopters left here, after what happened earlier that week, and all of them were already spoken for. He was told he would be a back up pilot for one of the helicopters they had, but he knew he would never fly it on a mission.

That's why he was sitting in his room now totally depressed. He wasn't good enough to help them with the fighting, so he would have to sit this one out, and hope someday he might get a helicopter of his own.

He was brought out of his depression by a voice coming over the speakers in his room. "All pilots and flight crew members are to report to the hanger bay immediately..." The message repeated, and Runt knew he had to go, so slowly he made his way up to the hanger bay.

---

Adam walked into the main briefing room an hour and a half after Tom showed up. Adam couldn't seem to wipe the determined smile off his face. This was the time that his family was going to get a bit of the revenge he had wanted for so long. Now was the time to lay out the plan that he and the rest of the Intel kids made up, to the rest of his family.

When he walked in, the room fell silent, which was impressive due to the number of people in there. Now took a moment to look them all over as he made his way to the front of the room. Not only were there over three hundred of his kids there, these of course were only the combat troops, and did not include the over five hundred others that got non combat related training. Of course Adam could not forget about the many, many others that got some type of training in the Tardis, and not all of those that got combat training were coming on this mission.

Other than those, he saw fifteen members of the VSO, representing the troops they would supply. Next his eyes fell on Jason, and his group, all eagerly awaiting their orders. Jason, his crew, along with Brant, Matthew, and the VSO, gave Adam something he never really had before. Yes he was trained in small unit combat, and he and his brothers did that very well, but since they got here, Adam had shifted their focus to larger scale assaults. The VSO though, they were perfect for part of his plan. They could go in and do their job, with out ever being seen.

Adam's eyes then fell on Joel and Kevin, along with their bodyguards. He knew he could never get away with giving Joel orders to stay back, so he was going to do the next best thing - give him protection detail, protecting the helicopters.

Then his eyes fell on Mike, Sammy, and their group. Adam's smile faded slightly. He knew he was going to give them one of the hardest assignments, but they were the ones best suited for it.

Then he saw Skipper, Bobby, and their group. He still remembered the arguments that they had over whether or not the medivac would be armed. It finally came down to Adam saying he would not allow another un-armed helicopter to go into a hot zone. When that was said, they all agreed to have two extra people in there with door guns.

Next was Chang sitting with his wolves. Adam still had trouble believing what had happened to bring the wolves to them, but he had even more problems with everything he had seen them do since then. Khan had privately admitted to Adam that the wolves were easily the match for his cats, if not more so. The things that made the wolves so much more dangerous could be considered a perfect storm of events. First off, they were totally loyal to Chang. Adam knew he could give them an order, but that

was only because Chang had let them know in no uncertain terms that Adam was in charge of even the pack.

What was even worse was how well synched they were. They had the instincts of a wolf pack, and Chang has utilized that to turn them into a frighteningly effective fighting force. Their link was so ingrained in them, that Chang had told Adam that very often, the wolves do not even think about what's going to happen next, they just do it. Both Chang and Korris had taken that link, and with some very extensive training, turned them into the premier strike team with in the Unit. The only thing that cats had on them was the fact that the cats could easily work together or separately. The wolves had a big problem if they were not together. The cats each had their own abilities, and one on one the cats would tear apart the wolves. The cats could do things that the wolves never would be able to do; but as a PACK, the Wolves would hold the advantage over the eleven cats even if they were together as a group again.

Adam still shuddered when he thought about the assignment the wolves took up. Adam was originally going to send in five or six strike teams - fifty or sixty troops to take out one building - the problem being who was he going to send. Then Chang had volunteered to take his PACK in - just his pack. At first Adam was unsure if they could do it, but Chang was insistent. Adam may have thought someone else was boasting about their abilities if they volunteered to do that, but he knew Chang better. If Chang said they could, then they could.

Next on the list of groups were the pilots, with Tom Larkin sitting with them. All of them had on their flight suits, and what ever other personal equipment they needed. Of course the biggest thing about the group was not just the fact that they all now had helicopters to fly, thanks to Tom, but the fact that Runt was flying for Tom. Adam thought back to what happened when he called all the pilots out to see the presents Tom had brought.

Once they were all out there, he told Will to break them up into their new birds. Of course, Will and Bill would take the Jump Jets, as they were the only two qualified to fly them.

However, before Will could split them up, Tom stepped forward and informed Adam that he was going. Adam cocked his head, and Tom explained. "Hey, you guys made me family, and I ain't about to let you go in there to rescue more of my family with out going with."

Adam grinned when he heard Tom say that and gave the man a big hug. When he stepped back, he was suddenly hit with a question. "But what about your pilot? He left with the others."

Tom nodded and called Will over. "Hey Will, need to ask you something." When Will nodded, Tom went on. "I'm a good pilot, but I am a better gunner on the Apache, so tell me, who do you have that I can count on to get me in there and let me blow the shit out of things?"

Will didn't even hesitate. He turned and called out, "Hey Runt, get your ass over here!"

Tom was a bit shocked when Runt jogged over, but trusted Will's judgment. "Okay Runt, here's the deal. You see the Apache over there?"

Runt looked and smiled shyly, but nodded. "Good, here's your assignment. Your one of the best pilots I have, and to be honest, I don't want to waste your talent on one of the black hawks - they don't have the reaction speed that you do. However, that thing does." Will said while pointing the Apache.

“Now, there's a string attached. Uncle Tom's gonna be your gunner.” He let that sink in for a second then went on. “We can't afford to loose him, so I don't want him to even have a scratch. However, feel free to make him puke.” Will added with a grin.

Tom just laughed, “Many pilots have tried, and none have succeeded.”

Adam busted out laughing. “Tom, you don't know Runt very well. I think he just took that as a challenge, and he LOVES challenges.”

Adam grinned as he was brought back into the briefing room and out of his thoughts.

He took one more look around that room, and his eyes feel on the intel kids, most of whom were Logan clones. They were ready to head to Tom's last surprise. Some how he had managed to get them access to an AWACS plane, basically the military's equivalent to a flying command and control center. The Intel group almost had one collective orgasm when they heard they would be sitting in one of those circling over the battlefield. Jack was going to be in command of that group doing his job as overseeing the whole operation, while Adam was in the thick of it.

Adam nodded to himself then took in a deep breath and spoke. “Every single one of you know what we are about to do. I don't need to really go into it, other then to give out your assignments. I would like to take a moment and thank each and every one of you for doing this. None of you have to do this, yet you are all here, and even when given the opportunity to back out - none of you have. For that I thank you.”

“Now, before I get into the assignments, I want to start out with one of my favorite quotes.”

“LIFE IS NOT A JOURNEY  
TO THE GRAVE WITH THE  
INTENTION OF  
ARRIVING SAFELY IN A  
PRETTY AND WELL-PRESERVED  
BODY,

BUT RATHER TO  
SKID IN BROADSIDE,  
THOROUGHLY USED UP,  
TOTALLY WORN OUT,  
AND LOUDLY PROCLAIMING...

"WOW! WHAT A RIDE!"

The room erupted in laughter, which Adam joined in on. Then he got down to the assignments.

---

Half an hour later, people were loading into the helicopters to go. Daileass was going to be transporting the helicopters full of people, while hovering above the ground, one by one to the appointed area about sixty miles away from the base they were attacking.

Adam and Logan, along with the rest of the core Unit boys, Janet and Joe were going from helicopter to helicopter making sure everyone was set, and okay with their assignments before they left. They got up to the helicopter holding Joel, Kevin, Brant, Matthew, the four cats, and a few others when Joel got their attention.

"Adz! AAAADDDDDZZZZ! Hey! I gotta tell ya something," Joel called out over the sound of the rotor blades beginning to spin up.

Adam looked over at him and yelled back, "Yeah?"

"I was pulling your leg!" Joel shouted back as the copter started to pull up into the air, struggling to make himself heard. "You're not pregnant!!! GOTCHA!!!"

With that the helicopter lifted off the ground as the boys just stood there in stunned silence.

Janet was the first one to react. She quickly grabbed the shoulder mounted rocket launcher that Juan had on his back, and with surprising ease, pulled the thing to full extension and put it on her shoulder before Adam could tackle her. Some of the kids were laughing, but Janet was cussing so bad even Juan learned a few words.

"NO MOM!!!! You can't kill him!!!" Adam screamed while trying to get the rocket launcher away from her, and not hurt her at the same time.

"WHY NOT!!!! I'm gonna kill that little bastard!!!!" Janet was screaming as well, but one person knew that she was just playing.

Juan was the one that noticed the safety had never been taken off, nor had she actually ever pointed it at the helicopter. Just as Juan was about to point this out, Janet grinned up at Adam who had finally gotten the launcher away from her, and said with a grin, "Gotcha too."

Adam stood there shocked for a second, then turned to address everyone around. "Okay - next person to pull a practical joke on me will face me in the ring - GOT IT?!?!?!?" With that he stalked off to get in his helicopter.

Of course Logan knew he was joking - sort of.

A few moments later, as Juan was getting into their helicopter, he looked down to his little bear, Rambo. He smiled as he thought about the changes the 'little' bear had gone through in the three years they were on the Tardis. At first Juan and Jory just thought about making him an android style body so he could move around and interact with everyone. But then something strange happened, Juan noticed that Rambo actually grew more self-aware than they thought he would.

With the personality that he and Jory had programmed, Rambo wanted to be able to get into the fight more. Or as he put it, "I wanna be able to kick ass, and I can't do it with this little furry body."

After discussing it with Jory, then Joel and finally the Doctor, they came up with an idea. They would make Rambo a new body along the same lines as what the Doctor had already developed, even closer to a human, or in his case a dog, then an android would be.

After discussing it with Rambo, and letting Rambo pick out many of the features of his new body, they began. They had much more success than they ever dreamed possible.

When they were done, Rambo stood just shy of three feet tall, looked for all the world like a large teddy bear, at least until he exposed the claws on his hands and toes, the mouth full of fangs, and the 4 inch retractable blades that came out of his wrist. Those of course he wanted after watching an X-Men movie.

Needless to say, Rambo was now every bit as deadly as he was cuddly - which is just how Juan always thought he should be. He is Juan's teddy bear after all.

Two minutes later the helicopters were all airborne, and Daileass was starting to transport the helicopters. Once they were all on station, and hovering just a few feet above the ground, Adam took a moment to do a count, and make sure everyone was there. There were the fifteen Blackhawks, carrying twenty combat troops each, along with the Medivac, carrying Skipper and Bobby's team. The two Hind-D gunships piloted by Sarah and Chris, both being excellent pilots, as well as the first two helicopter pilots they had besides Will and Billy. The Apache gunship with Runt as the pilot, and Uncle Tom gunning. Then there were Will and Billy, in the two Harrier Jump Jets. Adam could imagine both of them still grinning as they sat there ready to take those things in there and bomb the hell out of the base. Lastly, the two surviving Huey's acting mainly as fire support, but able to pull fast extractions if needed.

Adam still remembered the little fight he and Logan got into not long ago. Logan asked why they needed a medivac, or extraction helicopters, when they had Daileass. Adam's response was simple - they may not always have Daileass there to bail them out, so they needed to know how to do it with out him. Of course, if it was really life or death, Adam did give Daileass authorization to beam out anyone who would die with out it. Adam wasn't that cold hearted.

“Command this is Lead... all accounted for and ready for 'go' order.” Adam spoke over his mic, and started to picture in his mind what many brilliant military minds had spent over one thousand man-hours created over the last day and a half. Even Tom had said the plan was ballsy as hell, but had the best chance of working. Even with all the people they had going, they were still outnumbered around ten to one, and the other side had home field advantage.

Jack's voice came across no more than three seconds later, issuing the first orders of the battle. “Roger that Lead - Operation Furry Flight is good to go!”

Adam almost burst out laughing, and momentarily regretted letting the younger kids pick the code names for this mission. He really almost laughed when he heard the low guttural growl come across the radio, and he knew it had to be Khan.

Moments later, they all got word that Chang, along with his wolves, and all the cats had exited the plane flying high over the site. The pilot of the transport plane came over the radio, laughing as he said “Operation Pussy and Puppy drop is complete - we're bugging out.”

Juan giggled and nudged Adam, "It's going to be unpleasant out there."

Adam was momentarily shocked. "Huh? You thinking a fight will be unpleasant?!" he managed, eying his laughing brother.

"Yeah! It's raining cats and dogs, right now!"

Adam was about to bust out laughing, when he heard several voice over the radio either saying they weren't dogs, or Khan saying something about what he was going to do to Juan. That's when Adam realized Juan was broadcasting his comments. That just made Adam laugh harder.

"Oh my! Dogs and Cats and Bears! Oh My!" came a silvery little giggle over the comm.

"I did not hear that. I don't know who spoke, cos I'm not talking to them right now," Juan said semi-seriously, a smile in his voice.

"Oh, Ju... I mean, Psycho-Headcase!" Joel whined, using the code name a 7-year-old boy had come up with for Juan.

"Compliments will get you no where." Juan said seriously.

"How about cuddles, kisses and cookies?" Juan bit his tongue, while Jory laughed at the mental message Juan sent him.

"Psycho-Headcase says he is not speaking to the annoying little elf at this moment..." Jory said.

"Okay, then I'll read the last chapter of Silmarillion to my hubby WITHOUT the Pshyco-Headcase - ner!"

Before anyone else could respond, Jack's voice came across trying hard not to let his laughter be heard, but failing. "Please keep this channel clear for operation related conversations. 5 minus forty five seconds till landing. Harrier's your good for your run."

Juan now looked completely put out, and poked his tongue out at Jory. "You've lost me cuddles, cookies and a good story! Bastard!"

Adam let the banter die out in his head as he saw Will and Billy push the jets to top speed for their run. Adam started to picture in his mind how things were going, using what he knew the plan was, and the chatter over the radio with the updates. As soon as the bullets start to fly, everyone gets serious.

Adam could see the cats and wolves, with Chang in the lead gliding down in their glide suits towards the base. The wolves staying in tight formation around Chang and Korris, while the cats fanned out a bit. Adam knew they were going to try and stay in the sun as long as possible, which is one of the reasons they planned the attack for this time of day. They hoped it would keep them from being seen till it was too late.

Adam saw in his mind, the cats getting close, pulling up to drop their speed, at the same time as opening up with their machine guns on the four guard towers. They had one of the hardest jobs, as all the

guard towers needed to be taken out, or they would have a clear line on the wolves, Chang and Korris as they landed right in the middle of the parade field.

From the radio chatter, he heard first Khan's voice come over saying his tower was secure. Adam could hear the gunfire going in the background, while Jack ordered the gun ships to go full speed, and the Blackhawks to follow.

Adam barely registered his helicopter lurching forward as the pilot gave it full throttle as he heard Thor and Tyr call their tower clear, followed closely by Hermes and Mercury.

Adam was holding his breath waiting to hear Vishnu and Kartik call theirs clear, but the call didn't come.

He was about to call and get a status report, when he heard Kartik call over the radio, "South tower clear, need Medivac as soon as it's clear."

Before any acknowledgment could be made, Vish came across the radio, "I don't need a fucking medivac! I still got one good arm!"

Jack cut in right then, and Adam could see the base coming up in the distance. "South Tower, hold position and cover the incoming helicopters. Strike team delta, advance to zone alpha two, and take out the runway ASAP!"

Adam heard the various acknowledgments come across, and just as he was about to get ready for his part, his blood ran cold.

"Fuck!!!!" Billy screamed over the radio, and Adam saw his jet pull up sharp, and go balls to the wall away from the base. Adam's advanced eye sight caught why. "SAM away!!!! It's locked on... SHIT! Bugging out till I can get it off my ass!"

At the same time, Chang's steady voice came across. "Parade field cleared, ready for drop off. Please make it quick."

"Understood Black team - We are eight seconds out." Adam said, as he took off the headset he had, and relied now only on the sub-vocal. Adam would now only hear what was going on with the ground team, as Daileass was keeping the teams on one channel. Jack was now in full control.

Adam looked forward, as he hung off the side of the helicopter, and saw the destruction that was being caused. Will was taking out his targets, which included the south gate, the control tower, and the planes on the ground. Just then he heard Jack come across the sub-vocal. "VSO, South Tower is down, please begin your operations."

"The Dragon has air..." was the only response they got from the Welsh Commander.

Adam saw a problem right away. The North Gate - Billy was supposed to get it, but with the SAM, he had to bug out before he could. Adam couldn't do anything about it right then, since he felt them start to slow for their drop, as well as the helicopter starting to take fire.

Adam just shook his head as he saw Juan grab Rambo around the waist, and jump out of the helicopter - while they were still about fifty feet off the ground, and going about forty miles an hour. Juan's glee-ful cries could be heard for a few seconds, and Adam grinned himself. "Fuck this!" he cried as he too jumped out, machine gun opening up as soon as he had a clear line of fire.

Adam hit the ground, rolled and came up firing. He almost lost his concentration when he saw a fireball erupt from right next to him, and streak out to take out a group of four or five guys that had been running towards him. Adam looked over and saw his little brother Jimmy standing next to him. "What, you think I would let you have all the fun?" Jimmy grinned as he too brought up his rifle and started to take shots at people.

"JORY!!! Take out the North Gate! Juan, find high ground and cover him!" Adam called into his sub-vocal.

Adam didn't have to look to see if his orders had been followed, he knew they would be. When he did get a chance to look, he almost lost his footing and busted out laughing.

Jory was zigzagging towards the gate, while Juan ran at Khan. Right before he got there, Juan cried out in a deep dwarfish voice, "TOSS ME!!!! BUT NOT A WORD TO THE ELF!"

Khan never missed a beat, and grabbed Juan as he ran by, Rambo still clutching in the boy's arms. Khan spun once, and let fly right at the guard tower that he had just jumped down from. Juan and Rambo both cried gleefully as they flew through the air and landed inside the tower. Juan quickly pulled out his rifle and started taking out guys in Jory's path, while Rambo jumped behind the .50 cal turret and was screaming maniacally as he let loose with the huge machine gun.

"Oh look! A flying Dwarf!" Adam heard in his sub-vocal from the giggling 'Elf' in question. "Got all teams in place, Boss. The Dragon are all inside. Chipmunks and Horny One have linked up with Fire."

Adam was about to comment on the lack of sanity by his group when he saw Jory pull out one his famous C-4 teddy bears, threw it at someone and yelled out "HERE!!!! HE NEEDS A HUG!" As soon as the teddy bear hit the guy full on in the chest, then fall to the ground, it blew up. Adam actually heard Jory giggle saying "You shoulda hugged him!"

Adam was paying attention to everything going on around him, while still making sure they made enough noise to distract the bad guys from what the VSO Guys were doing, when he noticed the Jory made it to the gate, pulled out about five of his teddy bears and attached them to the gate. A few seconds later he was running away when he hit the button and the gate blew apart.

"If you go down to Arizona today, you'll sure have a big surprise. If you go down to that G-Base today, you better go in full armor and a tank... cos today's the day when Jory's Teddy's are having... a blast..."

"That didn't rhyme, Elf."

"I know. Kinda hard to do when you're racing for cover, Not-Elf"

'Huff!'

Adam just shook his head as he took a brief moment to take stock of how things were going. The last of the helicopters had offloaded their troops, and had just lifted off. At the same time, he saw Chang, Korris and the wolves hit the main barracks. Ten to do what he wanted to send fifty or sixty to do. Adam figured the bad guys would probably have preferred he send the large group in - they would probably be nicer.

Adam also saw that Sammy and his crew had hit their building. That was the one that worried him the most. It was the only building that Ollie and the Chipmunks could not get any intel on. He wanted to take it himself, but he was needed more out here. He trusted Uncle Mike, and knew that Sammy, the Trinity, Uncle Eric, and the rest sent with them could handle it. But as always he worried.

Adam slung his rifle as it ran out of ammo, and grabbed two hand grenades. He didn't want to take the time to re-load as his group had the most dangerous job. The thirty he had with him had to take as much of the shit as the bad guys could hand out so that they would not get to the kids held here until the VSO arrived. Their entire plan revolved around that.

Adam knew General Adams well enough to know that his orders were simple; if they came under attack they were to get rid of the evidence as fast as they could. So Adam's job was easy - yet the most dangerous. Adam and his troops needed to make enough noise to keep their attention focused on them while the VSO got into place to protect the G-Kids. Adam knew they couldn't keep it up for long, but they needed to hit them as hard as they could for a total of two minutes. In theory that doesn't sound hard, but when it's thirty guys trying to keep hundreds pinned down for that long, it can be.

As Adam started throwing more grenades, he heard over the sub-vocal:

'Huff huff huffff!'

"You sure?"

'Huff!'

"Fuck! Come on. We're needed, Not-Elf."

"Boss told us to stay here!"

"I'll say sorry later. Come on!"

'Huff!'

\*Bark\*

"Hi ho Sehlat! AWAY!"

"Oh, God... If I die, I'm going to be soooo pissed off at you!"

"You've got the same armour as me. And a morph!"

"I might throw up at seeing this too close!"

"Meh, bad guys. S'long as I don't kill them, I don't care. Wow! I-Cheya, you can run fast!"

"What the fuck now?" Adam said as he looked at the blasted in gates.

