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# **The Twisted Tales**

# **Definitely Not Swedish**

**Star Trek: *Voyager*  
Meets  
Stargate SG-1**

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Initial Completion - 01/17/07  
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Final Edit - 02/08/07**

**The author would like to express his appreciation to Janice Graham of the U.S.S. Renegade in Youngstown, Ohio. Ms. Graham donated considerable time and expertise in proofreading and editing this story. Without her efforts, this story would have been a lot uglier, to say the least.**

**Thanks to the Fuzzy Elf!**

**Chapter 1**

“Now that Daniel is feeling better, I’d like to get SG-1 back into things, General.”

“Never could stand vacations, could you, Jack?”

Colonel Jack O’Neill sat down in the extra chair in General Hammond’s office. “You know what they say. ‘Idle hands, idle minds.’”

“Well, don’t worry. Major Carter is working on preparations for your next mission. P3G117. We are scheduled to send a UAV through the *Gate* this afternoon for a preliminary scouting operation.”

“Finally.” Jack had been going stir crazy. He had known Daniel had a lot of allergies, but almost two weeks to recover from this one was just plain, well, pathetic, in Jack’s mind. He wouldn’t dispute that Daniel Jackson was a valuable part of SG-1, but for crying out loud. “One more game of chess with Teal’c and I’d have gone through to somewhere alone.”

Sirens and lights began signaling an alert in the Cheyenne Mountain Complex. “Offworld activation! All security to the Gate Room.”

Hammond immediately rose from his desk and headed for the Command Center, with O’Neill right behind him. “SG-8 isn’t due back for almost a week and they’re the only ones out. Either something’s gone wrong or someone else is dialing in.”

“What about SG-5?”

“Ran into bad weather. Came home early this morning.”

“I thought PCX422 was such a tropical paradise?”

“It is, with all the usual features, including category 5 hurricanes.”

“Oh! Bad timing.”

Arriving in the Gate Room’s Command Center, Hammond heard the tail end of a transmission on the overhead speakers. It sounded like terrified screams and shouts, interrupted by bursts of gunfire.

“Seal the iris.”

“Yes, Sir.”

“Any IDC codes?”

“We started to receive a code, but it was cut off.”

Hammond reached for the boom-mounted mike on his left. “This is General Hammond. Identify yourself.”

“O’Malley. Don’t send...” The transmission ended with a scream.

Hammond waited, but the transmission did not resume. “O’Malley? Colonel Diamante? SG-8, this is General Hammond. Respond.”

There was only static. The only response was a loud thump. Something had struck the iris from the wormhole side.

Major Samantha Carter rushed into the command center, looked to see the iris closed, and then heard the thump. Seconds later, there was another, then another. It continued. “Someone wants in bad.”

“And unless I know who it is, I’m inclined to let them beat their heads on the iris,” offered Hammond.

“Wise move,” commented Jack, as the seventeenth thump sounded through the Gate Room.

Finally, after the thirtieth impact, the thumping stopped.

“Maybe they got the point?” said Carter.

“If not, they’re pretty dense,” responded Jack.

After about thirty seconds more, the wormhole collapsed, closing the Gate. And when the iris opened, the sliding iris elements scraped a variety of debris off their back surfaces.

Hammond got on the PA system and warned the security personnel to stay away from it, for the moment. “Are we detecting anything dangerous, like radiation?”

Carter seated herself at one of the computers and accessed the few sensors they had in the Gate Room. “Nothing, Sir.”

“What about that partial IDC code?”

“Based on what we received, it could only have been SGs-8 or -12” answered the Lieutenant.

“And SG-12 is home, plus Lt. O’Malley is third in command on SG-8” noted Hammond. “They apparently ran into something on P4F783 that our initial MALP probe didn’t find.”

“The million dollar question is: what?” said Carter.

Carter, O’Neill and Hammond left the Command Center and went to the floor of the Gate Room. Traveling up the ramp, they stopped and looked at the material left behind. Carter stooped and picked up a piece.