Then he saw a white-silver armored bear run around the corner of it, carrying to small boys in glimmering and shining Armour, followed by two pissed off G-Cats, a Vampire and a black 'shadow' whom he knew to be Antony -- ALL heading to the same building Sammy just went into.

"Spock'll kill me..." Adam said as he pulled two of his pistols and started to take people out with those when he heard Billy come back over the radio. "LEAD!!! We got birds coming in hot and heavy from the south. They warning us off, and they got orders to open fire as soon as they're in range. Request permission to intercept!"

Jack's voice came over, and Adam could now hear the strain in it. "Red 1 and 2 break off, and engage the incoming hostiles... Yellow three, four and five, back them up. All other birds if they break twenty five miles you are to bug out immediately."

"Received!" Came the response from all the helicopters.

Tom came across with his own message. "Lead this is Yellow three. Switch over to military ops channel three two niner. Tell Tango Squad their run is authorized. That's a full ten Apache's simply waiting for the order to join in the fun! They'll help your guys handle the hostiles."

Adam couldn't help but grin even as he was forced to seek cover behind a still burning jeep. He landed hard next to his brother Jimmy who gave him a tight smile. "So this is your idea of a fun little assignment?" The younger boy asked referring to the way Adam had phrased it when he asked for volunteers to join him in it.

Adam knew how dangerous this part of the job would be, so he never ordered any of the teams to join him, but simply asked for volunteers to stand and fight next to him, after he described what the plan was. Adam was moved almost to tears as everyone of the kids under his command stood when he asked for volunteers.

Adam grinned as he came back to the here and now. "Oh yeah. This is a BLAST ain't it." Jimmy just groaned at a pun that was so bad it should have come from Dave.

Before Adam could say anything else, they both ducked their heads as one of the helicopters came streaking by laying down cover fire. However, just as it pulled up to circle around, Adam heard the explosion.

No one saw where it came from, but as the Huey pulled up and banked, a rocket propelled grenade came streaking in, and blew off the back part of the helicopter.

Adam cursed as he saw once again one of his helicopters going down. He looked around frantically trying to figure out what to do, knowing he was going to have to call Daileass to transport the crew out. He hated having to rely on something he would not always have, but he was not going to let people die because of his stubborn pride.

“COVER ME!” Adam heard someone shout. He tore his eyes off the wildly spinning helicopter to see Jimmy jump out from behind the jeep, and run out into the middle of the field, the helicopter spinning toward him.

Jimmy threw his hands up into the air, pointed at the helicopter, and Adam swore he was going to blow the thing up for some reason, but the helicopter started to slow its wild spin, and it's decent. Jimmy was using his telekinesis to save the helicopter.

He knew his little brother had been training with Nathan, but Adam also knew there was no way Jimmy was powerful enough to save the helicopter. Nathan was, and maybe even Chang, but both of them were N-Gen.

Jimmy wasn't.

Adam didn't have to give any orders, as everyone seemed to know that Jimmy was trying to do. All around Adam, everyone opened up with everything they had, trying to keep the bad guys pinned down so they couldn't hit the boy standing out in the middle of the field.

Adam emptied the clips on his pistols as he ran to be next to Jimmy. Using his speed loaders, he quickly reloaded, and did as much as he could to cover his brother.

Sweat had broken out on Jimmy's forehead as he strained to soften the landing of the over ten thousand pound helicopter. Adam would have tried to help, but he couldn't spare the concentration. Not only that, he hadn't really trained up his telekinesis. Jimmy was probably a stronger telekinetic than Adam was even though Adam was N-Gen.

Adam was momentarily stunned when he glanced over at Jimmy just in time to see his eyes flickering blue, and he started to lift off the ground. Adam could feel the heat erupt from his brother, and suddenly his brother was glowing. He wasn't on fire, but he was certainly super heating the air around him. His clothes were starting to smoke, and a cry of sheer agony tore from his throat. He was so intent on his task, that he couldn't - wouldn't - stop till it was done.

“SNIPER!” Adam barely heard it, and before he knew what he was doing, Adam flung himself in front of Jimmy. He felt the bullet slam into him, throwing him back almost fifteen feet, before he hit the ground, unmoving.

Juan glanced over as he heard the cry of 'sniper'. He saw the helicopter was now only a few feet off the ground, but what he saw with Jimmy shocked him. He knew what was happening - Jimmy was trying to channel more energy than his mind could handle. Juan knew there was only one thing to do, and quick as a thought, Juan broke into Jimmy's mind and shut him down. The boy collapsed just as the helicopter hit the ground. It wasn't a text book landing, but when it hit the ground, it didn't suffer any more damage, and Juan saw the side gunner standing there behind his gun, still firing.

That's when he saw Adam. Juan hadn't really thought anything about Adam taking the bullet meant for Jimmy. Adam was the toughest of any of them. He had been shot at point blank range with a high-powered rifle before while wearing his armor, and other than breaking a few ribs, nothing bad happened. Those ribs healed with in a few minutes, so Juan wasn't worried. Until he saw Adam not moving.

Juan's cry was heart wrenching, and seemed to seek out every single one of his brothers. He jumped down from the top of the tower, and was running as fast he could the second his feet were on the ground. Jory was only two steps behind him. Juan saw Khan break through the side of a brick building, intent on getting to Adam. Chang and the Wolves seemed to erupt from out of nowhere, all intent on one thing - getting to Adam.

Juan was only slightly surprised when he saw Logan running all out towards Adam. He wasn't surprised that his brother's love would be running, but it was the speed the Logan was running that surprised him. Then Logan jerked, obviously he had just been hit with a bullet, but he barely missed a step as he kept right on going.

They all made it to Adam almost at the same time, and they all saw the blood.

“ADAM!” Logan dropped to his knees, obliviously not caring that he too was bleeding.

Chang carefully rolled Adam onto his back. “SKIPPER!!! GET YOUR ASS IN HERE NOW! ADAM'S DOWN!”

Bobby was momentarily stunned - never had he heard Chang's voice raised, but then his training kicked in, and he kicked the helicopter up to full speed. As he did so, he replied that they would be there in ten seconds.

Adam looked up at Logan who was hovering over top of him. Logan gasped as he saw the blood that was frothing out of Adam's mouth, as his love took a breath, and spoke softly. “This ain't good Log...”

Before he could reply, Janet was pushing people out of the way to get to Adam as Chang was literally cutting Adam's armor off him. With Janet's help he pulled the vest off, and then Janet had a tricorder out and scanning.

“Oh fuck...” she breathed quietly, as Chang was doing his best to stop the bleeding from the holes on both sides of Adam's chest. He was quietly talking while he did this.

“The bullet seemed to go in under the arm on the right side, and exit on the left. Both lungs are down...” He could say no more for Janet stood up, and called out into the air.

“EVERYONE GET BACK!!!! Dailess – get us to the trauma unit now. I'm declaring a Code Blue staff all call. They better be there right now!”

Dailess didn't even bother to respond. With in a second, Janet, Chang and Adam all disappeared.

Logan looked lost for a second, then he heard Chang's voice in his head, and somehow knew that both Juan and Jory heard it as well.

“Logan, you know I will do all I can for Adam. However, we need you to command the rest of the battle. You are the best person for the job. Can you pull yourself together long enough to do it?”

Logan looked up and met eyes with first Juan, then Jory. He saw the same thing in both eyes. Neither Jory nor Juan were comfortable taking command, but would if Logan could not. But both of them agreed with Chang, Logan was the best person for this.

He looked down at the blood dripping from his hand, and for the first time really realized he had been shot too. A clean wound was in his shoulder - the bullet went right through with out too much damage. He was only mildly surprised to find out it didn't hurt. He looked back up, but this time his eyes were filled with a fierce determination, and both Juan and Jory grinned.

“ALL RIGHT EVERYONE!!! LETS FINISH WHAT WE STARTED! ADAM WANTED THIS MISSION COMPLETED, AND WE AIN'T GONNA LET HIM DOWN. ALPHA, BETA, DELTA TEAMS, TAKE POINT. I WANT THIS PLACE CLEANED UP - NO SURVIVORS!”

Everyone let out a single battle cry, then turned and executed Logan's orders. Every single one of them fighting for one thing, now. These assholes had taken out one of their own - and they would pay.

Juan ran over to Logan as the Entire Unit was fanning out. “Logan, can I call in my reinforcements now?”

Logan looked at the young boy who had a fire in his eyes. “Juan.. you call anyone in right now you want. Consider this an order... KILL THEM ALL!”

Juan gave him a ferocious smile, almost maniacal in nature, came to attention, saluted, then grab the radio off his belt. “Teddy bear Assault Force... you're live. Kill everything that is not IFF (Identify Friend or Foe) Friendly!”

Suddenly one hundred of the teddy bears that Jory and Juan had made appeared in the middle of the field, lined ten by ten. All of them only three feet tall, wearing camouflage clothing, and carrying guns. These were the ones that were programed with nothing more then military programing. These were not truly sentient, Joel had made sure of that. But they were very good at what they had to do.

Without a word they spread out, and one hundred more guns added to the battle going on all around the base.

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Back in Utah, the doctors were frantically trying to save Adam's life. The bullet had gone through him from one side to the other, finally stopping when it hit the armor on the other side. Both of his lungs had been shredded, two ribs were destroyed, but the worst part was the fact the bullet tore a hole in the ascending aortic artery. Chang looked up and saw the same thing in Janet's eyes as were in his own. Adam was dying, and they weren't be able to repair the damage quickly enough.

Chang had tears in his eyes as he cried out for one person he knew might be able to save his brother. “LEVI!”

There was a dual flash of light, and Levi appeared along with a yellow eyed boy of about the same age. "Yes, Uncle Chang?" Levi asked mutely, his eyes sad.

Chang never looked up from his work. "You can save him. Please Levi!"

Levi closed his eyes for a moment before opening them again to look down at the dying boy on the operating table. His eyes were shining white.

"I can't. Well, I could, but I shouldn't. My Friend... my Friend says it's... it's his time, Uncle Chang..." Levi said softly, tears in his voice.

"WHAT DO YOU MEAN IT'S HIS TIME?!?!" Janet cried out, just as a single tone filled the air - Adam's heart had stopped. "I don't give a shit what your friend says - SAVE MY SON!"

As Levi wiped a tear from his own eye and was about to respond, the yellow-eyed boy next to him spoke, "To hell with Vae'Runam. I like this one. He's interesting."

"No, Quint! We can't, it's not right..." Levi started, but Quint flapped his hand.

"No, YOU can't. I didn't hear Vae'Runam, so I don't know that I can't as well," he said with a smirk as he climbed up and sat next to Adam's prone body.

He bent his head down and whispered into the dying boy's ear. What he expected to get back from that was out of Janet's understanding, but he seemed satisfied a second or so later.

"Done and Done!" Quint giggled as he snapped his fingers.

With an explosion of light, all the blood and worse was gone from Adam and the others. So were all of Adam's scars.

His softly glowing blue eyes were now open and looking up at Janet. "Mom?"

"Yes, honey?" Janet said in relief as she sagged against the table.

"That fucking hurt! Can I have a hug?"

The End

"... and they all killed maimed and destroyed their enemies, and lived happily ever after... except Juan as there were no more enemies to kill. He just made Koth's life a nightmare... as well as make him so-re..."

...but that, my children, is *another* story..."

Author's Notes:

Before anyone asks, yes this is the end of book two, and yes there will be a book three, but there will also be an epilogue chapter of book 2 that is already being written.

Before I say anything else, there are a few people I really need to recognize, and give some heart felt thanks.

First off is my primary editor, D&B. With out him, These chapters would be a lot harder to read, if you could at all.

Second is my partner in crime Ilu. He has had a lot of input into these last few chapters as well as writing up the little blurb I put after "the end". I must say it has been nothing but fun writing with him.

Third is Ranger. He has recently come on board as another editor for me, as many know I need more than one.

Of course I need to say something nice about the readers, for with out you, no one would be reading my story. I am sure I like you guys a lot better then you like me after my series of cliffhangers. I have one more good one in store, but then I promise a break in the cliffies. I will only do dramatic pauses!

Ilu's Notes:

Blames me for everything... as if it were MY idea for Joel to prank his guys... as if it were MY idea to make Chang and Juan Klingons (God, save us all!! Juan a KLINGON!)... as if it were...

Well, okay. Yes, it was.

Hehehehe...

## Chapter 15

Adam was lost in thought as he walked down the corridor of the Unit's base. He had almost died. He'd never been that scared before; all he could think about was his family. He knew they would survive without him, but he didn't want to leave them. He knew he could die at any time, and that had been okay before. That was what he was made for, but now he knew he wanted to live. It really made him wonder what the future would bring. He stopped dead as he remembered a movie that he had watched with Chang a few weeks before. A line ran through his mind right then. "Every man dies... but not every man truly lives." Adam figured out that that is exactly what he was doing now... living. He started moving again, now smiling.

Adam walked into the conference room, and grinned as he saw everyone sitting around the room. He swept his hand through his long jet black hair, and sighed. He couldn't have been happier had he tried. Even with the fact that he had almost died, and even with the deal he had to strike with the young Q... he was still really happy. No one had died. They lost not a single person attacking that base. Of course there were injuries, some almost as bad as his, but no one died.

He glanced around at the faces sitting at the long oak table that served as their major planning table, and saw most of them were looking at him with a bit of worry, so Adam grinned at them to let them know everything was okay. "Geez guys, don't worry so much. It wasn't that bad."

He knew that lying to them was wrong, but he also knew that only a select few would really know how bad it was.

Ronnie looked up with tears threatening to spill, the words he spoke barely could be heard. "We.. we thought you died."

Adam walked over to the nine-year-old boy, and rested his hands on the small boy's shoulders. Ronnie was small even for nine, but his heart was the size of planets. "Nah, my dear boy..." He switched into a very bad English accent. "...it was just a flesh wound!" The room erupted in laughter with Logan groaning about how he would never let Adam watch Monty Python again. That was the lighter mood he wanted right now, and he was going to keep it that way.

"Yes guys... the rumors of my death were greatly exaggerated... you're stuck with me. Now... let me hear it, how'd we do?" Adam looked at Chang first, because he wanted Chang's report first. He already knew most of what his brother would say, but he wanted to make sure everyone knew.

Chang couldn't resist a grin as he reached up and rubbed his forehead ridges. Ever since he got changed by Kahless, he'd had more trouble controlling his emotions; most of the time he didn't even try... they felt good. "We had seventeen with gunshot wounds, only two serious, and thirty nine other minor injuries.... we lost zero." Everyone grinned as Chang said that.

"You see, Adam... THAT is what we can do when we have time to plan something." Logan's broad grin said everything else that his comment didn't.

"Damn straight," Adam said, while gazing at the love of his life. Logan was still the most beautiful thing Adam had ever seen, and hoped that nothing would even happen to what they had. "Now... let's get the info on our new 'residents'."

Logan sighed, shuffled some papers, found the one he was looking for, then met Adam's steel-gray eyes with his own deep blue. "Well, there were a few more kids than we had originally thought. Before I get into that, though, I best explain the classification system we have come up with." When Logan looked up and saw Adam's confused expression, he continued, remembering Adam knew nothing about this.

"Well, see, we figured it would be good to classify the different types of Genesis kids, since there are so many different genetic modification levels. What we came up with was a system that generalizes the amount of change made to a person, and their natural ability level. Basically a system to tell us how far above the human norm someone is, due to the Genesis manipulation."

Adam nodded, looking around to make sure everyone was on the same page. Everyone was leaning forward, eager for this to come out. Everyone knew that they had a lot of kids here that were above the human norm, but now they had a way to tell just how far each one was.

"Okay.. this might be a bit confusing, so if I lose you, let me know," Logan said, looking around to make sure everyone was with him. "Okay, first off, many of the hybrid kids, we have no real way of telling how old they are. See, this new bunch has about half that were allowed to age normally, and the other half were genetically aged, just like the original Cats, and the wolves."

"Wait a minute!" Adam broke in. "What do you mean the "'new bunch'."

That's when Logan realized that Adam didn't know about all the hybrids that they had found there. "Well... you know the building we couldn't get intel on? It was full of hybrids. Some growing normally, some force-aged."

Adam sat down with a thump. "How many are we talking about... and what kind?"

"I'll get to that in a second, Adam," Logan said, and Adam groaned... he had a feeling he wasn't going to like it. It's not that Adam had anything against the hybrids... Hell, he considered Khan to be one of his closest brothers. It was the fact that even though Adam was genetically enhanced, he could still go around without drawing attention to himself... the Hybrids couldn't.

"As I was saying, what we decided to do was assign an age to those that were genetically aged, based on their cellular development. See... Mom came up with the idea to look at the cells of the bones, and correlate that with what the age of a normal human would be with that cellular development." Logan paused for a moment to make sure everyone was with him. He saw that even Ronnie, the youngest non-argument there, was nodding his understanding.

"Okay, now that we have been able to establish the age of the person, we then can assign them a classification. It would be divided into two parts... a letter and a number. The letter would be what kind of genetic modification was used. Class A would be someone who was born normally, then changed. Class B would be someone who was engineered and then placed in vitro into a woman's uterus." Again he paused to make sure that everyone was with him. Ronnie looked a little lost till Janet leaned over and whispered something into his ear. Then the boy smiled and nodded.

"Finally," Logan went on, "there's the Class C. Those are the hybrids. Obviously they were engineered, and placed in an artificial womb for them to mature to 'birth.'"

Adam leaned forward, now clearly intrigued. "Okay... I get that part.. What's the number?"

"Well, the number is the harder part. See, every kid that was genetically engineered, Mom and Uncle Tony have done some testing too." Adam looked angry for a moment, and Logan quickly continued, "not like that, Adam, just seeing how much stronger, quicker, and how much faster they healed. Every single one of them agreed to the testing, and as for the healing, it only was tested when they got hurt in training or some other way."

Adam sighed, and looked looked guiltily over towards Janet. "Sorry mom, I know you'd never..."

Janet never batted an eye. "It's okay, baby... I know what you've been though, and can understand why you thought what you did. Don't worry about it." Janet may have said it, but Adam still felt bad for even thinking that Janet or Uncle Tony would ever purposefully hurt one of the kids.

Adam looked back over to Logan. "Sorry, Logan... go on."

Logan took a deep breath, then looked over his notes again. "What we did was average the three numbers... based on what would be normal for someone their age. Take Khan, for example. He is genetically fifteen years old. Obviously he is a Class C. Now compared to a normal fifteen-year-old boy, he is roughly seven times faster, eight times stronger, and heals about five times as fast. That would make

his classification level a C-7. Understand?" Logan was pleased to see that there were nods from everyone around the room.

Adam grinned and could help but ask. "Okay.. where do I rate?"

Logan broke into a broad smile and laughed a bit. "Well... you're a Class A, since you were modified after birth, and your stats run like this. Eleven times stronger than a normal fourteen-year-old, nine times faster, and ten times healing. So far you have the lead, being an A-10."

Adam leaned back grinning; Juan couldn't help but chime in. "Hey.. I think it's rigged... of course Logan would think Adam's A-Class." Everyone broke up over that.

Logan chuckled and looked at Juan. "Well, Juan.. you know.. I wouldn't say anything. See you USED to be a B-6... but since you decided to go all Klingony on us.. well, now you're just a freak!" Juan just stuck his tongue out at Logan as he flexed his brow ridges.

"Did he just imply that our race were freaks?" Koth asked Korris as both boys were up and moving in a pincer movement to come at Logan from both sides.

"Yes, he did."

"Tickle attack til he pees?"

"Agreed! ATTACK!" Korris yelled as Logan found himself brought to the ground in a laughing, hysterical mess.

Once the laughter died down, Adam sat back in his chair, not really knowing if he wanted to ask his next question, but knowing he had to. "Okay, Logan... NOW can you get to the new kids?"

Logan just grinned and pulled out another piece of paper. "SURE!!!!" he laughed a little. "It's a good thing you're sitting down."

"Oh, just get it over with." Adam giggled nervously.

"WELL!" Logan started with a flurry, then got serious. "We got two thousand two hundred and sixty two Class A. Yes... every non-hybrid at that base was born normal."

Adam's jaw hit the floor. He knew there were a lot... but never thought that it was anywhere near that high. But Logan wasn't finished yet... nowhere near.

"There are also many hybrids. And this time, things are a bit different. See, there are more than just the cats and wolves... as well as this time they accelerated the aging of some, but not all. They wanted to see if there were any differences between those that were aged, and those that grew up normally." Logan paused because he knew Adam was too shocked to hear much more right now. He was too busy trying to wrap his mind around what Logan was telling him. Everyone else in the room knew most everything, if not the exact numbers.

When Logan thought Adam was ready, he continued. "The first two groups are special. They were actually created twenty-six years ago. When General Adams found out about them... he threatened to expose them unless the doctor came to work for him. Since Dr. Rosenthal thought of all those hybrids as his children... he had no choice but to work for Adams. Mom has already offered him a job here, which he has accepted."

"What did Dr. Rosenthal create that long ago?" Adam asked in wondered shock.

"Gorilla and Chimpanzee hybrids." Logan said, showing some awe in his voice. "Hell... they've already started working on the second generation. Right now there are forty-two gorillas and ninety-eight chimps." Adam sat back in a state of shock. The implications were mind boggling. Hell... Adam knew that the Cats could reproduce... look at Claire. But to see what appeared to be a thriving sub-species... he just couldn't wrap his head around it.

Before Logan could continue, however, there was a slight rumble from the air vent. It popped open and a small, three-and-a-half-foot high 'creature' fell out and onto Adam's lap.

It was naked, furry and had a western style hat on its head. He reached out, grabbed Adam's gold-plated pen, thrust it high in the air..."I GOT THE SHINY!!" was all that it said before it leapt down from the shocked Adam's lap and raced from the room.

"What the FUCKING hell was that?" Adam managed to say while most of the others cracked up laughing.

"That," Nathan managed between giggles, "was Dave. He's one of the new kids. He's insane."

Logan was trying to speak, but every time he saw Adam's shocked expression, as he stared at the door the little furry boy had just run through, Logan broke up again. Finally he was able to make himself say. "And that brings us to the Ferret Hybrids..." Everyone broke up again as Adam looked at Logan with a look of absolute shock.

"How... How many of them are there?" Adam asked in a quiet whisper.

Logan giggled again. "Oh.. only seventy-six... but thirty one of them are aging normally... they range from three to six."

"Oh sweet Jesus..." Was all Adam could get out.

Logan, who was still giggling continued. "But wait... there's more!"

"MORE?!?!"

"Yup... we got one hundred and eighteen more cats... fifty-nine of them between three and six. Twenty-eight badger hybrids... ten of them being three to seven... and my personal favorite... the six Wolverine Hybrids... only two of them are young."

"Wolverines..." Adam breathed, "I bet they're a cuddly bunch..."

"Oh, and two more Badgers with Joel – they're seven and aging normally. Albinos, poor things. Also, two ferrets went with him, one chimp and three cats. But one of the cats is being adopted by Brant and Matthew," Nathan added.

"And Sammy ended up with... how many kittens was it?" Koth giggled.

"God only knows," Nathan responded.

"Oh, yeah... and don't forget about the two Raccoons," Logan added.

"Oh, God...." Adam breathed as he sat back and closed his eyes, "...give me strength."

The room remained quiet for a moment to give Adam some time to collect himself. After a few minutes he opened his eyes and asked no one in particular, "How can they even lead normal lives? I'm sorry, but seeing the cats try and fail to fit in makes me hurt inside."

Nathan smiled over at him, "Joel's four have gotten around that problem."

"How?" Adam asked weakly. "Please, I really want to know."

"They act like they are aliens!" Nathan explained. "Adam, go take a look in Orlando; New York; London; etc. There are aliens all over the major cities. People don't bat an eyelid. They see something walking and talking like a human but obviously not, so they'll just assume they are from another world in Federation Space – Federation member or not, Earth gets many visitors from unaligned worlds. Don't worry for them. The VSO will brief them on how to act around normals, so they can just be themselves – naked or not. Do you know there are 16 races in the sector that don't wear clothes unless they absolutely HAVE to? Your G-Hybrids will fit in fine once they understand that."

Adam sat there for a second, letting his thoughts collect, then looked over to Logan. "Okay, I like it so far, but could I make a few additions?"

Logan nodded, got out a piece of paper, and got ready to make notes as Adam put his thoughts into words. "One thing that's missing is the intelligence augmentation. I was thinking that maybe we could use Star Fleet's IQ tests to use as a base test, and figure out how much more brain power we use."

"Well, that would take some time, but I see no problem with it," Logan said, while everyone else was nodding.

"Okay," Adam said while looking around at the group, "now the big question. What the hell are we going to do with all the new kids? I mean, if I added it up right, we're looking at about two thousand six hundred and thirty new kids! Where the hell are we going to put them?!"

Everyone looked at Adam with a weird look and he got the distinct impression he was missing something. Finally it was Ronnie who spoke up. "You mean you don't know about the other base?"

Adam looked around like he was lost. He saw that everyone else must have known what Ronnie was talking about, but he had no clue. He didn't like that feeling.

"When Levi fixed up this base, he must have figured we were gonna get a lot more kids, so he made another base. It's in this canyon as well, but on the west wall." Ronnie spoke, as he was typing something into the terminal at his seat. Suddenly the lights dimmed and the screen on the far wall lit up. When Adam looked, he saw it was a 3-D picture of their box canyon, complete with a scale so he could see exactly how big things were. It showed the canyon, just shy of a half mile wide, and just over one mile long. The only entrance to the canyon was in the south wall, where part of the wall was missing, right in the center. Adam could see the entrance to the base they were in now, exactly opposite the entrance, on the North wall.

The image also showed how the base was set up, looking like a pyramid with the top level being the ground level, and the other levels going down into the earth. Each level being bigger than the one on top.

Adam knew all this, but what he didn't know was what was on the west wall. There seemed to be yet another entrance to another base. Adam could tell just by the picture that the blast wall on that entrance was even thicker than the one they had on this base.

Adam looked hard at the picture, and then worked his own controls to start getting close looks at things. Ronnie was giving a running commentary on the base, based on what Adam was looking at.

"As you can see, the second base, which people have been calling Phantom Base, is set up much more like a military base than this one is. It has a larger opening to the canyon, as well as a retractable ceiling large enough to let even the MI-26s fly in." Adam whistled softly to himself, and with a nod told Ronnie to go on.

"The base itself cannot hold as many people as this base does, simply because the layout is somewhat different. There are more training areas, as well as indoor firing ranges. There are more pods, but they don't hold as many. I figure that the pods can each hold two squads. Each pod also has its own weapons storage locker..."

Adam just sat there in shock as Ronnie went on telling him all about the base that had been there for over a week, yet he never knew about it. When he was done, Adam looked at his 'son' with a grin.

"Damn, Ronnie... I knew we kept you around for something. Now I guess the only issue is getting it supplied." Adam laughed, but his grin faded when Ronnie just smiled at him.

"Already got that covered... old man." Everyone laughed as Ronnie leaned over and stage whispered to Alvin, "Boy, they really do get slower as they get older!"

Adam grinned, then looked at Ronnie. "What do you mean, you got that covered?"

"What I mean is just that. While you guys were off playing soldier, a whole bunch of us went through the new base getting everything ready. It really goes quick when you got about two thousand kids wanting to help. Not to mention we got about ten friends of Hulk Hogan here...."

Adam's jaw hit the floor, and Jack took that moment to jump in. "Adam, you remember when we talking to Sam when he first got here?" Adam nodded and Jack went on. "I tried to explain to you then that most of these kids would follow you into hell if needed. You didn't believe me then, but maybe

you're starting to see it now. Those kids that helped today didn't do it because anyone asked. They saw Ronnie and a few others starting to do the work, and they just helped. It got around the base quick that new kids coming into the base needed a place to stay, and they all jumped in. When they heard you were leading the rescue attempt, they all said they wanted to help the guys that helped them." Jack knew by Adam's look that he would never believe he was the cause of it all, and that kind of modesty is what Jack loved the most about Adam.

Adam, being really uncomfortable with the way the conversation was going, changed the topic. "So where's Tommy? I thought he would be up here too."

Ronnie lost his smile, and looked over to Janet before responding. "Tommy's sick."

Adam's eyes flew to Janet, and was already halfway out of his chair before she could say anything. "Tommy's fine," she said, making Adam pause. "He's got the flu... but I'm keeping an eye on him. Right now he needs to rest."

Adam, only slightly less concerned, said, "You sure?"

Janet just smiled and nodded, making Adam sit back down. He took a moment, running his hand through his long hair. For a moment he thought that it might be time to get a haircut, but then he remembered how much Logan liked his long hair, which by now was more than halfway to his butt.

"Okay, so where are all the new kids now?" Adam asked, getting his thoughts back to the situation at hand.

Logan spoke up first. "Right now they are all hanging out in the canyon. Dave and his troop of cooks made a welcome feast for them. Most of the other kids are out there, getting to know their new new family members."

Khan spoke up next. "The hybrids were a bit concerned at first, thinking that the normal kids here wouldn't like them. That was, of course, until the teddy bear brigade got their hands on them." Adam looked blankly at Khan, and the oldest of the cats grinned at him, showing off his massive fangs. "Most of the kids under the age of seven have organized themselves into the teddy bear brigade. They've made it their job to welcome all the new kids, and especially any new hybrids that come. They got the idea from Camp Little Eagle, where the younger kids there have organized themselves into a group that helps out the new kids."

Adam just grinned and shook his head. He should have guessed that the little ones would have gotten involved. If he had to guess, he would probably say Kent was somehow in charge of that. "Okay, last thing I want to say before we go meet them is this. Khan, I am naming you commander of the hybrid forces. Make sure they get what they need, and if there are any problems, let me know."

Khan just nodded, and then the meeting broke up.

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"So? What was your score, you Klingony-Humany-Genesisy funny person?" Riti asked Juan as he flapped alongside the boy.

Juan grinned at his friend. Inside the Tardis, the two boys had become close, due to their love of weapons and marksmanship. Competitions inevitably arose between them as to who was the best, and usually, Juan won – mainly as Riti had not got the mass to use ballistic firearms.

In the rescue, however, they had made a bet on, with their preferred equipment, who'd have the most kills.

"68 clean kills, and one maybe. He got hit by Rambo same time as me," Juan grinned as he buffed his nails on his chest.

"Really?" Riti said, sounding most impressed. "Now that isn't bad – for a Klingony-Humany-Genesisy funny person. I got 71."

Juan stopped dead and glowered. His 'Gimli' voice in full measure, he stated, "I'll have no be-winged freak outscoring me!!"

"Shouldn't that be 'Elven Prince', and wouldn't that be between you and Joel?" Riti teased playfully.

"Sadly, no," Juan said, falling completely serious. "Joel can't kill, so can't. He's so good, though, that a three way game on who'd 'fell' the most would be interesting..."

"Joel," Riti giggled as he flapped higher, "well, let's say that Joel has already beaten us. As of today, he's beaten over 9000 people."

"What?! There wasn't THAT many in the fucking base we just gang-banged!!" Juan screamed, while Riti flew a little higher.

"Hehe... no, he's beaten all of the UNIT and all of the VSO, hasn't he? We'd do anything for him, so... he's won! Nerr nerr!" Riti crowed out before flapping away faster than Juan could draw and let rip with his favorite gun...

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Adam was walking around meeting all the new kids. Again he was thankful for his photographic memory, as without it he would never have remembered all their names. Finally they got to where the hybrids were hanging about, and for a second he was more than a little shocked. Hearing what they were did not prepare him for what they looked like.

The cats were easy enough to handle, as he had seen cat hybrids before. What he wasn't prepared for was the little ones. He knew from Logan that they ranged in age from three to seven years old, but he didn't think they would look so small, or so damned cute. He managed to spot Kent, who was directing a bunch of different games for all the little ones.

Adam could clearly see not only normal human kids, but also cats, ferrets, chimps, gorillas, and even a few that had to be badger kids in the group, all playing together without a care in the world. He heard Khan laugh beside him, "play, bringing kids together since the beginning of time."

Adam could only nod his agreement. Then he saw some of the older hybrid kids. The ferrets, with their reddish fur, only about a half an inch thick, but covering their entire bodies. Very thin, with short but wiry arms and legs, and long thin torsos. None of them were wearing clothes, but almost every one of them were wearing a hat of some sort.

Gorillas, who could easily give Khan a run for his money on sheer size. All of them, except for the youngest ones, were at least six foot tall, had huge arms, and even bigger chests. They were, for want of a better term, massive.

Chimps, who were smaller, and seemed to be exceptionally graceful. They were all wearing coveralls that must have been designed for them specifically. Their arms and legs were long, with long fingers on their hands, and long, almost finger-like toes on their feet. Their coveralls were lined with pockets, and Adam could see many of them holding tools of some sort.

Then he saw the badgers. They were short but incredibly powerful looking creatures, with very slight muzzles, and big, impressive looking teeth. They were all wearing military fatigues, obviously specially modified to handle their short, powerful frames.

Adam thought he was prepared for anything by that point, but then he saw the wolverines. The two tallest only stood about four and a half feet tall, but were probably wider than they were tall. Adam could swear they had muscles on top of muscles, and just looking at their faces, he knew that they were a bad-tempered bunch.

Adam figured out who Logan had told them was the commander of the hybrids at the base, so Adam worked his way over to the largest of the wolverines. He still couldn't believe what it was that the doctors of the lab had named the wolverine leader.

"Logan?" Adam asked as he stepped up to the almost five-foot-tall wolverine hybrid.

He looked up at Adam and asked in a gruff deep voice, "Yeah?"

"I'm Commander Casey, Commander of the operational forces within Camp Bam Bam." The kid looked him up and down, not looking impressed at all.

"Okay, what can I do for you?" and then, almost as if an afterthought, he added a "sir." at the end.

Adam was not sure what to do at this point, but pressed on anyways. "I wanted to introduce myself, and to introduce you to the commander of the hybrid forces. This is Amur Khan, and he'll be your direct CO," Adam said, while indicating Khan standing beside him.

"What: you want me to obey *this* pussy?" Logan the wolverine asked incredulously, jerking his thumb at Khan.

"Are you challenging me?" Amur Khan said, looking at Logan with a snarl on his face, not liking the look he was seeing.

"I ain't going to follow a pussy. We's take care of ours selves," he said without even looking at Khan.

"Don't call me a pussy," Khan growled under his breath.

Logan started to say more, but never got it out of his mouth. Suddenly he flew across the area as Khan's furry fist connected with the side of his head.

This was met by many sounds of startlement, and some loud cat calls from the various hybrids that Adam had just met.

"Fiiiiight!!!!"

"He's at it again."

"Aw jeez. He never learns."

"Damn... He picked a big one this time."

"How many does this make?"

Most of the chimps and gorillas were just making noises of disapproval and shaking their heads. A female chimp was clucking and wringing her hands. She clearly disapproved of the young wolverine's behavior more than most. Professor Don, one of the oldest chimps, turned to his mate and chuckled.

"I don't think he will ever learn, honey. It's just not in his nature."

"I know, dear, but you've read the profile on Khan I don't think LoLo knows what he's getting into," Professor Mary said.

"Honey... I don't think Khan understands what he's getting into, either," Professor Don said with a smirk on his face.

Juan was excited as he sized up the two opponents. He used his sub-vocal to speak with Daileass. "Daileass, you are already broadcasting this, right?"

"Of course, Juanita. Just who do you think you're talking to?"

"Oh ha. ha. Like I haven't heard that one a million times. Let the usual people know that I am giving 1.5 to 1 odds in favor of Khan."

"Are you sure, partner? I mean, this is Khan we're talking about, Juan."

"You haven't seen just how stubborn these wolverines are, trust me. Khan is going to win, but he is going to have a tough time of it."

"If you say so, Juan. You seem to be right about this sort of thing more than you are wrong. ...Oh damn! I just checked the file on the Logan guy. He is one tough customer. He has a slight defect, though. Once he starts a fight, it is very hard to get him to stop. He just kinda gives in to his wolverine instinct."

Juan smiled at the comment. He already knew this. He had memorized all the files on the new kids before they had even taken the base. The chipmunks were very good at what they did. They had gotten every piece of information that was on every system networked in the base. The only places they had not gotten were the closed lab systems, but they had even managed a few of those. Given enough time, Juan was certain they could have gotten everything somehow.

Logan for his part was literally snarling like a wild beast. He was on all fours and circling Khan, who was calmly standing still with his arms at his side. He wasn't twitching a muscle.

Adam for his part was of two minds. On one hand, he felt that they had enough fighting to do without fighting each other. On the other hand, he could see that Khan needed to establish the chain of command and earn the respect of the wolverines, as well as that of the other hybrids. Besides, he thought to himself with a grin, he liked a good fight now and then. Then there was also the small matter of the sizable bet he had just placed with Dailess on Khan to win.

Logan broke off Adam's chain of thought as he charged Khan on all fours. The wolverine launched himself at the neck of his opponent.

Khan for his part read the move, and was moving out of the way almost before Logan left the ground. He hammered his fist into the back of Logan's head. Khan fully expected this to put the wolverine down for good. He hadn't held back at all.

Logan slammed into the ground with enough force to leave a mark. It didn't slow him down for a moment. He simply changed his direction of attack and went for Khan's legs.

Khan was not expecting this, and his eyes widened in surprise as Logan latched onto his leg and began to bite over and over.

Khan let out a tremendous roar as he grabbed Logan by the scruff of his neck. He spun around and hurled Logan across the feasting area and into a table that had been occupied only moments before by several of the ferrets, trying to get a better look at the fight. Khan had rushed after Logan just as soon as he had sent him flying. Before Logan had righted himself, Khan began to pummel him. Blow after blow rained down on the young wolverine's body, but it seemed to have little effect. To be more precise, it seemed to only enrage Logan further.

Logan rolled and came to his feet. He snarled and made some other unintelligible sounds as he raked his claws back and forth. He began to bob and weave almost like a drunk person. Khan, not one to underestimate an opponent, was surprised by Logan's flexibility and speed. It was hard to imagine the wolverines as graceful, but that is what Khan was witnessing. Even though Logan was almost as wide as he was tall, he could move with speed, grace, and ferocity.

Bartholomew Rollins III, or "Runt" as he was known to his friends, winced as he watched Logan rake Khan with his claws. He had only spent some time with Khan while training in the Tardis, but he knew that his feelings for the huge tiger boy were genuine. Every time he looked at him, his stomach did flip-flops and he lost the ability to speak. But he knew that there was no way that Khan would look at someone as small and scrawny as him. Almost fifteen years old, and most people thought he was ten. There was no way that someone as awesome as Khan would look twice at a "runt."

Khan was busy meeting the onslaught from his smaller opponent. Khan was kicking to block him which was creating problems of balance and speed. The size difference was working in Logan's favor, but Khan was not one to be beaten easily. He dropped to one knee and began pivoting on it and alternating from one to the other. This allowed him to counter much more effectively with his own claws.

"Get him, Amur!" Runt bellowed at the top of his lungs.

Juan was busily conversing with Daileass as they managed the betting on the fight. Juan was very impressed with the wolverine. He had known they were tough, but Logan was showing an impressive amount of fighting ability. Juan decided it was time to reel the suckers in, and he instructed Daileass to now only accept bets with Khan favored at 1.25 to 1 odds. Juan knew that the greedy ones were waiting for better odds, and that he could sucker them with this move.

Quick as lightning, Khan seized Logan by the scruff of his neck. He leaped to his feet. Then he began to spin like one of those discus throwers in the Olympics. He sent Logan sailing. The wolverine's trajectory caused the crowd to scatter. Logan went right through a tent. It wrapped itself around his body as he rolled to a stop. The crowd ran in terror as Logan started growling and ripped his way through the fabric of the tent.

"Oh LoLo. Why won't you ever learn?" Professor Mary said as she wrung her hands. Professor Don put an arm around his worried wife and held her close. He didn't say anything because it had all been said before. His mind went back to the first time they had met "LoLo." It was a scene not too unlike the one they were watching right now.

### *Begin Flashback*

Professor Don was working on a compound to make stronger body armor for the fighting forces. He could hear an argument among some of the new kids that were down the hall from him. The sounds of their fight was coming through the vents clearly. His wife looked at him with that look he was helpless to defy.

"Well, what are you waiting for, Mary? I know you want to go see what you can do." She smiled at her husband. They were some of the oldest chimps, and they had taken on as much of a parent role as they could for many of younger hybrids. It was something that Professor Mary took very seriously. Of course Professor Don felt the same way, he just tried to hide it a bit. A survival tactic picked up from being stuck around General Adams and his bunch of crazies. His wife, on the other hand, couldn't help but wear her heart on her sleeve. It had been what brought them together before General Adams had changed everything.

Don felt the hole in his heart as he remembered when things had changed and they had been taken. Father had been working for General Adams for several years now. Things had begun to change slowly at first, but then more and more they found themselves subject to armed guards and questionable "requests." It had become obvious that General Adams was not what he said.

Their son, Ben, not old enough to know any better, had tried to resist being caged when the soldiers had come to forcibly relocate them to an unused maximum security army base. The soldiers had used cattle prods on him before beating him to death as a lesson. You did not resist or we kill you, was the messa-

ge. It was only the intervention of Father that had kept things from getting worse. He had put a stop to the soldiers brutal techniques and convinced us to "cooperate." We learned a hard lesson that day.

Mary had felt the need to help out any of the youngsters she came across ever since. She didn't care if they were human enhanced or hybrid. She didn't care if they were chimp, cat, or badger. She tried to give as many of them as she could the mother they were lacking. She dropped the work she loved and became a behavioral researcher in order to be able to perform "experiments" with groups of the hybrid children.

What she was in reality doing was setting up programs that trained the kids with good social skills. She had eventually been able to work it out so that she had access to almost all the kids in the base. Most of the education programs were run by her, and she had been able to put a stop to the majority of excessively brutal methods that some of General Adams' staff seemed to prefer. Some things were still beyond her control, but she had done a very good job. It helped that a lot of the staff was more to her line of thinking than the extremes. She had built some very good relationships with some of the human research staff. A select few were even helping with the resistance that the chimps and gorillas had started.

So off she had gone to see what the noise was all about. I clicked the monitor to view what was happening in the other room and found a rather strange scene. There were several of the new wolverine hybrids. They were standing behind a young male who was demolishing the room. He would not let anyone near the others.