“Sir, this appears to be both organic, and inorganic.”

“Can you tell what it was?” asked Hammond.

Carter shrugged. “Maybe once I get it into the lab.”

“If Dr. Frazier can be of any assistance, tell her this is top priority, per me.”

“Yes, Sir.” Carter exited to get instruments and containers while O’Neill and Hammond pondered what had occurred.

“Sir, if each of those ‘thuds’ we heard was another of whatever they were trying to come through, then whoever it was tried to arrive in force. That sounds a lot like an invasion.”

“I would have to agree with you, Colonel, but by whom? One of the System Lords?”

“I don’t think so, General. The word about us is out among the Goa’uld. They know the iris exists and that they aren’t getting past it without saying please. Same for the Tok’ra, but why would they want to invade anyway? The Asgard aren’t the type. They usually just show up and transport whoever they want to talk to up to their ship.” O’Neill nudged a piece of “debris” with the toe of his boot. “I hate to say it, but we may have a new kid on the block.”

Hammond glanced toward the Stargate. What had they been forced into? “I want to know what happened to those men. We need information. The only way I can see to obtain it is to send someone or something through and see what there is to see.”

“UAV?”

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Hammond nodded. "I think it's our best bet right now. We're already prepping the unit that was to be sent to P3G117. Have it retasked for the new mission."

"I'll tell Sam to leave the guts to someone in medical and rush getting it ready."

As O'Neill left the Gate Room, Hammond found himself getting a very uneasy feeling.

## Chapter 2

“Captain, I have detected a Borg Cube. It is already in orbit of the planet we are bound for.”

‘Damn,’ thought Captain Katherine Janeway. Not another one. *Voyager* had been traveling back and forth through this sector for weeks, seeking planets they could obtain food and other supplies from. And everywhere they went, the Borg had already been there. “Has it been destroyed already?”

Tuvok examined his sensor readings for several seconds. “I do not believe so. I am still reading extensive flora and fauna on the planet’s surface.”

“But what can we do to prevent it?” asked Chakotay. “We aren’t equipped to battle a Borg cube.”

“It appears that we will not have to. The cube is leaving orbit,” responded Tuvok.

“Why would they leave the job incomplete?” asked Janeway.

“I doubt we scared them into leaving,” commented Tom Paris from his helm position.

“That is highly unlikely.” Seven of Nine was monitoring from a science station. “It is more likely that they were called away by some other event. Perhaps the Collective is under some form of attack?”

“Whoever it may be, more power to them.” Paris would be happy to see someone cause the Borg some distress.

“But the real question is, will they be back?” asked Janeway.

“Without question. Once the crisis is averted, they will return to their previous duties,” offered Seven.

“I wonder how long we have?” Janeway knew they were so low on supplies, foraging was a primary concern at the moment.

Chakotay was prepared to take some chances. “Even if we only have a few hours, it might get us through for a while. Anything we can gather would be a help.”

It was snap decision time. “All right. Mr. Paris, get us into orbit as quickly as possible. Tuvok, make sure we know the second that the Borg return. Janeway to Neelix.”

“Here, Captain.” Neelix sounded as chipper as ever. A good prerequisite for a morale officer.

“Mr. Neelix, be prepared to start your foraging mission as soon as we get into orbit. We may not have long here, so make it as productive as possible.”

“We’ll be ready.”

“I will proceed to assist Mr. Neelix, to ‘improve his efficiency’,” added Seven before leaving the bridge.

“Neelix, Seven is on her way to assist you.”

“Always happy to have the help. Thank you, Captain.”

“Good Luck. Janeway out.” Katherine felt kind of superfluous at this point... “Chakotay, you have the conn. I’ll be in my ready room trying to rest before the Borg return.”

“Good luck.” Chakotay’s impish grin told her that he didn’t expect her to have time to get too comfortable.

“UAV is ready, General.”

Hammond had returned to the Command Center, still pondering the possibilities. They were just too many at the moment. “You have a go for UAV reconnaissance.”