His eyes were little more than slits and he was snarling. Drool was flying from his mouth. He had the scientists all cornered. No amount of pleading from the scientists had any effect on the enraged wolverine boy. Professor Don chuckled to himself. He had warned that the wolverine experiments were not going to get the results that the scientists expected. He had warned them that a wolverine hybrid would probably have some severe temperament issues.

He chuckled as the wolverine kid literally ripped the lead scientist's lab coat into ribbons. *I guess I will have to review my own theories. His temperament is worse than I expected.* He slapped his thigh and laughed out loud when the wolverine kid snapped randomly in the air. *That's just wonderful. I hope those damn eggheads the General brought in will listen to those of us with experience now.*

"Go get 'em, little guy!" Professor Don exclaimed out loud as the enraged little wolverine charged the scientist that tried to subdue him with a stun stick. The scientists were all screaming like little girls. Prof. Don was rolling on the floor laughing uncontrollably. Then Mary entered the room.

"What on earth is going on in here!"

Everyone stopped and looked at Mary. She was eyeing the scientists with what looked like a mix of skepticism and disapproval. The scientists wilted under her gaze. Professor Don never ceased to be amazed at how well his wife could manage the scientific personnel on the base.

Logan growled and cursed as he rounded on the intruder. What he saw stunned him. The motherly face of Professor Mary smiled kindly at him. She looked down at the tablet in her hand and then at the wolverine boy.

"Ah you must be LoLo?" she said as she gazed into the youngster's eyes with the look of a mother. "Give the doctor his clothes back and come with me. That includes the rest of you too," she said, gesturing to the other kids in the room, as she eyed the doctors, daring them to contradict her.

Logan blinked his eyes in disbelief. *Had she just called him LoLo* Then a strange thing occurred. He found, to his great surprise, himself answering her politely.

"Yes, Ma'am." was his subdued response. His stomach was all topsy turvy. He felt slightly embarrassed. He knew for sure that he had never felt quite like this before.

### *End Flashback*

His eyes had narrowed to slits and drool was beginning to drip down his muzzle. His head was making strange twisting motions as he bit at the air. He was making some sort of twisted cross between a growl and cursing. He went down on all fours and began to scratch at the ground with his claws. He started to circle Khan, his body making a peculiar rocking motion.

Runt put his hand over his mouth and made a gasping sound as he tried to master the emotions swirling in his head. He wanted nothing more than to run over and take on the wolverine himself. He knew that it was not a possibility, because in terms of strength and fighting ability, the young wolverine had much deeper resources to call on.

Juan for his part was loving this. Logan was putting up just the type of fight Juan was expecting. He was counting on it looking like a close fight. It would drive the betting up.

Logan started stalking Khan. He was bobbing and weaving all over the place, looking for an opening in Khan's stance. He was not finding one. The large tiger had been trained by one of Takamura's students, and had eventually surpassed his teacher. His fights with Chang had made him improve by leaps and bounds since that time. He was a warrior in every sense of the word, but so was Logan. Logan was as single-minded as they came. Once he latched onto a target, he never backed down or off.

Khan for his part was looking at the wolverine with something akin to wonder, but bordering on horrified fascination. He had heard the term "foaming at the mouth," but had never expected to see it. He especially had never expected to see it in an opponent. Khan crouched low. He knew that he couldn't let the wolverine get leverage on him. He was very strong and fast.

Suddenly Logan moved in on Khan, who shot into the air. Logan was not fooled and he veered to one side, then launched himself at Khan. He was met by a flurry of kicks and punches from the tiger boy. As he landed on the ground, Khan landed on him with a knee in his side. He proceeded to pound on Logan with his fists, but it was hard for him to keep Logan pinned. Lots of comments and gasps could be heard from the crowd.

A rather large gorilla could be heard above everyone else though. "Damnit, Logan! Why do you have to be so hard headed? Look at how much you are making Mamma Mary worry about you. Won't you ever learn?!?"

The wolverine seemed to shrug the assault off as he twisted out from under Khan. He was focused solely on his fight. Nothing was reaching him at this point. Pure instinct. Logan came at Khan slicing him

with his razor sharp claws. Khan met the onslaught with his own attack. Both were bleeding now. Suddenly Khan changed tactics. He stepped back, drawing Logan forward, then quickly sidestepped and seized him by his neck. He quickly hurled the wolverine into the wall of the canyon, which sent spectators scrambling.

The resounding crack as Logan slammed head first into the wall brought silence to the area. Everyone was convinced that the young wolverine had to be seriously injured, if not dead, from the impact. Khan however knew that he might have only stunned the kid for a moment. His pounding on the wolverine had let him know just how tough this kid was. He knew that it was going to take more than that to put Logan down.

Runt almost could not contain himself. He actually took several steps toward Khan before he checked himself. Sure, Khan had been kind to him in the past. They had even talked a bit while training in the Tardis, but that did not mean that he was interested in a "runt."

Logan leaped up and landed on all fours. He found himself in front of a folding style chair. He growled at it as he charged, seizing the offending chair in his mouth. He then began thrashing it around, crumpling the chair before ripping it apart with his claws. Those close enough could hear a steady stream of profanity/growling coming from the wolverine. If it wasn't for the fact Logan looked totally deranged and ready to turn on anyone in his way, it would be funny.

This time Khan didn't wait for Logan to attack. He came at the wolverine with deadly speed and power. He leveled kicks and punches with devastating accuracy. The wolverine wasn't able to counter-attack, because as soon as he would position himself for an attack, Khan would do a flip over him and attack from a different angle. Logan for his part was running on pure instinct now. He was literally chewing rocks and dirt.

Khan couldn't believe what he was seeing. It was as if something had short circuited in Logan's brain. Logan suddenly back-pedaled toward one of the tents. It was not something that Khan expected, as Logan had been very straightforward in his fighting so far, but it didn't take Khan long to react. He closed in quickly, relying on his speed and longer stride to allow him to get between Logan and whatever he was after.

Khan soon realized that he had made a mistake. Logan had anticipated the move. This time, as Khan passed over the wolverine, he found himself on the receiving end of a bite to his shoulder from the foaming furry fury that Logan had become. Logan tried to adjust to get a better grip, and found himself sailing into the tent in front of them, pulling it up from the ground before he slammed into the canyon wall for a second time.

Khan followed the wolverine to the wall. He grabbed the tent that was wrapped around Logan like a sack and quickly hurled him into the air. Leaping upward, he delivered several kicks before grabbing the tent and hurling Logan back to the ground. On the way down, the enraged wolverine shredded the tent and did a neat roll before charging back at Khan.

Khan threw a kick, and to his horror found his calf being chewed on by a snarling wolverine. Luckily for Khan, Logan had not found purchase, and it only took a few good shakes and a shot to the head with a fist to dislodge the kid. Khan was staring at Logan like he had lost his mind, which in reality was not too far from the truth.

The two combatants were circling each other, both letting out small growling noises. Khan crouched low and began to move on all fours. He sized up his opponent slowly, watching his movements and taking measure of his body. He was strong. He would never make the mistake of underestimating this kid's strength again.

Khan moved. It was a blur to most of the observers. It took Logan by surprise. The speed was unexpected. Khan attacked without mercy. He rained kicks and punches down on Logan and began to drive the snarling mass of fury back. The blows were taking their toll on Logan. His body was beginning to betray him.

Then it happened. Logan's jaws clamped onto Khan's forearm when he executed an open palm strike at Logan's chest. Khan for his part let out a startled primal roar. He immediately grabbed the wolverine's jaws with his free paw and tried to pry Logan's jaws open. They wouldn't budge. Khan's eyes grew wider and wider as he began trying to use a foot to pry Logan off.

He began raining hammer blows on Logan's skull, and still the wolverine wouldn't let go. His blows began to become more desperate. Khan was beginning to think that Logan was going to rip his arm off. He pushed Logan's chin to the ground and tried to pry the kid's mouth open, but it wouldn't budge.

Khan began to panic at this point. He had never before been subjected to this type of single-mindedness. It was scary in ways that Khan had never imagined. Khan was beginning to make noises like a house cat in heat as he tried in vain to pry the mouth off of his arm.

Runt was holding a hand to his face. He couldn't stand to see the person he cared for most, even if he couldn't admit his feelings, being hurt. He was in turmoil inside as he tried to encourage Khan.

"Don't give in, Khan. You are the best!"

Despite Khan being totally freaked out, something registered for him. He let out a roar of defiance. He started slamming Logan on the ground in an effort to dislodge him. He began to bounce up and down as he tried to dislodge the wolverine. Strange noises, very out of place for the leader of the G-Cats, began spewing forth. It was reminiscent of the sounds a tom cat might make during a fight in an alleyway.

Juan was beginning to giggle at the sounds that were coming out of Khan's mouth. He couldn't help himself. He was going to make a ton of money on this fight. Suddenly he was whirled around and a fist connected with his face. He fell back on his ass and let out a startled gasp. Runt had taken exception to Juan laughing at Khan. Juan was on his feet in an instant.

His eyes were glowing, but then he just looked at Runt, not too much bigger than himself, looking at him with a stunned expression of disbelief. Juan's eyes softened and then he got a wicked look in them.

"Ah, so that's how it is, huh?" He made a kissy face at Runt. The color drained from Runt's face and his eyes began to tear up.

*Hey now. Don't worry. I think it's great! You and the big pussy are perfect for each other!* Juan projected into the boy's head.

This was too much for Runt to handle. He took off, pushing through the crowd until he found a spot he could hide in, but still watch. Juan shook his head. 'I don't know how, but those two need to get together,' he thought to himself with a grin.

Khan for his part was beyond freaked. He was flopping around like a fish out of water. Logan was slamming repeatedly on the ground. Khan leaped into the air and brought Logan crashing through one of the tables that moments before had been full of spectators. It shattered into splinters.

Khan began making more guttural cat sounds. All the cat hybrids laid their ears back and made shocked faces at the large tiger kid. It was obvious that the noises were not considered polite by the cats.

Soon the crowd was scattering again as Khan flopped around and twisted, trying to shake the wolverine off his forearm. Chairs, tents, sound equipment all went flying as Khan became more and more desperate. The destruction was becoming more and more pronounced when Khan suddenly heard a voice inside his head.

*Stand down, soldier. Logan has been unconscious since the first blow you landed after he bit you. Khan whirled around and looked straight at Adam, who was struggling to keep a command face on, but was slowly losing to his giggles. I deadened the nerves in your arm, so just sit there and let us get him off.*

Khan looked down and noticed that Logan's breathing was deep and steady, and that he was not moving. He calmed down slightly, but only slightly. *Get this fucking psycho off me!* He literally bellowed at Adam through the telepathic link that Adam had with all the Unit members.

Most of the crowd still shied away from where Khan was sitting, panting, with a very unconscious Logan still attached to his arm. No one noticed the very small 'Runt' run away from the carnage. As much as he wanted to be by Khan's side, he knew it wasn't his place. He hoped sometime it would be, but knew he never would be with someone like Khan. Chang, Adam, Logan, and Nathan moved up to try and help the rather freaked out tiger.

Nathan shook his head as he looked at Logan and Khan's arm. "I don't know if I can pry his jaw open without breaking it. Even with my telekinetics, I think the jaw will break before I can pry it open enough to get your arm out, Khan."

"THEN BREAK THE DAMNED THING!" Khan said, still struggling to keep his calm. It was very disconcerting for Khan to look down and see the huge maw of the wolverine boy still attached to his arm.

"MOVE OUT OF THE WAY!" a voice said from the crowd area that was slowly moving in on the small group in the middle. Professor Don came pushing his way through the crowd and then moved to where Khan was sitting. Right behind him were two of the larger gorillas, as well as Mary, who everyone called Mama Mary.

"Here... let me," Don said as he bent over and pressed on a spot just under Logan's jaw, and everyone there saw his jaw slacken. Don then stepped back and nodded to the two gorillas with him. They reached down, one grabbing the upper jaw, and the other grabbing the lower. On the count of three, they started to pull apart Logan's jaw.

Since both were shirtless, everyone could see the corded muscles bulging with the strain, but bit by bit, the young wolverine's jaw moved apart. The sounds coming from the area, and watching as Logan's

fangs were pulled out of Khan's destroyed forearm, made more than one squeamish spectator run for the trees.

Finally though, Khan was able to pull his arm gently out of Logan's maw, and immediately, Chang and a few of his medics went to work on both boys, none of them laughing simply because of the look on Khan's face.

At one point, Logan woke up, and looked up at Khan. With a feral smile on his beaten and battered face, he slurred, "Not bad... for a kitty." At which point he promptly passed out again.

Adam was standing there with an arm over Logan's, his lover's, shoulder, watching as Janet got the two hybrid boys ready for transport to the medical wing. When she was done with that, she turned to Professor Don. "How did you know how to do that?"

Professor Don wrapped a long arm around his wife Mary, and smiled sadly at the assembled crowd. "This is not the first time that young Logan has lost control of his faculties. Thankfully he did not lose total control of himself."

Adam's jaw dropped. "You mean he can get worse?"

With a tired sigh, Don looked out over the canyon. "Unfortunately, yes. You see, the Wolverine Hybrids are much more volatile than the doctors were prepared for. Had they listened to me though... oh, well, there is no point in that now. See, I warned the military doctors that making a wolverine hybrid would have very negative effects. They did not believe me, until one time they saw Logan lose total control. Scientifically, I have given their behavior three different classifications. The first one is their normal selves. Although rather ill-tempered, they can be reasoned with, and if they respect someone, they can even follow orders rather well. The second, I have classified as enraged. In this state, they are exclusively single-minded, and will attack their target without concern to life or limb. They will back off if they are in danger of getting killed, or they see life-threatening danger to someone else... but the trick there is getting them to see that."

He paused for a second to gather his thoughts, and being extremely dramatic, he was waiting till everyone was leaning forward a bit. "The third stage, I have named 'the blood frenzy.' In this state, they care about nothing other than destroying what they are after. It doesn't matter what it is, they will destroy it. They can't tell friend from foe, or make out really anything other than what they are after. If someone or something gets in their way, the hybrid in question WILL go through that obstacle."

Almost everyone had wide eyes at that pronouncement. Silence reined until Adam asked, "What happened that one time Logan lost control?"

"Well, my young commander... It happened shortly after General Adams rotated his own personal guard into the base. These were big brutes who were totally loyal only to General Adams. Anyways, they decided that the wolverines needed to be moved to a different barracks. So in the middle of the night, they came in with tear gas and cattle prods, hoping to surprise the sleeping group, and be able to move them easier."

A few of the wolverines that were hanging around started to chuckle, as well as a few of the other hybrids nearby. Even Don smiled a bit as he thought back to that night. "See, thanks to the ferrets and

some of the chimps, we had our own surveillance throughout most of the base, so some of us were able to watch as this happened. When they attacked, Logan went into full protective mode. See, since he's the oldest, and largest, he sees it as his job to protect the others. Which he does very well. When they stormed into the room, which was already filled with gas, they found out something they would have known, had they read my reports... the wolverines are not affected by tear gas."

That got a few laughs out of everyone, including Adam, who filed that piece of information away for later. "So when they came in, they were expecting to find a small group of hybrid kids choking and in hysterics. What they found was one really pissed off Logan. When they attacked him, he attacked back."

"We were all filled with mirth as we realized they had not done any of their homework. Again, had they read my reports, they would have known that cattle prods and stun sticks work great... if you're trying to piss the Wolverines off, but will not work if you're trying to subdue them. Three of the soldiers tried to use their sticks on Logan at the same time. Only one of them lived long enough to see the error of their ways. But only barely."

Twenty soldiers went in there to move them; five minutes later, none of them walked out. However, by the time I got there, Logan was unconscious. See, one of the last guys tried again to use the stun stick. Logan bit the thing in two. Unfortunately for Logan, when he did that, the electrical charge in it locked his jaw shut, and continued to deliver its charge, right into his mouth. I had to wait for about five minutes for the battery in it to die, before I could dislodge it from Logan's mouth. That's where I learned the trick to unlock his jaw."

Janet looked absolutely horrified, while Adam had that feral look in his eyes that all the Genesis kids seemed to have from time to time. "Good for him" was all he said. That was, however, enough to make Janet turn and lock her gaze on him.

"You know, Adam, I do not think it is a good idea to have these 'little' fights among the family. It serves no real purpose." Janet stood there with her hands on her hips, daring Adam to contradict.

He was about to, but Don beat him to it. "With all due respect, Doctor Hayes, the fighting serves a vital purpose to the entire group."

She turned towards Don with a look of horror on her face. "What... how could that possible be?"

Before Don could respond, Mary actually stepped forward and reached up to put both her long arms on Janet's shoulders. "Doctor Hayes. I know how hard it is to do this, as I consider many of these kids to be my children. But there are times when you must take the hat of mother off, and put your Doctor's hat on. I know you are one of the most brilliant geneticists alive today, so you will know what I am talking about. But before I say it, let me ask you a few questions."

Janet took a deep breath, and then nodded. "Among the Hybrids, what percent of their DNA is animal? I know you would have to look it up, but I am asking you to guess."

"Well I would have to guess somewhere between sixty and sixty-five percent," Janet answered, after thinking about it for a few seconds.

"Very good. It actually averages out to be around sixty-two percent. Now, in the non-hybrid, augmented children, how much Animal DNA would you think is in them," Mary asked.

"Actually I do not need to guess. It averages out to be roughly thirty-one percent," Janet said, now seeing where Mary was going with this. "But I still don't think they need to resort to violence to solve their problems."

"Actually, Mom, we do." This, surprisingly, came from Logan, her son. "I know it's hard for you to understand, but since we've been here, I have been doing a lot of research in sociology, as well as the study of animals in the wild. In order for the Genesis group to function properly, they needed to set up their own society. Part of that is influenced heavily by the behavior of animals, mainly predators. In every society of predators, it is always the strongest who lead. In the wild, most animals live in social groups: packs, flocks, or what ever you want to call them. I think of them as family groups. They are usually a very structured society too. While young, they would learn everything about the social system of their group. They would slowly find their place in the group's dominance hierarchy. Dominance, leadership, obeying others are all understood within the group. Each group has a leader who is dominant over everyone else in the group. This leader is usually called the Alpha. This is the member who makes the rules and has to be obeyed. The U.N.I.T. members' social interactions are more complex than that, but that instinct is still there, and it is necessary for it to be followed if things are going to work. THAT is why Khan had to assert his dominance over Logan, and why Adam has to project strength at every moment. If he didn't, someone might challenge him for leadership. Now obviously, the animal instincts are somewhat softened by the human DNA, but in some cases all that really means is that some of them are extremely intelligent predators."

Don, Mary, and Janet all looked at Logan in awe. Sometimes it was easy to forget that Logan was brilliant. Everyone knew he was a computer wiz, but it went much further than that. He had a truly brilliant and unique mind. "Exactly right, my boy. I couldn't have said it better myself," Don said.

Logan grinned and shocked everyone with his next comment. "I am thinking of using that as my Doctoral Thesis in sociology at Harvard."

It was quiet for a few moments until Juan came over. "Hey, Mom... here's your winnings!" he said, and handed her a large stack of bills. Juan was totally oblivious to her face going red with embarrassment, as he made his way over to Don and handed him a stack as well. "And here's yours, Professor. Nice doing business with you." With that he skipped away as Mary slapped Don upside the head.

---

Alvin was loving it... he finally got to win money from Juan, instead of having to give it to him. He knew Amur would win, but he was also able to instantaneously access and review all the files on Logan. He knew it would be a BIG fight, and he wasn't disappointed. Logan's performance had won him just over twenty five hundred dollars.

Not that the three 'chipmunks' actually needed any money. The boy's liquid assets topped six digits, and their holdings topped seven. Unknown to anyone other than Logan was that their latest acquisition was a large amusement park that was about to go out of business. The Chipmunks bought it, and up until now had currently dumped a little over one million dollars to upgrade it. Their corporation... CMK

Holdings... had been rather busy lately. The only reason Logan knew about it was the fact that he was linked to the Chipmunks. If not for that, then he would have no clue... they didn't tell anyone about it.

"Hey Juan... I gotta go for a bit," Koth said as he walked up next to his lover. Alvin didn't want to listen in, but some things he couldn't let go... this was one of them.

"What's up?" Juan asked, and suddenly Alvin couldn't hear anything, Either Koth was speaking very softly, or telepathically. However, the next thing Alvin saw was a very pissed off looking Juan, as he and Koth transported out. Alvin was worried about his brother, but he knew Juan well enough to know that if he needed or wanted help, he would have asked. Juan might be psycho, but he wasn't stupid.

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Adam was sitting on one of the cliffs overlooking the open canyon. Logan was sitting in front of him, his back pressed up against Adam's chest, and Adam's arms were wrapped around him. They were looking out over the assembled mass of kids that were, for all intents and purposes, Adam's. They were his family, and he was their big brother. For the most part that was true; even the older ones looked at Adam like an older brother. They were not talking while they were sitting there; both of them were lost in their own thoughts.

It took Logan, Janet, and Joe to finally make Adam realize that he was not just their military commander any longer, he was their leader. At first Adam didn't understand what the difference was, but then Logan said something so simple, yet so very profound. 'They don't follow you because they have to... they follow you because they love you.'

Once again, Adam's mind drifted back to a movie that Logan made him watch. Adam was starting to feel like perhaps he was the main character in that movie. He led an army of his countryman to freedom. His army didn't follow him because he made them. They followed him because they believed in him and, in turn, he believed in them. Adam learned much by watching that movie, but the biggest thing he learned was about 'real' leadership.

Right now, though, all Adam was really worried about was holding his lover tight, and watching his family become one. He couldn't help but let a small feral grin out when he thought about the fight between the wolverine, Logan, and Adam's best friend, Amur Khan. It had been supremely brutal... a violence that is not often seen... especially not in the more 'civilized' areas. But here... with his family around, it had stirred something deep within all of them. That primal part that was deep within all the Genesis kids. Something that not many would understand unless they were a part of it. The Genesis project had made them all killers, nothing more, nothing less. They were made, not just to kill their enemy, but to totally annihilate them. The Genesis project made them Killers, but the love shown by many around them made them so much more.

Logan understood what drove their blood lusts. But he also taught Adam how to control it when needed. That is what Adam loved so much about Logan. He never tried to change Adam from what he was, but to help him learn to control the baser instincts within himself. Adam was definitely not the most violent of his family, but those that really knew him knew what would happen if he lost control.

Now add in the fact that he was an 'N-Gen,' and Adam became just that much more deadly. Adam thought with an evil chuckle that he actually had to thank General Adams for one thing, though. Even though Adam hated the General for what he had done, if it hadn't been for all the evil and stupidity that

the General had perpetrated, Adam would not have the family he had... and that was the single most important thing to Adam... his family.

'Adam...' A voice said in his head, and from the stiffening that Logan did, obviously he heard it too. But what really shocked Adam was the fact that it was Daileass. Adam had no clue that Daileass could speak telepathically, but... well he could.

"What's up, Daile?" Adam asked, still having the habit of saying things out loud when he only had to think them.

'Sorry to break up the cuddle moment, but I thought you should look into something,' Daileass said; he was obviously nervous about something.

"What's going on?" Adam was thoroughly confused by this point.

'Well... I guess the best thing I can do is show you. This is about two miles to the east/northeast of your current location.' Adam closed his eyes, as a picture came into his mind.

He immediately jumped to his feet, Logan doing the same thing. Adam took Logan's hand and spoke urgently. 'I need you to go get some supplies, and your youngest brothers. I don't want to be too intimidating right now, and bringing anyone else would be.'

Logan simply nodded, turned and ran off. Adam ran off in the other direction... within a hundred feet, Adam reached his full speed. He would be there in less the five minutes.

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"What the hell have you two been doing?"

Khan looked up to see Joel Short walking up to him with two of the ferret boys and his large Sehlat bear behind him. "Getting to know each other," Khan grunted sourly, nodding at Logan at his side.

Logan nodded and also grunted, "As well as the tables, chairs, canyon walls, bushes..."

"Tents, dirt, rocks..." Khan added even more sourly. "And cacti," he added, rubbing his sore butt.

"He fights well," Logan grudgingly admitted.

Joel rolled his eyes as one the ferret boys tutted at Logan. Joel grinned, "Why did you fight?"

"'Cos that's what we do," Logan grunted.

Khan rolled his own eyes, then winced, due to his black eye. "He didn't want to accept my authority over the Hybrid Forces, so I had a 'discussion' with him about it."

Joel sighed before moving over and opening Khan's ever-present robe. Khan raised an eyebrow at the boy, but soon started purring once Joel had settled himself to hug Khan, chest to chest. Joel reached up and started scratching Khan's ears, then under his chin, then he leaned back and rubbed Khan's chest.

"Cats," Logan muttered, while shaking his head as he watched.

Joel muttered, "You'll be better, soon."

The strange little Vulcan's Armour glimmered, and Khan gasped. All of his injuries had vanished. Normally, such wounds would have taken a couple of days to go away.

Joel smiled and got off of Khan's lap before closing Khan's robes. He then went and sat on the already naked wolverine's lap, and started to give Logan's shoulders a good massage and rub. If Logan could have purred, he would have. "Get better," Joel said again. And again, the Armour glimmered for a second, and healed Logan as well.

Joel finally stood up and then added, "You know something, Khan?"

"What?" Khan asked.

"Next time you need something from Logan, just ask me," Joel giggled.

"Why?"

"Cos he owes me a life debt!" Joel smiled.

Khan looked at Joel for a moment. Then he looked at the wolverine at his side, who grinned toothily at him, "He's right, I do."

Khan then looked back at the innocently grinning Joel, "You mean you could have just ORDERED him to follow me?!"

"Uh huh, but I didn't know you were gonna go tell him you were his boss, right away, and I wasn't here... anyways, the look on your face is more fun!" Joel hooted before scampering away giggling, with the ferrets and Sehlat running fast behind him.

Khan looked at Logan again. The wolverine was still grinning at him.

"That's it: I'm going for a walk," Khan said in complete disgust as he got up and wandered away, swearing under his breath.

Logan grinned more, stood up, and ran to catch up with Joel.

---

Joe sat in his wheelchair watching as the new arrivals mixed with the 'old timers' in the base. The bonfire filled the air with a slight smoky, heady smell, and Adam and the gang were as chilled out as he'd ever seen them. This last week had thrown more their way than Joe had ever expected, but if you were to ask him if he'd wish things were different, he would tell you no. Life must go on, and no one should second guess fate.

At that profound thought, Joe's eyes fell on a boy dressed in silvery armor standing with Logan the Wolverine, and on a large armored bear with two small furry ferret boys on its back. He had watched as Joel Short hugged both Logan and Amur Khan, and he had wondered at the sudden healing both had received.

As he sat there, just staring at Joel, he replayed all that he had seen that day over and over in his head. Three boys had nearly died in the rescue. Yet they were now alive and well and completely whole. All down to Joel.

Joe pondered that. Miracles were not something he would be quick to attribute these 'healings' to, but as a renowned detective from the early 20th Century had once said, 'When you eliminate the impossible, whatever remains, no matter how improbable, must be the truth.'

Joe nodded as he thought. He had no other explanation other than a miracle. Yet that raised more questions. How was it that a wounded, hurting alien child had the ability to heal with a simple touch?

"Why's you lookin' at our daddy like that?"

Joe blinked, then focused his eyes before him. The two little ferrets were standing right at his knees watching him, with their arms around each other's shoulders. "Pardon?" Joe asked as he felt himself smiling.

"Why's you lookin' at our daddy?" the one on the left asked again. "Yous been staring and staring. You wantin' cuddles from 'im? He gives nice cuddles!"

Joe chuckled, "I know. I've had a few from him. What're your names?"

"I'm Jules, and this is Verne," Jules said as he ruffled his twin's fur on the top of his head.

Verne grinned, "And who's you?"

"I'm Joe, Adam Casey's father," Joe answered with an easy smile. "Your daddy calls me Uncle, so you can too if you want."

"Okay, Uncle Joe! You didn't answer Verne's question, though," Jules giggled. "Why were you staring at our daddy?"

"I was just thinking," Joe answered as he reached and pulled both boys onto his lap.

"What about?" Joel asked as he came to a stop at his side.

Joe started then grinned, "You've been learning your sneaking very well, Joel."

"Thank you!" Joel giggled.

\*Huff\*

"You too, I-Cheya," Joe laughed as a wet nose touched the back of his neck. Then he looked closely at Joel. "Where have you put your armour and sword? You had them on a moment ago."

"I sent them away," Joel shrugged.

Joe blinked.

Joel giggled, "Here, I'll show you. Sa'ren! Fo-Wein Sa'ren!" he said loudly. Firmly.

The air around Joel became liquid, and suddenly he was dressed in his armour. On his back appeared his sword, also through a liquid effect.

"Wow," Joe whispered.

Joel grinned through his helm and face-guard and did a small twirl on the spot. Joe reached out quickly to stop him, "How is that sword staying on your back? There's no scabbard! And it's... it's in PIECES, Joel... what?!"

"It's the Sa'ren," Joel answered. "I don't know how it stays there, nor how it stays in one piece, but it told me it would take care of the details."

"It... it told you?" Joe asked weakly.

"Yup," Joel giggled as he moved closer to hug himself to Joe's side. As he remained there, held close, he asked, "How long til you're strong enough to walk again?"

"Not long," Joe answered as the two ferrets on his lap hopped down to go hunting for food (or Shiny's), "but I'll never be quite the same."

"I hope you get all the way better," Joel whispered as he snuggled closer to Joe's side.

As he did so, Joe noticed a slight glimmer from the boy's armour – a glimmer he'd seen twice already when Joel had hugged Amur Khan and Logan.

Then, Joel pulled back, "I gotta go, Uncle Joe. I have food with my family, now."

"Good bye, sweetheart," Joe said softly, as Joel and his bear ran off to catch the two ferrets.

Once Joel was out of hearing, Joe lifted his leg and wiggled his foot. Then he smiled.

He felt normal.

---

Runt had been in hiding since just after Amur Khan had won his fight. Everyone must have noticed his reaction. They must have. Even Amur. So, he went for a walk to hide further up the canyon for a while. The very idea that such a runt as he would fancy such an amazing guy like Amur... it was laughable, wasn't it?

He had found a sheltered place where no one could see him, and just sat there; staring morosely out across the canyon, thinking. 'Brooding' came closer, but he wouldn't admit it.

He had even lost track of how much time had passed, and it was only when the light started to dim as the sun rode low in the heavens, did he drag his mind back from its wanderings. What helped was the crunching sound caused by soft feet on the loose stones and shale on the path leading to where he was hidden. Runt looked up and saw a huge shadow round the bend and head in his direction. Now who could this be?

'Oh, no!' he thought with rising panic. It was Amur Khan himself... and he looked rather put out.

'FUCK! Juan must have told him! Oh nooooo! He's going to... to laugh and... oh GOD! Why me?!' Runt thought in panic. Then Runt noticed that Amur wasn't limping, wasn't injured in any way. He couldn't heal *that* fast, that much Runt knew well.

He watched carefully as Khan came closer. It didn't seem like the large tiger was here to find him. Maybe he needed to think as well? Runt didn't know, but he hoped that Khan would simply walk by. He just didn't want to...

"Oh, it's you. You okay, Runt?" Amur asked as his sensitive nose picked up Runt's scent in the early evening air. "What are you doing up here?"

Runt tried for some levity, hoping to throw off Amur from finding out the real reason. "I could ask you the same thing," he half grinned. Then he turned his eyes back to the far side of the canyon and said softly, "Just thinking."

Amur half smiled as well. "It's a good place for it. Peaceful," he said just as softly. Then he pointed at the space next to where Runt was sitting. "Do you think I could sit here and think with you?" he asked.

Runt felt his heart rate skyrocket. Amur wanted to sit with him? To be with him? That he had even *notice* him was a miracle as far as Runt was concerned, but the idea that Khan would care enough about such a tiny speck as he to sit and think with him? Runt's mind swam.

He did, however, nod slowly and whisper, "Sure."

Amur Khan sat slowly, keeping half an eye on the little angel now shaking lightly at his side. Something had changed in Runt's scent, and Khan could easily tell what it was. Runt was attracted to him – and was rapidly getting turned on, judging by the pheromones. Khan was not surprised. Many of the teens here did in his presence; male and female alike. He was, after all, a well built tom - and his rank and personal history made him a target often for those who fancied trying their luck getting him into a bed.

Khan had never done so, however. For one, the teen boys had little chance as Khan considered himself straight, and two, the girls just wanted a conquest. Khan wanted love. Just like his twin brother had been, Khan was a romantic. And he was a virgin, which was hard to maintain when he could smell others' lust and sex everywhere so easily. He at times envied his twin's luck at finding love.

But it wasn't hard for Khan with Runt, for with this small kid there didn't seem to be the added scent of a male in search for a wild time. Runt was instead nervous; scared. Yet the smell of desire started to build anyway. Khan decided to simply ignore it and just try talking to the small, sweet teen by his side. In all the time in the Tardis, Runt and he had said very few words, even though they had been around each other a lot. In fact, every 'morning' in there, Khan brought Runt a large coffee made just how Runt liked it – and every evening, it was Runt who brought over a special bit of meat for Amur to enjoy with his meal.

At the time, Amur just thought he was building camaraderie. Now, at this moment, Amur realized that he had not done that for ANY of the others in there - and no one had done that with him either.

He liked Runt, he decided in that moment. He'd made a very good friend.

"I heard you shouting your support earlier," Khan said softly, breaking the silence. "Thank you. I needed it."

"No sweat," Runt whispered nervously. "You'd have won anyway. You're awesome," he added bravely, sneaking a look at Amur.

The tiger was staring out over the canyon as well, and didn't seem to react at first. Then Runt saw a subtle shift in the fur on Amur's face.

"Umm... did I make you blush?" he asked curiously before he could help himself.

Amur's eyes darted to him for a second before looking back over the valley. Then he nodded. "You can tell? Not many can."

"Uh, well... it's nothing. I just... uh... well..." Runt hedged, for if he said that he'd spent days in the Tardis studying Amur's every movement, the large cat would probably laugh at him and leave him alone. He didn't want that.

A large paw patted him lightly on the back, so he just smiled, sighed and looked back out over the canyon. Amur was just too good to be true, Runt thought. He didn't even want a full explanation.

Not that Amur had needed it, for the scents coming from Runt were a dead giveaway. The boy must have been watching him for some time, now. Amur smiled softly as he rested his paw on Runt's back, and he felt Runt relax too. Why was he feeling so strange due to this simple contact with another boy? Khan had no idea, but he just flowed with it. It felt - right.

"How'd you heal up so fast? You were leaking red stuff like a busted out dam, earlier," Runt asked a few minutes later as he relaxed back against Khan's arm.

Khan's voice was puzzled as he replied, "I'm not entirely sure, but Joel came over from Orlando and hugged both me and Logan. Then we healed. It was most strange."

"He's a strange little boy, but I love him," Runt giggled. "I'll have to make him his favorite cookie as a thank you," he added without thinking.

Amur managed to not react, but the idea that he meant *this* much to Runt was shocking. This was definitely not about sex or lust, he decided. That worried him.

"He's thirteen, not a little boy. He might be upset if you call him that," Amur said as he tried to think on what to do about this situation he was getting into.

"Really? He looks nine. No one ever said..." Runt said curiously. Then he sighed, "Was his mom a crackhead too?"

"No," Amur said softly. "He was starved and a slave all his life. There's more, but that's for him to say."

"I understand. Just like you guys not asking about my past. I like that, makes me feel real safe here," Runt whispered as he reached to pull Amur's arm from behind him so as to wrap it around himself. He was feeling cold, and he did it without thinking.

Amur was getting more and more worried, but something inside just seemed so right. He pulled Runt closer to himself and to his body heat.

"Do you have a boyfriend? Or a girlfriend?" Runt blurted out, then clapped his hands to his mouth in shock. Why had he asked that?

Amur chuckled softly at Runt's reaction. "No. I don't have a partner. Still looking, but finding some girl crazy enough for me is difficult," he said in jest.

"You're straight?" Runt's sad question came. Runt felt his heart sink suddenly inside of himself.

"As far as I know, yeah. Both are nice to look at, and boys seem very fun, but girls make me a little hot under the fur more often; so yeah, I think I'm straight," Amur said easily.

Runt twisted to look at him properly. He was still being held by Amur's strong arm, and he felt very warm suddenly. "You think boys are fun and nice looking, though? Doesn't that mean you're... well, a little more bi than straight?"

Amur thought about it, then shrugged, "I really don't know. I want love, Runt, not a quick tumble under the bed sheets. My twin brother was the same, and he was so lucky to find Claire."

"Your twin? Oh, Kuan Ti? I've heard about him. I'm so sorry, Amur," Runt said tenderly. "I know how it feels to lose someone you love. I lost my dad and my stepmother a few years ago, and then my grandfather. I lost everyone I loved, and thanks to some bastards stealing all our family's money, I ended up on the streets... I'm sorry," he finished.

Amur purred at him for a second or so, then said, "Don't be. He died to save others. It's how I would want to go out. And he's still with me, as I'm sure your family is still with you and watching over you. I'm sure of it."

"I wonder what they think of me," Runt said quietly as his eyes went far away.

Amur remained silent for a short while, then said, "They probably want you to grow up fine and strong, to love and laugh in your life, to fight for what you believe in, and to find someone to share your life with."

"I think I already have," Runt said quickly, his mind still far away. Then his face paled and his eyes locked with Amur's. "Oh fuck! No, no, no! Sorry," he whimpered as he tried to pull away.

Khan wouldn't let him. "I know you like me," he said simply. "I can smell it."

"Fuck fuck fuck!" Runt wept. "I didn't want to tell you this way... didn't want to say at all! What chance do I have? Did I have? None... fuck!"

"Why would you think that?" Amur asked, his own heartbeat now beginning to race. He was finally working out what he had been feeling for a long time in the Tardis, now. He liked Runt too. And that was the scariest thing of all.

"Cos I'm a *runt*, Amur!" Runt sobbed. "I'm small and tiny! I'm nearly fourteen, for Christ's sake! Look at me! I'm a freak!"

"And I'm not? Look at me; I'm two-thirds tiger by my genes. So as to being a freak, let me be the judge of that," Amur smiled. "Attention, soldier!" he barked.

Runt jumped up and snapped to attention before Khan.

"At ease," Khan said, and Runt did so.

Khan then reached out from his seated position and felt down both Runt's arms. "Nice and strong. A little thin, maybe, but nicely proportioned," he said approvingly. Then he turned Runt slightly and patted down his chest, stomach and back. "Good muscle tone, a slight pot belly which means you're a healthy teen in a growth spurt," he added. Then he turned Runt back to face him and proceeded to pat down Runt's legs.

Runt's face showed a mixture of curiosity, amusement and embarrassment. The third expression gained the mastery, for the teen he'd been silently watching since he had come to Camp Bam Bam was touching almost every part of his body; and his body was reacting. Noticeably so.

"Good strong legs, although a little thin, but that will change in time," Amur finished as he looked back up into Runt's now deeply blushing face. "And finally, you react properly too," he added as he made a very light, playful swipe at the lump that had formed at the front of Runt's combat pants. Runt moaned at the contact without meaning to, making Amur chuckle, "As I said, you react right. I think you're just right, Runt."

Runt's mind was going a mile a minute in about fifty different directions. He didn't have the words nor the ability to express himself, for his embarrassment was too great. Yet it was mixed with a strange calmness that seemed all the more beautiful with the shy embarrassment. Eventually he managed to squeak out something. "But I'm so small... who my age would ever look at me as anything other than a kid brother?" he asked, but his eyes were plainly saying that it was Khan he was hoping would look at him as something 'more'.

"Everyone has that fear, Runt," Amur said gently.

"Not you," Runt shook his head as he sat down in front of Khan.

"Yes, me. I've got the opposite fear than you. I'm huge, I'm scary, and I could easily hurt someone if I... if I ever became intimate with them," Khan said quietly. "And all us G-cats ... all the hybrids, I suppose ... have had to deal with the same feeling you have, of being freaks, not normal."

Runt blinked and his heart did a strange flip in his chest. "You're a virgin?" he blurted, his face lighting up with something Khan thought was hope.

Khan blushed again and nodded.

"Me too!" Runt smiled.

Khan's brow furrowed. "Sorry to ask this, but didn't you say you were on the streets?"

Runt nodded seriously, but his smile never left his face, "Yeah, but I stole stuff and begged to survive. My dad always said to me that sex should be something special, not belittled with one night stands. And my grandfather said that sex with someone who means the world to you is the best feeling ever - it's real love that makes sex change into 'making love'. I was lucky, though. Near the end I was about to start selling myself just to live, but you guys said you were taking in anyone in need of help. I thought 'What the hell?' and signed up." He grinned at Amur, "I'm glad I did. I met you."

Amur blushed again. "You really like me, then. I can smell so much from you, but depth of feeling is something I can't sense as well."

"Yeah... sorry. I won't try anything with you, Khan. What could I do anyway if you didn't want it?" Runt asked with a giggle. "After seeing you pulverize that wolverine, I'd be mince if I tried to molest you!"

Khan chuckled and nodded.

"I still remember each and every cup of coffee you brought me," Runt said happily. "In the Tardis, your good morning coffee was the thing that got me through each day. I had to search high and low for something nice to give you in return. What made me so happy was that you still took what I found, even if loads of others must have given you thank you gifts too. You're just a good friend for doing that," he finished with a slight tear rolling down his face.

"You were the only one who got those mugs of coffee, Runt," Amur smiled.

"What?! Really? But... why?" Runt asked in shock.

Amur smiled more, "I've only just worked it out... I think I really like you too. I just thought I was being kind to a kid that needed it at first, but then I felt more at peace each time I gave you something. Then just now, as I first sat with you, I realized that I lo... I like you too," Amur finished, quickly catching himself from blurting out what his mind still couldn't fully accept, but what his heart must have already done.

Runt did not fail to catch it, however. His heart nearly exploded inside. "I love you," he whispered before sniffing back a tear. "You're strong and great and wonderful. How can I not love you."

Amur nearly burst into tears. He was frightened and nervous all at once. Nervous as he was so new to relationships, and frightened as he could so easily hurt this tiny teen without meaning to. And he never wanted to hurt Runt. Not ever.