Carter rechecked her controls for the Unmanned Aerial Vehicle and was satisfied that she was ready. “All right, Lieutenant, dial us up.”

“Yes, Major.”

In the Gate Room, the little UAV sat on its launch rail, aimed directly at the Stargate. Around it, Security personnel were prepared for the possibility that something might try to use the open wormhole to come back their way. It was the down side of a UAV mission. You had to maintain the wormhole to collect data, and the longer it was open, the more chance there was that someone or something might come through from the other side.

“Chevron 4 locked.”

Samantha flexed her hand, getting comfortable before reaching for the control stick that controlled the UAV. She could be at this for a while.

“Colonel, is Daniel up to a mission if the UAV shows that the other side is survivable?” asked Hammond.

“Dr. Frazier has released him and he seems eager enough.”

“This may be dangerous, and we’ll need him in top condition, but I need my most experienced team ready to go if this proves out.”

“Don’t worry, General. He’ll be ready if I have to drag his butt through the Gate.”

“Chevron 7 locked,” reported the lieutenant. With its usual flurry, the Stargate activated and settled into its calm operating state.

“Launching UAV.” Carter ignited the small rocket motor that would get the small craft off the launcher and up to flying speed in a matter of seconds. It disappeared through the event horizon and Samantha held on tight to the controls. This phase was sometimes bumpy, and it felt like this would be one of those times.

“UAV should clear the destination Gate in 5...4...3...2...1...UAV has cleared the Gate.”

Sam could tell; the buffeting was gone. She checked the readouts on her control panel and saw that everything appeared fine. “Bringing the camera online.”

Everyone turned their attention to a monitor on their left. The staticky snow cleared and looked out over a barren looking landscape. The UAV was still in a slight climb, headed away from the Stargate.

“Major, let’s bring it around and see what’s in the area around the Stargate.”

“Coming about.” Samantha leveled the craft out, then banked into a neat turn to her right while trying to track the camera toward the Stargate. When she succeeded in getting it into frame, they could see that something was astray.

“What is all of that?”

Around both the Gate and the DHD were various pieces of equipment, interconnected amongst each other.

“Looks like some of it’s hooked up to the DHD, like someone was trying to modify the controls,” said Jack.

“And hooked to the Gate, I think,” added Carter.

“Keep circling the Gate, Major.” Hammond wanted to get better film of what was going on. “We need to determine if there is anyone nearby that may be a threat to sending a team through, as well as what may have happened to SG-8. And where’s Teal’c?”

“I am here, General.” Teal’c had just come up the stairs from the lower level.

“Seen anything like this before, big guy?” asked the Colonel.

Teal’c examined the video feed from the UAV. “I do not recognize it. It appears that someone has been tampering with the Stargate.”

“Kinda looks that way.”

“Major, begin a search of the area immediately surrounding the Stargate. See if there is anyone else out there.” Hammond watched as Carter swung the camera to view the surrounding area. After watching for several minutes, he could see nothing. “No sign of SG-8 or whoever they were fighting. How could they have just disappeared? With all the screaming and yelling and gunfire, it sounded like they were engaged with numerous opponents. And why leave the Gate unguarded afterward?”

O’Neill was satisfied that no one was around. “I think we can get through there, General. There is a fair amount of large rocks in the Gate’s area, so we will have some cover. Once there, maybe Teal’c can track whoever it was that came knocking this morning.”

“It looks like they decided to give up for now. All right, Major, initialize a standard low-level spiral search pattern for the UAV. Then I want SG-1 suited up and ready ASAP.”

“Looks like Desert Camo is the order of the day,” said Carter.

“I want you well prepared. That means extra ZAT’s and full Kevlar.”

“And extra ammo, just in case,” added Jack.

“Tuvok to Janeway.”

The Captain put down the cup of tea that she had hoped might relax her.

“Yes, Mr. Tuvok?”

“I have detected what appears to be a wormhole.”

“Nearby?”