Runt's face grew tender at first as he allowed Amur to regain some control. Then a hint of mischievousness grew in his eyes. "So... how big is 'big', Amur?"

"Huh?" Amur asked as he wiped at his slightly leaking eyes.

Runt's eyes drifted down Khan's body to below his waist. "Well..." Runt giggled.

The tiger blushed again, but then sighed. "Big, Runt... which is going to be difficult as I could hurt you so much," he said softly.

Runt smiled. "I'll show you mine if you show me yours," he giggled.

Amur snorted, "It's not like I'd be embarrassed to show you. Here," he added as he undid his robe and lifted it off of himself. Now just in his fur, with knives and guns strapped to him in various places, Amur sat there with his legs stretched out to either side of the now kneeling Runt.

Runt was getting hot under the collar, and his 'tent' was still on display to the world - meaning Khan. Then Runt's eyes grew curious, "Uh, Amur? You said you were... big... but where is it? I see your balls, but your dick looks about two inches long..."

Amur chuckled. "I'm feline. We have retractables... you have collapsibles."

"Oh? So it's inside you?" Runt asked as he reached out without thinking. An inch before he made contact with Khan's privates, he froze and nervously looked up into Khan's amber eyes.

Khan just nodded and took Runt's hand with his large fore-paw and brought it into contact. "You are now the first one not family to touch me here," he said seriously, his voice filled with more than a little nervousness.

Runt gulped and nodded, then looked down and watched as Khan made his not quite excited 'little Khan' appear. It didn't remain unexcited for long, especially not when a curious Runt was exploring.

Soon, Runt's hands were moving up and over every inch of Khan's fur covered body. With wonder in his eyes, he examined and felt as much of this wonderful, gentle person before him as he could.

Then, Khan's paws reached and started pulling off Runt's clothes gently. Runt barely noticed until he was just as nude as Khan. He was blushing slightly, but then so was Khan.

"You're amazing," Khan whispered hoarsely as he took in all of Runt's angelic looking body before him.

Runt smiled joyfully, then he giggled, "And you're purrrrrfect!"

Groaning at the bad pun, Amur pulled Runt up so that they were chest to chest, then laid down on his back. His tail he used to reach up and around to wrap lightly over Runt's waist. Runt rested his chin on his hands which were folded just below Khan's neck and looked down into the tiger's eyes. "This is nice. Your fur touching me all over," he whispered dreamily. He murmured softly, "You don't know how long I've dreamed of this..."

Amur started purring.

"Amur. I need to know. You think you're straight... if we... if we do 'do' it, and be together... would you ever leave me if a nice looking girl came by?" Runt asked nervously, his eyes filling with momentary doubt.

Khan brushed those doubts away with one simple sentence. "I will mate for life."

Runt wiggled up Khan's body a little more, then gently brought his lips into contact with Khan's. It took a while for both boys to work out what went where with a human kissing a hybrid tiger, but they eventually found a happy medium. Runt had to giggle when Khan alternated 'tiger-style' french kissing for full on Cat kisses to his face and neck.

"So glad you don't have sand paper on that tongue," Runt giggled as they took a short break from making out. "Otherwise you'd never go south with it, I'd tell you that right now!"

Amur smirked, "Oh, so that's what you're after then, huh?"

Runt blushed red instantly and he tried to respond but no words came.

"Fruedian slip, I think," Amur chuckled as he made to roll over and place Runt on his back. However, while he was comfortable on the rocky ground, Runt wouldn't be. "Shall we go back to my apartment?" he asked his new boyfriend.

Runt, his face still flaming, shook his head. "It's nice here... unless you're uncomfortable on the ground, though?" he answered and asked all at once.

"I'm fine, but I want to treat you to a cat-bath, and you'll get stones in your butt here."

Gravel crunched and both boys looked over to see the largest wolf they had ever seen in their lives standing a foot from them. He was shining brighter than the moon overhead, and was as white as snow. Yet silver was there as well.

*'Turn your heads, younglings, and see the den I have made for you,* came a voice that went past their minds and right to their hearts.

Runt saw it first... a cave that had not been there seconds before. Inside was a roaring fire to ward off the night's chill, and all over the floor were furs and pelts of animals.

*I name you One. You are Together. You shall remain. This is your den. Only you shall ever see it. It shall remain as long as love shall. Which is 'til the ending of the Earth,* the strange creature sent again.

Both boys turned back towards the Wolf in shock, but it was no longer there... well, almost. A pair of amber, glowing eyes remained.

*Join as One. This night, none shall disturb you. Strength of Arms and Strength of Hearts. Be blessed, Children of the Earth.*

Then the eyes vanished.

Amur didn't know what just happened, but he didn't care either. He was up on his paws a second later and quickly carried his soon-to-be-lover into the nice, warm 'den'.

"Bath time," he whispered to Runt softly as he laid the boy down on the furs, then settled down next to him to begin...

Editor's Notes:

Cynaira's Notes:

Wow, my first notes. I asked Roland, "What do I say? I won't be as poetic, or do the story as much justice as all these wonderful authors and editors will." From his response I got this: So here goes nothing. Something! There, I wrote it. OK. now to be serious. To see the distinct groups starting to bond and form a family unit, fights for dominance and all, is always touching. The little ones and the Teddy Bear Brigade was wonderful to read about, and new romance in the air. We got more questions that we will patiently be awaiting answers for though. We will soon be finding out who the boys went to rescue. Great chapter, in-depth explanations, healing and bonding, and more suspense. What more could we ask for?

## Chapter 16

Adam was running at full speed; he kept part of his mind on the video feed that Daileass was sending to him. Something was wrong, and he knew it. *Daileass, check to make sure there is no other activity anywhere near these kids.*, Adam sent telepathically.

*Nothing anywhere within three miles other than normal wildlife. Just to update, Will is spinning one of the Black Hawks, Chang and the Chipmunks are about two minutes behind you with med gear. Logan will ride with Will,* was Daileass's response. Adam nodded to himself and pushed just a little harder.

Without even thinking about it, he increased his own metabolism, and pushed his body a bit further than he normally would have. This was as serious as it could be. Something was wrong with Tommy.

He didn't even want to think about why Tommy would be miles away from the closest entrance to the base. What he did want to know is why Tommy was in the woods, and what the other kids are doing with him. Not just one or two kids, but ten to twelve. Add onto that the fact that Tommy was riding on

the back of a rather large wolf. Now that in and of itself would not be all that surprising, given Tommy's abilities with animals, but with him being draped over the back of said wolf sent Adam's mind into a frenzy.

Ducking through the trees, Adam was afraid to think how fast he was going. When he was on a treadmill one time, he had actually hit sixty-two miles an hour. That's really good on a treadmill, but he was in a rocky area right now with lots of trees and underbrush.

Only Adam's amazing reflexes could have seen the tree branch coming, but also be able to avoid it. Dropping to a baseball slide, Adam hit the ground, and then came up with his sword drawn.

In front of him was a boy about fifteen years old wielding a broken tree limb like a club. Wearily, Adam let the tip of his sword go down till it was almost on the ground. "I'm not here to hurt you... drop the weapon."

Looking behind the boy, Adam could see the rest of the group there, Tommy was laying on the ground, and the wolf was slowly stalking up to stand next to the other boy. Adam had seen very few wolves of that size before. Adam took more of a defensive posture, as the older boy spoke softly. "You drop yours first."

Adam, knowing his own abilities, and knowing that Chang and the others were less than a minute away, figured he could play it their way. "Fine," he said as he sheathed the sword behind his back. "Is Tommy all right?"

The boy with the branch lowered it slightly, then got a confused look on his face. "Who's Tommy?"

Adam mentally told Chang and the rest to stay hidden, and then stepped forward slightly. "The boy over there on the ground. That's my son Tommy. I came here to help him."

The wolf and the boy looked back to where Tommy lay on the ground, and then back to Adam. The boy finally got a smile on his face and then dropped the branch. "You're from the Clan people, aren't you?"

Adam nodded, and the all the kids let out a sigh. "We've been trying to find you. Elwyn said Kieron was with you guys."

Adam quickly went through the names of all the kids he knew of in the base, and then cross-referenced it with Daileass... neither one of them knew anyone named Kieron.

"Sorry guys... we don't have a Kieron here." Adam again looked worriedly at Tommy, who was still on the ground obviously unconscious.

The boy looked at Adam and then back at Tommy on the ground and that's when it hit him. "Oh, shit. Well, I guess you call him Tommy." Adam's eyes snapped up and got a dangerous look in them.

"What do you mean?"

The wolf growled, but the boy put his hands up to stop anything from happening. "Look... I think this might need some explanation, but the boy over there..." he said, pointing to Tommy, "isn't Tommy; his name's Elwyn. His twin brother was kidnapped right after they were born. Elwyn always knew the boy as Kieron, but I guess you know him as Tommy."

---

Tommy lay in bed moaning softly after having thrown up yet again. Grandma Janet said he had the flu; he didn't know, as he'd never been sick before, but this really sucked. Ronnie was great, though; he almost never left his boyfriend's side, unless it was to get something for him. Ronnie kept Tommy entertained with stories of when he was sick, or some of the things he and Billy used to do when Billy was first laid up in the wheel chair.

After laying there for a few minutes, Tommy nodded, and Ronnie helped him to sit back up on the bed. They were just about to start back to their game of Monopoly when Adam's voice came over the speakers. "Tommy... I know you're not feeling well, but could you please come up to Med Bay Alpha. Ronnie, why don't you help him?"

"Okay, Adam... I'll be there as quick as I can," Tommy said. However, Ronnie muttered under his breath, "It'll be a minute or two."

As if Ronnie knew something that Tommy didn't... suddenly Tommy got a weird look on his face, and jumping out of bed, he ran into the bathroom. He was going to be a few minutes.

---

Rambo had wandered off not five seconds after Amur Khan and Logan's fight had ended, for he had seen a silver plate that had been thrown to the floor during the fight vanish. At least, it seemed that way. He moved to where it had been and found a vent into the ground. After poking his furry face into it, he found that there was a sizable tunnel leading from the direction of the main base towards the newer one on the far side of the canyon.

He slipped inside quickly and started scouting and exploring. He moved fast, using all the training Juan had given him to check for possible dangers to his family and friends.

What he found, however, was an entrance to where those new ferret kids were now setting up a literal 'Ferret Village' in the new base. He watched curiously as they squeaked instructions to one another, as well as listen to some odd sounding stuff from who seemed to be the leader; a ferret teen boy in a ste-tson hat. Dave.

Rambo stayed still and watched, amused at the activity, as well as his interest being piqued by what he could swear was a reference to a 'shiny war'. Now *that* sounded like fun!

He was about to slip out and into the room when Joel entered with his Sehlat and two ferret sons. What happened next shocked Rambo just as much as the rest of the ferrets... and it made *him* believe in "The Great Shiny" as well!

Once Joel had left, still dressed in his "Garb of Shinyess", Rambo fell out of the tunnel and made himself known to the now hysterically fervent parishioners of the "Shiny Faith".

Dave looked over at the small, two-and-a-half-foot living teddy bear, and recognized him from the battle from earlier that day. "How did you get in here?" he asked curiously, while taking account of all Rambo's weapons - shiny weapons. The other 73 ferrets were starting to surround the intruder and taking a visual inventory of his possessions.

Rambo had been watching long enough to know what to do next: "I pledge allegiance to the Shiny of the Shiny Nation, and to the Gleam for which it stands; one Nation under Shiny - sparkling, with incandescence and radiance for all!" he swore, holding his right hand up as he took the oath.

"OooooOOooooooh!" came from every ferret there, including Dave.

Rambo started to bust his ribs laughing, for when they had vocalized that, their faces all turned to the ceiling and they weaved back and forth. It was just too funny for the little bear.

"A convert! Another convert!" Dave exclaimed in joy. "You are the second!"

"Am I?" Rambo giggled as he tried to bring his laughter under control.

"Yes! Yes! The one called Chang was the first! He became one with us when the Race of the Shiny Warrior used their mind powers on us!" Dave said as he jumped up and down with joy.

"Oooowwww! No fair! He's got NICE Shinys!" one little girl pouted.

"Now, now - you know the Commandment: thou shalt not steal a Shiny-Lover's Shiny, Lisa," Dave admonished her gently.

She still pouted, "I know! But he couldda waited!!"

"Can you fight, teddy?" an eight year old ferret boy asked curiously. He was standing next to the animated teddy bear and was looking down at Rambo's ears - debating with himself about whether or not to tickle them or just hug Rambo.

"Uh huh," Rambo giggled before extending his sheathed claws from inside his paws. "My daddy trained me! So! How do we get Shinys, guys? And who do we have to fight in this war?"

Dave started to respond, then paused as a seriously interesting idea came into his stark raving insane mind.

Five minutes later, the new Shiny-General-of-War was suiting up and picking his first Shiny-Raider's squad.

The Shiny War had began...

As Rambo lead his crew out to start the first offensive on this new 'war', Dave started to sing at the top of his lungs. Within a few words, all the ferrets joined in.

Onward, Shiny soldiers, marching as to war,  
With the Shiny Warrior going on before.

Dave, the Shiny Master, leads against the foe;  
Forward into battle see His Shiny's go!

Refrain:

Onward, Shiny soldiers, marching as to war,  
With the Shiny Warrior going on before.

At the sign of triumph, Hater's host doth flee;  
On then, Shiny soldiers, on to victory!  
Dull's foundations quiver at our Shiny praise;  
Ferrets, lift your voices, high your Shiny's raise.

Onward then, ye Ferrets, join our happy throng,  
Blend with ours your voices in this Shiny song.  
Glory, laud, and honor unto Dave our King,  
This through countless ages men and Ferrets sing.

---

Gabriel Michelson sat down next to the bed of the badly burned boy. Had they not had the medical technology here that they did, the boy would be dead. As of right now, all that Gabe could see of the twelve year old boy was the right half of his face. Dr. Hayes had made sure that Gabe knew what he could and could not do to help the boy.

Gabe looked down at the file he had in his hand. It wasn't the full medical records of the boy, but it was enough. He went through it again... he just could not stop reading and reading.

Name: Aalim Zakaria

Gender: Male

Age: 12 years 5 months (actual)

Diagnosis: second and third degree burns over 85% of body surface due to intentional immolation by father.

Prognosis: Full recovery expected with short term physical therapy needed. Recommended for long term psychological therapy.

Intake Notes:

CSSF (Clan Short Special Forces) was first alerted to this child when Intel Spec Alvin Casey intercepted a local 911 call from the Washington DC area. Strike Team Beta was dispatched within 20 seconds of the call coming in about a child who was "set on fire."

Within 45 seconds of initial call, S.T. Beta was on site, had "neutralized" the offending party, and had secured the child with immediate transport to Med. Ward Alpha.

Personal Notes:

It is believed that Child reported to father that he had been sexually assaulted by the leader of the local

Mosque. Father immediately became extremely violent, demanding that the child "stop spreading his filthy lies." Father dragged child physically to this religious leader, who denied any and all allegations that the child had made. Both father and the leader in question then dragged the child outside, dosed him in gasoline, and lit fire to the child.

When ST Beta arrived on scene, we witnessed father actively trying to stop two others from putting out the fire. Father was quickly disabled and child sent for medical treatment. Both father and religious leader were detained and transported to CSSF criminal holding area, for telepathic scan and 'logical' punishment to be set.

Gabe set the file down in his lap, and quickly wiped away the tears falling down his face. He knew just how bad parents could be, but even he wasn't as bad off as Aalim was. Gabe may only have been thirteen but only God himself could stop him from helping this boy.

---

Tommy was leaning heavily on Ronnie and Fluffy when they walked into the med bay. All eyes turned to him, and Adam got a worried look on his face. Tommy knew why; he looked like shit right now. He felt like it too. He was so glad that Grandma Janet said it would only last a few days. He really felt like he was dying.

Inside the doors were a couple of the med beds with some new kids on them. Tommy didn't even bother wondering why they were staring at him... he was used to that by now. Fluffy usually made people stare, and most of the time Tommy was amused by it. They all thought that she would eat them or something, but he knew Fluffy... she was just one big pussy cat.

His eyes zeroed in on the large wolf. He wasn't used to there being animals around that he didn't know about, or personally speak to - especially ones that size. He looked at the wolf in the eyes, and that's when he knew... something was wrong.

"Tommy... there's someone here I think..." Adam started to say, but Fluffy's low guttural 'growl', along with her moving between the wolf and Tommy, showed something was wrong.

"Adam... That wolf... there's something wrong with... wait... IT'S NOT A WOLF!" Tommy cried out. Fluffy immediately crouched down like she was going to pounce, and Ronnie drew his pistol. Both Adam and Logan stumbled back from the wolf, also drawing their own weapons, while Chang placed himself between the wolf and the rest of the patients.

The older boy jumped off the bed the wolf was next to, and got between Fluffy and the wolf. "Please... don't! He's not gonna hurt you!" The boy almost cried out, but all conversation died right then.

Behind him, the male wolf moved.

It reared back onto its hind legs and howled piercingly as every part of its body began to shimmer and shift. The forepaws became fuller; the hind legs lengthened; all four paws began to elongate and change; the fur seemed to grow backwards into its body; the muzzle shrank away to nothing; the ears literally moved and became different; but worst of all, Logan could swear what sounded like a myriad of bones breaking came out of every part of this 'animal's' body.

Yet, what once *was* a wolf seemed to be in no pain.

"Holy Shit," Logan breathed out. "It's a were-wolf!"

The naked boy standing by the bed, now covered in a fine sheen of sweat, smiled... and nodded.

One of the doctors in the room who watched the whole thing with his jaw on the floor slowly drawled out in a Southern accent. "My boy... There's no such thing as were-wolves."

"Dr. Guy Calloway..." Ronnie said with a small chuckle as he pointed to the now naked boy. "I think someone forgot to give him the memo."

Juan looked around the dirty city streets, and again the thought came to his mind, 'How do people live like this?' For right now, though, the mission was what mattered. They had to find the gang's hideout, and rescue the hostages.

He walked through the city, once again wishing that he hadn't insisted that he and Koth split up. Yes, they could cover more ground by themselves, and Juan was very good at not being noticed, but this was hard for him. Harder than anything else he had to do. Juan actually said a little prayer of thanks for being what he was, since he could see perfectly clear in the middle of the night.

He grew up in a lab; he knew nothing of this kind of living. He never even considered that someone could live like this, let alone thousands, maybe even millions of people lived in this kind of abject poverty. He had heard stories, but he never thought they were really like this. To his mind, being homeless just meant you made your own way; he never knew that it could be this hard, or look like this.

He walked past an alleyway, and no one gave him a second look. He wasn't wearing his normal combat fatigues, now; he was wearing a ratty T-shirt, and ripped jeans. He had figured that this would be the kind of clothes that homeless kids wore... now he was realizing that he was dressed in so much more than these people ever saw. It made his heart bleed to see that most of these people would be so happy just to have the pair of dirty, worn out shoes he was wearing.

A voice interrupted his thoughts as it came over his subvocal. "Juan, you should be near to where we think the hide-out is. Two streets west by northwest. If we are seeing things accurately, the Warlord is calling all his forces home, and preparing for an attack. Be advised, we have confirmed several hostages."

Juan didn't speak out loud, just under his breath, replied "received" and started that way. He pushed the thoughts of these people from his mind, and saw once again the lifeless eyes of the five-year-old boy that had died giving them the information on where the hide out was located. The Warlord's men had tortured him to death, after learning that he gave up the information. His body was left on the street as a warning to others. Juan would give his own warning.

He forced the tears from his eyes, as he stepped over two children, the oldest of whom could have been no more than seven. Juan could tell just by looking at them, that both of them were dead... probably from hunger. He vowed to himself, right then and there, that he would do something about this. He wasn't sure what... but he knew he had to do something.

It didn't take him long to find the building in question. It was the only one around that had lights on inside. It was the middle of the night, and this was the only building he could see that actually had lights on. That and the roving guards told Juan a lot.

Speaking softly, so only the subvocal picked it up, he called for Dailess to transport his pack. For once, Juan didn't have a joke on the tip of his tongue, or some smart-assed comment about anything. Juan wasn't angry... he was so upset that he was nearly shaking. Whether from rage or grief, he couldn't tell. One thing was clear, though... someone was going to pay for this. He found an empty shack nearby and ran over to it.

It only took Juan two minutes to strip down, and dress in the black, lightly armored suit that he'd had made for night infiltrations. It only took him thirty seconds to place his weaponry. There was only one gun this time. He was going for extreme quiet. Glancing around, he saw two kids huddled together in an alley close by. He quietly and quickly walked over to them. Both the girl, who Juan guessed was maybe ten, and the boy, who was maybe eight, shied away as he approached.

"Please... please don't hurt us," the girl said in broken English.

"It's okay, I won't hurt you," Juan said, as he squatted down and looked them over. It was obvious, from the dirt on both of them, that they hadn't seen a shower in a very long time. The rags that passed for clothes on them wouldn't have been good enough for Juan to use as rags to wipe mud off one of his guns, let alone wear. "What are you two doing here?"

The little girl looked like she wanted to run. For a second, Juan thought she just might, but then noticed something odd. He reached his hand out, towards the young boy's leg, and they both shrank back. The little girl spoke softly, but Juan could hear the pain in her voice. "Please... please don't hurt him."

The little boy tried to reach down and pull his leg back, but Juan caught the boy's hand gently in his own. "I won't hurt him, but I would like to see." Juan's eyes never left the scared little boy's, and then Juan heard Janet's voice in his head. It's something she said shortly after he meet the woman he now calls mom: 'You can tell a lot about a person by looking into their eyes. They say that the eyes are windows to the soul.'

As Juan stared into the dark pools of the young eight-year-old boy, he saw something he had never seen before. He had seen people who were afraid, hell, he'd seen people terrified as they saw their own death coming, usually by Juan's own hand. But now he saw something different. In the eyes of this eight-year-old boy, Juan saw something that would haunt him for the rest of his life. Yes, the boy was afraid, but Juan saw a soul that welcomed death. He saw someone who was in so much pain that he welcomed death.

Juan tore his eyes away from the boy's eyes, and looked down at the deformed leg. He ran his fingers over the leg gently, and couldn't help but shudder. "What... what happened."

The little girl answered quietly. "Demarco's leg broke last year when we tried to run away from the Warlord's men. Mommy tried to fix it, but she couldn't." The girl broke down into tears, and Juan, for the first time, used his telepathy on someone who didn't know he was going to do it, and it wasn't a treat to him. What he saw made his stomach turn, and tears instantly sprung to his eyes.

He reached up and gently grasped the girl's shoulder. "I will bring your mother back to you." The girl gasped, but didn't say anything.

Juan was about to make for the nearest guard that he could see when the girl's hand caught his own. "Don't leave us alone... we're frightened," she whispered as a spark of trust built in her.

Juan looked down again, his Klingon brow gleaming in the faint light. He felt torn, "I have to save your mother, Alesia," he whispered.

"I don't want to die alone. I don't want my brother to die alone. Please, don't go," she cried.

*'Child of Fire, of Wind. Son of Q'onos, of Warrior blood. Child of Vulcan, of Ancient power &ndash; be not afraid to leave them. I shall be with them.'*

Juan looked up and saw a white-silver Wolf standing there by the children. They saw him too, and started to shrink back, but the wolf bent down and breathed on them, calming them instantly.

*'I am Cynoeswr, the Ancient, the Father of Black Feet. Be not scared for these, for I shall be with them. We shall wait for you, Son of Q'onos.'*

Juan could do nothing but nod. The two children were now cuddled against the wolf's side, and the wolf had settled down to keep them warm in the cold night air.

Three minutes later, Juan was slightly upset that he only had to slit the throats of four guards to get into the building. This general was obviously slipping in his training of guards. Too bad for him.

He made his way quietly along the first floor, listening for any sound, and looking into rooms to see who or what was inside. He was once again grateful that he was able to see in almost pitch black. He came to a set of stairs, going both up, and down. He stopped for a second, trying to figure out which way to go, when a scream from upstairs made his choice for him.

Quietly, yet quickly, he made his way up the stairs. He followed the scream to the left, when he got to the top of the stairs, but wasn't sure what room the scream came from. But he caught the scent of blood on the air, and that led him on. Turning down another hallway, he had to duck into a room as two guards came out of one of the room further down the hall. The smell of blood on them, made his blood boil. They had just passed the room he was hiding in when he struck.

One of the guards got his sword plunged through his heart, the other had Juan's knife slide across his throat. Quietly, Juan dragged both of the bodies into the room he had hidden in, and then made his way to the room the guards came from. He didn't have to worry about the blood splatter. With all the raping and torturing going on, there was blood almost everywhere.

Even with everything Juan had seen and done in his life, he still had to fight to keep his dinner down, when he walked into the room. The woman tied to the bed had to be Alesia's mother. Even though he had some of the girl's memories in his mind, he could not recognize her. What gave her away was the necklace she was wearing. That was the only thing that made Juan think that the person lying on the bed was the kids' mother.

Tentatively, Juan walked into the room, and again had to fight to keep his dinner down. The two guards that were laughing when they left this room, had to have tortured and raped this woman. He made his way to the side of the bed, and was shocked to see that she was still alive. Her head turned towards him, and Juan quickly pulled off the stocking mask that hid his face.

He tried to smile down at her, and not let her see how badly this was effecting him. She tried to smile as well, but instead coughed up some bloody froth. Juan reached out to grab her hand, and it barely registered to him, that every single one of the bones in her hand had been broken.

She tried to speak, and Juan leaned closer to try and hear what she said: "Please... please help my... children."

Juan had tears in his eyes, and he stood back up, nodding, as the breath of life ran out of her. He wanted to break down and cry. He wanted to just crawl up into a ball and let the pain he felt all around him out. Yeah, he'd seen bad things in his life, he knew the hopelessness that permeated every part of this part of the city. He had hoped to never find that feeling again, but here, in this place, it oozed through every pore in his body.

He fought down the rage he was feeling, wanting nothing more than to destroy that hopelessness, but knew... better than most... there was only one way to do that. It was not easy or quick.

Juan dropped the dead hand of the woman, and walked out of the room. He controlled his tears, controlled his fears, and for once, had complete control over his rage. He knew, soon enough, his rage would be able to be let out, and for right now, he was content with that. Tonight people would pay.

He stopped at the top of the stairs, and let his mind drift out, tasting the emotions of the people all around, until he found what he was looking for. His rage almost exploded out of him when he found what he was looking for, and before he even knew it, he was flying down the stairs, drawing both his sword, and dagger. He didn't even notice the slight blue glow of power that surrounded him, that urged him forward. He may not be as strong a hand to hand fighter as Chang was, but that still put him higher than most normal adults, and today, they would find that out. Today, Juan would unleash his full potential on his enemies. Tonight, Juan would bring them the Fury of Hell...unleashed..

Running, Juan saw the re-enforced door that lead the way to the "holding" area, where the hostages were. He also saw clearly what was going on behind the door. The Warlord was never intending to release them. No, the good Warlord was allowing his "troops" to have whatever fun they wanted before he killed them all. Knowing that killing the people in that room would send a message to the people of this city, and thinking that none would ever dare to challenge him again.

Without really thinking about it, Juan threw a hand out, just before he got to the door, and it exploded before him. He was running on instinct right now, and the need to exact vengeance. So much for his keeping quiet.

The guards inside the room barely got time to turn around before Juan cut them down. He never missed a step, nor did he allow for any wasted movement. He moved with the grace of a cat, and every movement brought death to those in the room. For a moment he remembered a line from a book that Chang was reading, and now it made sense to him. Right now, he was dancing with death itself.

Before he even knew it, he was moving away from the twelve, now dead, men, and moving further into where the prisoners were kept. A single man turned as Juan rounded a bend, and made to raise his rifle, but instead dropped it, as his hands flew to his chest. With barely a thought, Juan had reached into the man's chest with his powers, and crushed the man's still beating heart. Juan slowed down, and simply stepped over the still twitching man.

Again, using just his mind, he threw open a door, and was through it and into the room, before the soldiers knew what was happening. Juan's control on his rage slipped for a moment, as he saw the naked guards diving for their weapons. Children cried out, and tried to move, but they couldn't break the bonds that held them fast to the floor. Juan knew just by looking that he was the oldest child in the room. A quick count told him there were six boys, and eight girls, all younger than he, and every single one of them was being violated by the guards. Juan cut down every single one of the guards before they had a chance to do more than cry out.

The alarms sounding barely registered in Juan's mind as he left the room and went to another. He would have liked to try and help the kids still tied to the floor, but he knew if he stopped, others would die.

Another guard flew around the corner, but Juan was prepared this time. He didn't simply kill the man, but instead reached into his mind, and pulled everything about this place out. The man dropped to the floor screaming in agony, as Juan destroyed the man's mind. But he had the information he needed.

Rage and need drove him on, as he crashed into another room, blades flashing, as he cut down another group of guards playing in what they called the "fun" rooms. This one, though, was full of adult women.

Juan's once black clothing was now covered with gore, as he took a brief moment to wipe off his hands. Then it was off to another room. More kids in this one, and ten less guards. Juan was on the verge of a mental breakdown at having to see all of this pure evilness, when he heard gun fire. He knew what kind of weapons the "friendlies" would have, and the sounds he heard were not from them. Juan again flew into action.

Several bullets tore into his armor as he blew threw a door, and into the final room. His mind refused to even allow him to feel the pain of being shot, nothing mattered now but the rage. The pain flowed and ebbed while adding to the rage he felt inside. Twisting and turning, he danced through the lines of the men trying to kill him, bullets flew, and he moved, knives came, and Juan's blades flashed as the arms holding those blades fell to the floor, right before the body that held them.

In his mind's eye, he saw the people huddling in the back corner, adults and children all; he tried to get to them, to protect them. He screamed in horror as he saw one of the men turn from him, and open fire on the huddled mass, just as Juan's blade left his hand.

His sword flew through the air, and embedded in side of the man's head, but it was too late; the rifle, on full auto, tore into the group. His screams of fury intertwined with the cries of pain and fright as helpless, hopeless people were cut down by the bullets flying at them.

Juan spun as another bullet tore into his back, spun and ducked, as his knife was sent flying, only to find the man's chest, buried hilt deep through the soldier's heart. Never more was blood to pump from the black heart in the man's chest.

Without missing a beat, Juan drew two more knives, and let fly. Before they reached their targets, two more knives flew, and Juan was moving again. He barely registered that he was limping. While he might not feel the pain, the bullet that was now lodged in his hip was making it difficult for him to walk.

He was now in front of the innocents, his back to them, waiting, searching for more that needed death. He fell to one knee as his leg gave out on him. He pulled up one of the dropped rifles, and let fly with a burst, as a group of men tried to charge into the room.

Glancing behind, he saw some of the people who were still alive, trying to pull loved ones to cover. The cries of pain and terror were still filling the room, as again his rifle spat out, taking down a group of soldiers who were again trying to come into the room.

A few seconds later, Juan lifted the rifle and fired again, his hours of practice at the rifle range, with small moving targets came to the fore, as he hit the grenade before it flew even five feet into the room. His free arm came up to protect his face from the bit of shrapnel that hit him when it exploded, but most of it hit the soldiers trying to come into the room after the grenade.

Juan didn't know how long he was there, fighting off the soldiers that tried to make it into the room. Only his sheer stubborn will kept him fighting as he knew he lost a lot of blood. He would not allow these people to be hurt any more than they already were. Several times he heard his own voice, as if from far away, screaming at the soldiers that he would not allow them to harm these people anymore.

"My life for the helpless. My honor compels me to stand. My blood shall buy their freedom. You shall not pass me while I breathe," Juan yelled as he kept on firing, his Klingon blood now making him literally see red. "I stand by Kahless, I stand for Kahless, and he stands with me. You cannot win, and today is a good day to die, mutha fuckers!"

From out of nowhere a figure appeared next to him. Before even Juan had time to react, the newcomer flung his hand out in front of Juan and caught a bullet in his bare hand!

"I believe I can honestly say... these people are starting to annoy me," the figure said, and when Juan was able to get a look at him, even Juan was stunned. Standing next to him was a little kid, maybe the same age as Juan, or even younger. He was wearing a plain brown robe that went down to the floor. His head was completely shaved except for a single braid that came out of the back of his head and went down to halfway down his back. His skin was like the color of caramel, but it was his eyes that shocked Juan the most. They were blazing red little orbs.

Juan felt something he never felt before in combat... complete and utter surprise. He was dumbfounded as the young boy's arm flashed faster than even Juan could watch, and when he looked, four blades slammed into four different bad guys. The blades hit with such force that the men were taken off their feet, and flung backwards through the doorway. "You know... you really need to concentrate on the bad guys if you wanna live through this."

Juan knew he was losing a lot of blood, and even being as enhanced as he was, he needed help fast. He dropped to both knees and fired as yet another man tried to come through the doorway. He had absolutely no idea how many men he'd killed so far, but he knew it was a lot.

The new boy took care of the next man before Juan could even pull the trigger, but again the boy surprised Juan. Instead of killing the guy, the boy had wrapped a length of chain around the man's wrist, and yanked him towards where the two boys were. As quick as lightning, the new boy grabbed the man, and then grabbed Juan. His eyes flashed for a moment, and Juan realized he was completely healed.

In shock he looked at the man that the new boy had grabbed, and saw that all of his injuries had been given to the man. However, since the man was not enhanced, it killed him instantly... however, Juan was fully healed and ready for more action.

"Come, little Warrior, there are more to save," the boy said with murder in his voice, as his blazing eyes met Juan's bright bluish yellow eyes. "It is time to bring Ra's wrath to these Godless dogs."

Juan grinned; he couldn't help but like this boy. "Lead the way," Juan said, and the boy simply nodded before he took off.

The boy grinned back at Juan and pulled from behind his robes two weird looking long knives. Because of how small he was, they almost looked like short swords. Juan knew that they were Khukuri knives, the weapon of choice from Ancient Egypt, and these did look old. "Let us put away the weapons of this age, and fight like true warriors," the boy said to Juan. While Juan may have been offended at other times, this time he was not. He simply holstered his pistols, and drew the two swords that Chang had made him. After the boy nodded, Juan followed him out. He mentally sent to Koth where he was at, and that they needed to get medics down there for the injured. He didn't, however, tell his lover about the new boy. He wanted that to be a surprise.

As soon as they hit the hallway, the bad guys opened up with their rifles. Juan would normally have thought they might have been cut down, but the new boy took to the walls, and started running along them. This caused the men to falter, and it gave just enough time for the vastly swifter boys to get to their enemies, and start to cut them down.

The two boys never slowed down as they wove their way through hallways and corridors. Juan wasn't sure if the boy's feet ever touched the floor. It almost looked like he was bouncing from wall to wall and from wall to ceiling, never giving the bad guys a steady target.

Three floors later, and at least thirty bad guys, the young boy stopped outside a heavy door. "In here," the boy said and Juan put a hand on his shoulder.

"What's in there?"

The boy turned and looked at Juan, and for once Juan saw some emotion other than rage in the boy's eyes. This time he saw worry. "What I have come here to get. Please be careful, as these people mean a great deal to me."

Juan just nodded and took a moment to wipe his blood-soaked hands on his pants, and then took up his swords again, then nodded to the boy. He nodded back, and then took a step back from the door. With a scream, the new boy raised his right leg, and kicked out at the door. With a crash, the door flew inwards, and the boy almost flew into the room.

Juan was about to follow him in, when he heard a gun fire, and then felt the bullet rip into his back. He swung around, using the momentum of the bullet hitting him to help him spin quicker. He grabbed one of his knives as he spun, and as soon as he had his target in sight, he let it fly. Before the man knew what had happened, a knife was sticking out of his forehead. The man dropped to the floor, dead before he even knew he was hurt.

Two more men came around the corner, and Juan charged them. Juan was a quick learner, and understood how the little boy's jumping around all the time had confused the enemy, so this time, Juan took two steps forward, and then sprang to the wall. From there, he sprang to the other wall, and was swiftly moving down the corridor towards the two guards, who couldn't seem to get a bead on their target. Before they knew what to do, Juan's swords flashed, and both men toppled to the floor, both of them without their heads.

When Juan stopped, he heard the screams and the gun fire from the room that the young boy ran into, and he quickly sprinted towards the room. As he hit the doorway, he skidded to a stop and his jaw hit the floor.

There were two groups of people in the room; one group was obviously guards, and there were at least twenty of them. The other group looked like a family, or something like that. Two adults, and five kids. Four boys, ranging in age from about eight to about thirteen, and one little girl who was maybe six or seven. In between them was the little boy. And something else.

About two foot behind the boy was a swirling cloud of what looked like dust. It was rotating rapidly, and Juan could tell that the two groups couldn't even see each other through the swirling debris field. One of the guards raised his weapon, and fired a string of bullets into the field trying to hit the group behind. Not one of the bullets made it through the cloud.

The boy let out a scream of rage, and his voice took on almost a demonic quality to it. "MY NAME IS RUNIHURA!!! I am the Destroyer! Face me, and you shall feel Ra's embrace!"

As he was speaking, the boy seemed to grow. Black leathery wings exploded out of his back, and his skin turned even darker and looked to be the texture of rough leather. Wicked looking talons exploded out of his fingers and toes.

The once loose robe grew taut around the thickly muscled beast, as it launched itself into the group of men. Juan was very impressed with the carnage that the boy/beast created. In less than thirty seconds, it was over, and the beast returned to being the boy. The boy looked around and spotted Juan. A small sad smile graced the boy's lips as Juan heard in his mind, 'It would please me greatly if the others did not learn about that.'

Juan nodded, and with a wave of the boy's hand, the swirling field dissipated. The little girl, who was being held in her mother's arms, squealed and shouted "RUNI!" She squirmed out of her mother's hold and ran across the room, slamming into the young boy, who picked her up and hugged her tightly to his chest.

Right about that time, Koth came running into the room with a squad of VSO soldiers right behind him. Juan moved over and pulled Koth into a hug. When he stepped back, Koth pointed over to the group, who were by now all around Runi, hugging and crying. "Who are they?"

Juan smiled as he pulled his lover out of the room. "I'm not sure, but I intend to find out."

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Martha was happier then she had ever been... at least she thought so. Of course, with everything going on, the nearly sixty five year old lady was not able to keep up with all the kids around. That's fine though, she didn't have to.

Ever since the people here started to bring in all those poor unfortunate kids, she has dedicated herself to helping out in ways that she knew. That idea quickly grew into something more then she ever imagined. Now she runs what everyone is calling "Grandma's Brigade."

These kids were helping out with everything that could. She had just over thirty five kids that spent almost every waking moment of the day helping her out. She finally put her foot down and demanded that they take some time to play.

Her job was simplicity itself, which of course meant that it was very hard to do. What she took on, was finding the kids that were falling through the cracks. It was inevitable that it would happen. You can't plan for everything, it just isn't possible. What you can plan for is missing things, so you can put something in place to catch it. The places that usually caused the most issues were when one sibling was injured, and separated from the other. This very morning had cemented this for her. When her little Juan-ny had asked her and Sam to watch over Bobby and William, it became so clear.

They were both such cute boys, and so enthusiastic about helping out. Their predicament had shown her where a hole was in the system, and she moved to fill it. She made sure that they regularly checked out the Hospital ward for children that were separated from their siblings. Now if a kid in the hospital ward had a sibling they were made aware of each other as soon as possible, and reunited as fast as could be allowed.

The final component of "Grandma's Brigade" was "Operation Cuddle Bears." Juan and Jory had created three foot tall android teddy bears that were programmed to be the companion of any kid in the compound. As the child grew so would the bear. The kids would always have someone on their side. Juan and Jory were amazing in Grandma Martha's estimation. The little bears were so like their creators. They had almost endless patience with the little ones, and enough firmness to help guide them to do right.

Of course this is the UNIT, so the bears were also protectors in the most real sense of the word. The bears had three inch retractable claws that slid out like Wolverine's in the X-men. Being who they were, Juan and Jory went after the best. They worked with Chang to develop a fighting style unique to the little bears, and also a "code of conduct" for when to attack and what force to use. If someone tried to harm a kid with one of these teddies, then God help them.

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Koth and Juan stepped outside from the building, which was slightly smoking, and surrounded by police cars with flashing lights. Koth had a five-year-old in his arms, and Juan once again felt sadness for the boy. Not only had his twin brother been killed after telling the VSO where the Warlord was located, but then the boy had to watch as his family was killed before his very eyes. The only reason he was left alive was that his two older siblings had shielded him with their own bodies. The boy had no family

left. However, even though neither Koth nor Juan had talked about it, both knew that the boy would be theirs.

Right behind them were Runi and the people he went there to rescue. No one really knew anything about them yet, since they hadn't said much since they were reunited. Juan was of course, dying to learn what he could about the little boy who so efficiently kicked ass with him. To that end, Juan walked over to the group.

"Hi... I'm Juan. I just thought I would introduce myself," Juan said to the man who was standing there. He had his arms full of the youngest boy, but managed to shake Juan's hand.

"I'm George Harris, and this is my wife Kathy." Juan shook hands with Kathy, and then George introduced the kids, starting with the thirteen-year-old. "This is my oldest son Tanner, then there's Nathan, and Dylan," George said, indicating the three boys that were obviously brothers. "And the little girl in Kathy's arms is Diana."

Juan grinned at the little girl and walked up to her. She almost shied away but Juan held out his hand to her. "So you're the little princess in this group?"

The girl just giggled and grabbed Juan's hand. She leaned forward a bit and then asked in complete seriousness. "What happened to your head? Did you hurt it?" She was obviously pointing to the ridges on Juan's forehead.

The chuckles from Koth coming from behind Juan made the girl glance around him. Her eyes widened when she saw a boy with even more pronounced ridges on his head and nose. Her mouth just dropped open.

"We're Klingons," Koth said to her through his chuckles. "The way we look is normal for us, little angel."

Diana was going to respond, but George cut her off. "I think you already met Runi, and the boy next to him is our adoptive son Colt." Juan smiled when he saw that Runi was actually holding hands with the bigger boy. He looked Colt up and down and figured him to be about twelve. Stick thin with long legs. Juan knew that the boy was right in the stage of puberty where his limbs grew faster than the rest of him. To most, Colt would almost look gangly. Colt looked a little worried when Juan was looking at him, and had a good idea why. Juan resisted the urge to mind scan him, remembering Adam's orders to not scan anyone who wasn't a potential threat, or who had not agreed to being scanned.