“On the surface of the planet below us.”

That got Katherine’s attention. She hurried from her ready room. “What do you mean by that, Mr. Tuvok?”

"I had detected a piece of technology on the surface, but it appeared non-functional. I was preparing to conduct a more thorough scan when it activated."

"Show me."

On the main viewscreen, there appeared a large ring, looking very "man-made". The opening appeared to be full of a shimmering fluid.

"That is the ecesion disk, there in the middle of that object?"

"Affirmative. The wormhole appears stable."

Janeway was amazed. "You mean it appears to be artificial *and* stable?"

Tuvok confirmed her statement. "And, another object has emerged. It appears to be a mechanical flying device, using wings and forward velocity to remain in the air. I believe it is similar to remotely piloted drone aircraft used during Earth's twentieth and twenty-first centuries for a number of military and scientific purposes."

"That's kind of a contradiction in terms, isn't it?" Paris was adequately puzzled. "Someone with the technology to make artificial wormholes is playing with an antiquated flying machine? Why?"

"Perhaps they are not the makers of the wormhole generating device. The aircraft appears to be relatively new of manufacture, yet the ring it came through registers as ancient in construction. In addition, the aircraft seems to be in communication with someone on the other end of the wormhole."

"How?" This was fascinating Janeway. Plus, other possibilities were developing in her mind.

"It appears to be common radio frequency transmission."

"That would correlate with the technology level of the rest of the drone, but not the ring it came through," injected Harry Kim, the Ops officer.

As they watched, the shimmering in the ring disappeared with a mild flash.

"The wormhole has closed," reported Tuvok.

"What about the drone?"

"It is no longer making radio transmissions. It appears to be starting a spiral search path away from the ring."

"It's operating on a preprogrammed path."

"And probably storing its data for later download," added Kim.

"Yes." Janeway was becoming mildly excited about this. "Implying that whoever it belongs to will be reestablishing contact, if for no other purpose than to obtain the data. I wonder if we could use that opportunity to make contact ourselves?"

"*Voyager's* systems were not designed to transmit on the frequencies used by the drone, but we may be able to modify them."

"What if we simply use the unit on the drone?"

"What are you getting at, Mr. Kim?"

"Beam the drone aboard and program its systems with a message from us."

Tuvok supported the idea. "Having it onboard would also allow us to do a more thorough examination of it as well. Perhaps we can determine where it comes from."

Janeway agreed. "All right, let's get it up here."

An hour later, Tuvok and Kim had completed their initial analysis of the drone.

“You will not like what we have found, Captain,” reported Tuvok.

“I’ll be the judge of that. What have you found?”

Harry sighed deeply. “It’s from Earth, but Earth of the past.”

Janeway agreed, she didn’t like it. Now the temporal aspects of the Prime Directive could come into play, this was about to get complicated. “How do you know?”

“By these.” Kim pointed to a block of information stenciled onto the side of the drone. “They specify the model of drone, who built it and who it was built for.”

Janeway stooped close enough to read it. Reading through the information, she noted Boeing made it, and the notation “Property of U.S. Air Force” followed the serial number. “Well, Boeing may still exist, but the United States and its Air Force do not.”

“Correct,” noted Tuvok. “The United States and its Armed Forces suffered grievous casualties at the beginning of the Eugenics Wars and, for all practical purposes, ceased to exist afterward.”

“Then how did it get here?”

“Bridge to Captain.”

“Go ahead, Chakotay.”

“That ring thing just activated again. A new wormhole has opened.”

“We’re on our way.”

### Chapter 3

The SG-1 team had assembled in the Gate Room awaiting final orders from General Hammond. O'Neill noted the usual disorganization on the part of his science advisor, Daniel Jackson. It was apparent to everyone present that Daniel was not regular military. Despite having started the process before everyone else, he was still trying to get his Kevlar body armor on the right way. Teal'c, on the other hand, had been the first into the gear and now stood puzzling over his more intellectual teammate, one eyebrow raised in apparent concern.