Juan decided to go to a safe topic and leave the Elephant in the room alone... Runi. "So.. may I ask what you guys are doing here? You're obviously Americans... what brought you to South Africa?"

Runi was the one who answered. "We had some... business down here. But that has been concluded. I am sure we will be leaving shortly."

The rest of the group looked a little relieved at that, and Juan immediately pounced on that. "Could I offer you transport back to the States? It would be quicker than flying, as long as you don't mind a little layover at our base in Utah."

Runi looked over at the adults and seemed to have a quiet conversation with them. Finally he turned back to Juan. "That would be very generous of you. I think we would like...." Runi's eyes darted to something behind Juan, and Juan quickly spun around. Walking up to the group was a large silvery white wolf, and he had two children riding on his back.

"Silver Wolf!" Koth exclaimed in shocked surprise. "It can't be! How'd you get down here, boy? Did you come with some of our guys?" he asked as he ran over to scratch the wolf's ears. He glanced at one of the Vulcan VSO officers in question.

"He did not come with us, Commander," the Vulcan answered simply.

*Greetings, Talons of the Dragon*

Koth stared at his animal friend and removed his hand in shock.

*Now is the Time for that which is veiled to be revealed. I am Cynoeswr, Guardian Spirit of Terra and father to Black Feet, Guardian Spirit of the Shaper. These are to be your nephews, the children of Adam and Logan of Utah. Care for them*

Both children slipped from the wolf's back and ran to cuddle around Juan, whom they recognized. Their injuries were gone.

"Why... how... what?!" Koth spluttered, still staring at the wolf. "How long, uh... I mean..."

*Always*

Runi walked over, "What are you? I have never seen your like in all my years."

"No, you have not, Child of the Timeless Sands, Lord of the Nightfall. But I have seen you, and guided you, and protected you when you Slept. Go with them. It is your destiny

And, with that, the wolf seemed to swell and grow until all any could see were amber eyes looking into their souls... then Cynoeswr was gone.

Juan looked up from the two children who were cuddled around him. "Well, that was interesting. However, I think it may be time for us to go home."

After receiving nods from all of them, Juan spoke softly, "Daileass, could you please bring us to the med center?"

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"Incoming transport." They heard Daileass say just before they appeared next to the nurses' station in the med bay. Janet was already coming around the desk when she stopped in her tracks. The two kids that were plastered to Juan gave a cry of fright at suddenly being in a new place, and the little five year old boy in Koth's arms giggled a bit at the funny feeling.

Janet's questioning look found Juan and he spoke in a soft voice. "Mom, could you look these three over and make sure they're okay?" Before she could respond, Juan turned the two kids around to face him. Janet was stunned as she watched her youngest interact with the frightened boy and girl with him. She didn't really even notice the family that was with them, other than to look them over and see they all appeared to be fine. "Alesia, Demarco... This is my mommy, Janet. She's a doctor and needs to take a look at you. I wanna make sure you guys are okay now. Would you two go with her?"

The girl looked up into Juan's eyes and asked softly, "Will you be with us?"

"Of course I will, darling. I will be right here, and she's going to take you over to one of the those beds right there," Juan said, pointing to one of the beds closest to where they were at. The two looked from the beds to Juan and then to Janet, and finally the girl nodded her head. Janet took that as her cue and walked over. She held out her hands and spoke in a very soft voice. "It's okay guys... I promise not to hurt you. As soon as you're done, I'm sure we can find a treat around here for you."

Slowly, first Alesia then Demarco took her outstretched hands, and she gently led them to the biobeds. Koth followed behind her and laid the little five-year-old boy down on the next bed. He stayed there with him while Janet started to work on the first two. Juan then turned to look at the group standing behind him.

"Okay, first off, let me welcome you to the Unit's Main Base of operations. Before you ask, the Unit is the Special Forces section of Clan Short of Vulcan. You guys are welcome to stay here as long as you like, and if you need anything just ask." George sighed, obviously having heard of Clan Short before, but it was Runi that he addressed next. At some point after they got there, Runi pulled out a pair of sunglasses and was now wearing them - obviously to hide the yellow glowing eyes. "Runi, we are aware of your kind here. There is no reason to hide your eyes; you are safe here."

All eyes snapped to him, and Runi, for the first time in MANY years was absolutely at a loss for words. "How... How did you know?" Colt asked in awe.

Juan chuckled, "When you've seen one person with red glowey eyes, you know what to look for the next time. As a matter of fact, there is a Vampire within the ranks of the Clan. He actually runs the night time security at the main Clan compound."

"That would be me," Brant said seriously as he came out of the shadows, his boyfriend Matthew next to him. "I was told to come here, but not the reason," he finished, looking closely at Runi. "You're older than you look," he said softly, consideringly.

Runi looked him up and down. "You're not very old at all." He wasn't being mean about it, simply stating a fact.

"A year in darkness, or thereabouts," Brant said. "Mmm, I see something. Sands. Time. Ancient power. Knowledge long lost, yet remembered. I see the oldest of civilizations. Now I know why the Guardian sent me. My name is Brant, Brandar to my enemies. I am the Dark One," he said softly.

Runi looked closely at Brant also, and his eyes widened. Young this twelve-year-old vampire might be, but he could not escape the feeling that he held a power unlike any other vampire. Runi tried to read Brant, but found that he was unable to; impossible considering their age-gap.

"You know... there have been more people that I can not read in the last hour than I think I have seen in the last thousand years. Very interesting." Runi now waited to see what the response from that would be. He knew full well that very few if ever any Vampires could conceive of a thousand years in Darkness.

"What about in five thousand, eight hundred and ninety-four years in darkness?" Brant asked with a whisper that only another vampire had a hope of hearing.

Matthew whistled softly, however, making Brant's eyes contract in worry.

If Runi was surprised he was good at covering it. He said just as softly. "49 days, 38 minutes, and roughly 16 seconds... give or take 23.4 seconds."

Brant and Matthew burst out in belly laughs that made everyone there puzzled, for all they saw was three boys looking at each other - two with glowing yellow eyes, and one normal.

Brant stopped laughing quickly, however, and cast another worried look at Matthew.

"He has ingested a large amount of our fluids," Runi whispered to Brant. "He is not one of us, but is close. You are together, are you not?"

"We are," Matthew said, just as softly. "Is that why I am stronger now? I thought it took full sex!"

Runi grinned, "Talk later, young one. It is for our ears only." He looked at Brant, "I like you."

Brant smiled, "Feeling is mutual, Destroyer."

Runi smiled, but then his eyes went hard. "I want this known now. This," he gestured back behind him to the family standing there, "is MY Family. They are not to be harmed."

"So I can sense. I shall inform the Council in Orlando, and they shall spread the word. However, word has gone out to the Darkness that Clan Short is not to be touched. They are safe if counted as our number already. Once I receive the response from Hezekiah, Elder of Orlando, I shall inform you," Brant said seriously in a normal tone of voice.

"Ummm... I don't mean to interrupt..." George said, stepping a little closer. His youngest son by now was standing on the floor next to his brothers. Runi nodded and George smiled. "I have a favor to ask of the Clan." Juan peeked up hearing this, as did Brant and Matthew. "Well, this is a long story, but to make it shorter, Colt here is not our son by birth; however he is our son." George paused as he pulled Colt under his arm. "Let's just say his parents were not very good to him, and Runi here saved him from that. However, he is not officially our son."

Juan, standing with Koth to tickle their soon-to-be-five-year-old son, looked deeply at all of the family there. His mind reached out, gathered what he needed, gently knocked on Runi's mind and was graciously permitted to see what he needed, then his eyes focused on George. He then spoke with a new maturity in his voice. "You are now. Daileass, start recording!"

*"Doing so now, Juan."*

"I, Captain Juan Casey of the Special Forces Division of Clan Short, do authorize your adoption of Colt Ryan Robins. His biological family no longer have claim upon him, and he shall hereby be known as Colt Ryan Harris. This is so ordered under the Authority of Clan Short, Vulcan, and the Federation High Council." He then walked over to the stunned Colt and hugged him tight. "Well, what are you waiting for? Go say 'hi' to your FOR REAL mom and dad!" he giggled.

As Colt sprang away from Juan to slam into a hug with his official parents, dragging Runi with him, Juan turned back to cuddle up with Koth and spend time with the little boy Koth was holding.

They watched with joy as Colt was passed from one family member to the next, giving and receiving hugs and affection.

Juan sighed happily before leading Koth and their little boy, Tumelo, to sit near to where Demarco and Alesia were being examined by Janet. He was in the right place at the right time to see something extraordinary.

Adam and Logan rushed into the room, and quickly came over to him. "Daileass just informed us of your return," Adam said, trying to maintain his feelings. His little brother had gone off to a war without telling him... he didn't know whether to be pissed off that Juan could have gotten hurt, or annoyed that he had missed out on a fight!

"Yeah, well... you see, Adam... I... ahh..." Juan started. Koth giggling didn't help any. Juan looked up at his big, beloved elder brother and smiled. "I'm a daddy, Adam! And I love you!" he said before slamming into Adam's chest and beginning to sob. The sights and horrors he had seen were now boiling over in his mind and heart. Sure, he'd done worse, but he'd never seen such human cruelty on such a scale, before. On top of that, he had, for the first time in his life, used the new Clan powers the Unit had been given to create a family for a hurting boy - AND, he and the love of his life were about to become fathers over Tumelo.

Yes; this wonderful, sweet boy who usually hid behind his training and aggression, had more than enough reasons for wanting love and hugs from the brother he loved above all others.

Both Adam and Logan were shocked, to say the least. However, both did know the 'real' Juan well enough to get over it and sandwich the shaking, emotional, proud little warrior between them protectively. It was not often that Juan would allow this, especially not in public, but when he did - they were always there. Would always be there.

He was their Juan, and that was final.

Janet looked up from the biobed monitor and smiled. She glanced down at the brother and sister and became puzzled, for they were both staring open mouthed at Adam and Logan. "What's the matter, little ones?" she asked softly. "They won't hurt you."

"The Wolfie," Alesia whispered, her voice awed. "He showed us... them. Showed us both of them. And we already knew them... dreamed them."

"Uh huh," Demarco croaked. "We've talked and talked and know we've had the same dream for years and years..."

Janet didn't know what to make of that, and certainly didn't know who 'Wolfie' was, so she simply glanced up at her two eldest sons. Juan was now in Koth's arms, and both teens were whispering softly to them both. "Adam? Logan? Could you come here, please?" she called.

They turned to glance at her... and both became ridged with shock once they laid eyes on the two siblings on the bed.

"Oh, my..." Logan barely managed to get out as he lost his breath.

Adam had tears streaming down his face, "I know you... both of you..."

*Of course you do, Master of Arms. They are your children*

Everyone turned to see...

"Wolfie!" Demarco cried out, bouncing on the biobed as Cynoewr - AKA 'Wolfie', AKA Silver Wolf, AKA 'One who gets around more than a teenage boy in a whorehouse' - appeared at the foot of the biobed.

*You four have known each other all your lives. This was written long ago that they would be your children, and you their parents*

"What?!" Janet exclaimed. The fact that it was a talking animal saying it didn't faze her - she'd met I-Cheya, so she was now immune to such surprises - but the implications of what was said staggered her.

"How long ago?" Logan managed to ask, not able to take his eyes off the two kids that had been made flesh from his dreams.

*Since before the founding of Terra. Since before the Lords of Time strode over Creation on legs of fire. Since the Birth of Time. Adam, Master of Arms. Logan, Mind of Power. Behold your children...*

... and, as suddenly as he had appeared, Cynoewr vanished.

"That's it -- from now on you BOTH wear condoms!" Janet exclaimed.

## Chapter 17

Adam and Logan spent a few minutes to move a set of bunk beds into their room in the command pod. Logan thought that Alesia might have wanted her own room, but she made it clear that she would not be separated from her brother or her dads, so they decided to just bring in a set of bunk beds. Of course, that meant that Adam and Logan would have to find somewhere else for their fun, but since they were both sure it was temporary, they didn't mind.

The fact that Janet had told them that neither Demarco or Alesia would be leaving the med bay for the next day or two gave them time to have everything set up for them when they moved in. Adam took a trip down to the commissary and, after talking with Ronnie for a bit, came back with a whole bunch of clothes and other things that the kids might need. One thing they were not lacking for in the Unit base right now was clothes.

Logan could only chuckle as Adam brought everything in. Even though they were called dad by both Tommy and Ronnie, neither one of them had had to ever really act it. Now though, they both were going to be daddy to two younger kids, and Adam was doing the normal 'new parent' thing, and overdoing it somewhat. Logan was sure the kids only needed a few sets of clothes, not the fourteen different sets that Adam had picked up. Nor did they each need an entire crate full of toiletries dealing with everything from brushing their teeth to dealing with diaper rash.

'Oh well...' Logan thought to himself, 'at least he didn't get baby food.' Looking at the clock, Logan sighed. "Well hun, I got ten minutes before the start of my shift in the command center. I'm gonna jump in the shower."

"I'll join you..." Adam grinned and they both went into their bathroom. Logan was about five minutes late getting to the command center.

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Janet sat back in her office chair sighing in frustration. She couldn't find anything in any of the records she had access to. It was as if these new kids were aliens that the Federation had never encountered before. The problem was, they didn't even know who or what they were, making her search all that more difficult. So far in every Federation medical database she could search, there was no record of anything that even closely resembled the DNA pattern she had found in these kids, Tommy included. That was something else that worried her a great deal. Tommy wasn't actually human.

The fact that he looked human, and the fact that he wasn't with the military doctors for more than a few days, meant that she had never bothered to do a very deep DNA scan on him. Without Federation equipment or a fully stocked genetics lab, it was just about impossible to do that anyways. He'd never been sick during the time that he was rescued, or even really hurt bad, so she never had to do any blood work on him. He was sick now, yes, but with what she thought was just the flu. It presented just like it, and seemed to need the same things, plenty of fluids and lots of rest.

Now that his twin had shown up, and was sick with the exact same thing meant that there was something else going on, and she was at her wits' end trying to figure out what was going on. This was not a situation she normally found herself in, and didn't like it one bit.

"Daileass!" She called out, and immediately his voice filled the room. "Yes, mother, what can I do for you?" His pre-pubescent voice always filled her with a bit of sadness; he should have been out playing with his brothers, but because of the sick experiments that the boys had been forced to endure, he now sat many levels below, his positronic brain hooked up to the computer system that ran then entire base.

"I need you to do me a favor. I need full access to Starfleet Medical," she said in a soft voice, knowing he would be able to hear her, no matter how softly she spoke.

"But mom, you already do have access to all the public areas." She could almost hear the smile in his voice.

"I know I do, but I want FULL access... even to the restricted areas," she said with a small smile.

"But mother... you said that I shouldn't hack, and that it was illegal to do it." His high pitched boy soprano was dripping with cuteness.

"Yes I did... but now I want you to do this; how long will it take?" she asked, trying not to laugh.

"There you go!" he said, giggling as suddenly her computer screen changed to display an access code. "Just use that anytime it asks for a password."

Janet blinked, then looked sternly towards the ceiling, an unconscious act that many people had when talking to Dailess. "How long have you had this?"

"Well... only a few days... ever since Logan got me hooked up with the Trinary servers. I've been putting back doors in every system I can get access to... just in case, of course." His voice was dripping with innocence. "You never know what someone might need access to. Like right now." Janet could only laugh as she imagined his face with a shit-eating grin on it. Shaking her head, she bent forward and started to delve into what Dailess had given her access to.

---

First Commander Huthel walked into the large briefing room, and bowed before Captain Liuella, and Master Quel before taking his seat. "I have the reports you asked for, Sir." The Commander spoke mostly towards his Captain, but any time the Master wanted to be involved in something, he was. That was the way of their people.

"Go ahead," Captain Liuella said, even though he already pretty much knew what was going to be said.

"Well, with the help we had acquired, the repairs have gone much better then expected. The 'Raptor's Claw' is back to 100% efficiency, as well as all the repairs to the 'Eryres' have been completed. We are waiting on your orders, sir, to spin up the reactors. If all goes well, reactors one through four should be fully operational by this evening, with reactors five through seven coming online a few hours later. Then the main drive core can come online, and we will be able to resume our hunt."

"What are the conditions of our other ships?" the Master asked quietly from where he sat. "Our armada is currently at 100% readiness, with all weapons fully charged and in complete working order. There should be no problems when we face our enemies."

Master Quel smiled, "I am glad you were able to convince me to approach our new friends. Without them, we would probably be down to less then fifteen ships, instead of having all forty-two completely operational."

The Captain smiled and glanced at Master Quel. With a nod from the Master, the Captain looked back to his First Commander, "Very Good, First Commander, make it so."

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Tommy was dreaming... he knew he was dreaming, but wasn't worried; he'd had these types of dreams before. So many things were clear now. So many things he'd never understood, now he was beginning to. Things he wouldn't, couldn't tell even Ronnie or his dads now made more sense. He'd seen himself

in dreams many times, even talked to himself in his dreams, but now he knew the truth. It wasn't himself who he talked to, it was his brother.

All the places and things that his brother showed him in his dreams, now he knew were real. In his dream, Tommy walked into a longhouse, Native American style, and approached the fire that was going. His brother was already seated on a log, with Fluffy seated not far from him. Tommy sat down between the two and stared into the fire.

Silence was all that was heard, and finally Tommy couldn't help it any longer; he turned his head and looked deep into the eyes of his brother... the brother that he never knew he had, and his own eyes stared back. It was as if Tommy were looking into a mirror. The face he was looking at right now was the face he saw in the mirror every morning. He couldn't help but giggle, thinking that Ronnie was going to love this. He always said he thought Tommy was really good looking, and now there is another one of him.

"You finally accept that this is real?" Elwyn said.

"I... I just can't believe it. For all these years I thought you were just something I made up in my dreams." Tommy was now looking into the fire, not really sure how to take this all in.

"Why must the young make things harder than needed?" Fluffy asked rhetorically "I know it is difficult for you, Tommy, but stop acting like such a bird brain!" It was only in his dreams when Fluffy actually spoke. Most of the time it was just images that entered his mind from her, and he interpreted them. It was something that he could do for as long as he could remember, and with most of the bigger animals. It took him a long time to figure out how to send to them, and how to "phrase" it. It was more like what images he needed to project to them. Animals think in such a vastly different way than people, but once he figured it out, he realized that it wasn't all that much different... it was like learning a new language, one filled with pictures and emotions then one filled with words.

"I've told you since you first told me of your dreams that they were real. That you did have another family out there. I've also told you since I met you that you were different from the other humans around." Fluffy was 'talking' in such a motherly tone, that Tommy couldn't help but start crying.

"But I didn't want to be different. I didn't want to be the freak boy who could talk to animals!" He was crying by now, and Elwyn reached over and pulled him into a side arm hug. He let go after a second when Fluffy pushed into Tommy with her head. Then she pushed harder until he fell off the log, and down on his back... before he could move, she was over top of him looking down into his small face.

"I will not have one of my cubs saying bad things about themselves. Look at your human father... is he a freak? How about your Uncle Chang? Or Uncle Will... or even Uncle Jory and Uncle Juan... Well, they maybe... but that's not what I mean." She said with a cat grin and Tommy couldn't help but giggle. Fluffy leaned down and licked his face, from his bare chest all the way to his forehead. Of course that started a wrestling match where Tommy lost cause he was laughing too much.

I know this is a very short chapter, and I want to let everyone know why. In the Past the CSU has had many repeat scenes appearing in several different chapters and stories. In an effort to not allow that to happen again, I have closed off book 2 of The U.N.I.T. At this point, so as not to duplicate scenes.

Obviously my kids are still going to be busy, so I would invite all of my readers to go over and catch up with my guys in the Saren Book 2 chapters as they come out.

Of course, what kind of evil author would I be if I didn't leave a bit of a teaser for you... so... here you go.

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"Read it 'gain, pwease," Tumelo asked, for Juan had just finished the scene where Smaug the Dragon had been talking to Bilbo Baggins the Hobbit.

Juan giggled, then put on a deep, growly voice and said, "'Revenge? Revenge? The King under the Mountain is dead! Girion, Lord of Dale, is dead; and where are their son's sons that dare approach me?..."

Juan stopped reading as Draco's voice came over Koth's communicator. He then felt something that made his heart go cold, and immediately ran for the Emergency Room.

What he saw... was his worst nightmare. Chang, already hard at work, asked him to step back and give them room.

Juan never heard him. He was already walking back the way he had come. His eyes were shining blue-yellow, and his very posture was as if carved from ice.

Rage. Bloodlust. VENGEANCE...

"...I kill where I wish, and none dare resist. I laid low the warriors of old, and their like are not in the world today. No, thief in the shadows. I am indestructible..." Juan recited as he walked down the hallway.

From the entrance, he saw Adam and Logan and the others racing towards him and the room he'd just come from, but he passed them without a word.

As he threw open the door leading outside, he turned and stared back towards where his little brother was dying.

"... my breath... is DEATH!"

To be continued....