The General entered, followed by the diminutive Dr. Frazier. "I've just been briefed by the Doctor on her findings. Doctor."

The SG-1 team gathered around to receive this last-minute information.

"I have tested some of the organic material and at least some of it is human. But not all of it. It appears we are dealing with more than one species. But what I found most interesting were these." The Doctor held up two items, both obviously not organic. One appeared to be part of a cylindrical device that had been sliced in half when the wormhole closed. The other was circular, with a flared fairing projecting from one side. Carter immediately reached for the latter item, seeing something obviously advanced.

"That was removed from over the eye socket of a basically humanoid head. The eye had been removed and replaced with a bunch of very advanced looking hardware," said Frazier.

"Some type of a prosthetic, and artificial vision device?" wondered Carter.

"Maybe, but my autopsy leads me to believe that it was not a case of compensating for a handicap. It looked like the eye had been removed to be replaced by this, deliberately. And it was done in the simplest way, with little respect to the organic parts. I can't help but believe that it was done deliberately, and perhaps forcibly."

O'Neill took the other item from Frazier and looked at it. They had apparently tried to clean it, but he could still detect traces of blood in places.

"That one," added Frazier, "had some organic material inside of it, which I discovered was part of a humanoid forearm. The hand had been amputated, and an item fused to the stub that appeared to both anchor itself to the bone and set up certain connections between the device and the organic nerves. I think the device you are holding was then fitted over the stub with the attachment point inside."

O'Neill held the device level and laid a forearm into it. There appeared to be room to spare. "The owner must have been a little larger than me, at least around." The Colonel removed his arm and held it toward Teal'c. The Jaffa rolled up his shirtsleeve and placed his arm in the device. A much better fit. "So, Doc, can we assume that whoever it was, it was about Teal'c's size?"

Frazier gave a slight shrug. "Barring no other evidence, it's a reasonable assumption, but it's no guarantee."

"So they're cybernetic?" asked Carter.

"That would appear to be the case."

O'Neill had a feeling he was going to have a headache. The technobabble was starting already. "Cybernetic?"

"Yes, Sir. It refers to a being that is made up of both organic and inorganic parts."

"So my uncle with the artificial leg was cybernetic?"

"No, Sir. He could live without the leg; he just couldn't get around as well. A cybernetic organism, or cyborg, is dependant on both its organic and inorganic components just to survive. Remove one or the other and it will die."

Looking at the device in his hand, O'Neill asked, "How could you tell?"

"Sir?"

"How could you tell if it was dead or not?"

Carter's expression agreed with him. 'Good question.'

Jackson was curious about this now. "Are we talking a 'terminator' type thing?"

"Actually, they used incorrect terminology in those movies. Arnie was actually a robot with an organic covering. Destroy the organic part and the robot could still be fully functional. A true cyborg would die."

"Important distinction." To O'Neill, they were both just fancy machines. Too fancy for his taste.

"Take no chances, SG-1. If things look questionable, dial home. We need information, but let's not go losing people for the sake of it," ordered General Hammond.

"I hear ya, General."

"That's an order, Colonel."

O'Neill smiled. "When have you known me to take chances?"

"At every turn."

Carter couldn't help smirking, eliciting a glance from her superior.

"Yes, well, we usually have less to be concerned with than in this case."

"Since when?" quipped Daniel Jackson, still trying to figure out his Kevlar helmet. He had worn them before, but so seldom that he sometimes forgot how to strap them on. Sam offered her assistance and managed to get it fastened.

"Since this morning."

"Yeah, I heard about it. But is all this level of armament necessary?"

Even Daniel had an MP-5 submachine gun, a fact that really made him feel out of place. He considered his 9mm pistol to be more than adequate.

"Till we know otherwise," responded the General

Carter took the MP-5 from Daniel's hand and yanked back on the charging handle, then set the safety. "You're ready to rock and roll, just flip the safety off."

"Thanks, I think." Daniel was still obviously against this, but he appeared to have little to say about it for now.

"Do not worry, Daniel Jackson, I will be right beside you," stated Teal'c in his ominous baritone.

"Actually, Teal'c, I was hoping you would do the honor of taking point. I have a feeling that staff might be more intimidating than these," said O'Neill.

"As you wish."

Teal'c hefted his Jaffa weapon and awaited the completion of the Gate's startup. As soon as the event horizon had settled, he started up the ramp.

"Teal'c, hold up," ordered Hammond. "Lieutenant?"

The officer manning the Gate controls looked over his newly settled readouts. "I'm not getting a response from the UAV."

Hammond redirected his attention to the colonel. "That's a bad sign."

"Could be a malfunction? It's happened before," offered Carter.

O'Neill didn't really believe in coincidences, though. "Or hostile action. There's only one way to find out. Hold the Gate open till we give you the all clear, General."

"Will do."

"All right. Teal'c, lead the way."

Moments later, the former Serpent Guard was standing on the Gate platform on the other side of the wormhole, staff weapon at the ready. He scanned the area and saw nothing. No SG-8, no "enemy", nothing until Major Carter appeared beside him, her weapon at the ready. A few seconds later, they were joined by Jackson and O'Neill.

"Wow. Kind of warm."

Jackson was correct in that. It was over one hundred degrees, if O'Neill was any judge of it. "I believe it's called 'desert.' Major, any signal from the UAV?"

"No, Sir. Nothing."

O'Neill triggered his radio microphone. "SG-8, this is SG-1, respond."

There was only silence. Several more attempts netted the same results.

Teal'c had begun a scouting of the immediate area, looking for signs of who had been here or what had happened. Carter searched initially as well, but it was soon clear that they were alone. O'Neill swept the area with his binoculars, finding the surroundings equally empty. Seeing no reason to maintain the open Stargate, he used his radio to communicate their situation back to Earth. "Whoever they were, they appear to have left this area well behind, General. And we still can't get a signal from either the UAV or SG-8."

"Do you feel reasonably secure for the moment, Colonel?"

"I think so. I'd shut it down but be ready. We may have to dial home in short notice."

"Let's stay close to the Stargate on this one for now, Colonel. Attempt to decipher what the equipment that we saw from the UAV footage is and its purpose. I'd like a report in four hours this time."

"Teal'c and I will try to track them, Carter and Daniel can get to work on the technical side of things. If we get any hot news, we'll dial out immediately."

"Understood. Good Luck. SGC out."

And with that, the Stargate deactivated.

"All right. I think you all heard that. You two let me know as soon as you have even a theory. Teal'c, let's see if we can put a tail on these guys."

"I'm reading four life forms, three are human, the other reads as partially human," stated Harry. "I think it may be symbiotic."

"Like a Trill?" asked Janeway.

"Yes, though these readings don't agree with any scans I have seen of a Trill. It could be a similar species."

"On screen."

The viewscreen showed four people, seemingly well equipped, searching the area of the ring.

"The symbiotic life form appears to be carrying a directed energy weapon, operating on laser principles. The rest are armed with chemically propelled projectile weapons."

"That sounds like the right time period to correspond to that drone we picked up," commented Janeway.

"Except that the directed energy weapon is of a more advanced design," answered Tuvok

"So if these people are from Earth, they're not from our Earth."

Unfortunately, Janeway had been harboring another thought in the back of her mind.

"Captain, if we assume that we are not dealing with a parallel universe, then clearly these individuals have come from either Earth of the past, or a world with parallel development, of which we have found very few."

"I understand, Tuvok. I was just thinking. It would have been nice."

"Nice if we could have used it to get home," added Chakotay. Janeway acknowledged him with a sad-looking smile.

"I can understand your hopes, Captain, but we must also consider possible damage that could be done to the timeline."

Tuvok was correct, but did that really rule out the possibility that this encounter could be beneficial to *Voyager*, or at least, her crew?

Harry Kim was not ready to give up yet. "But they already know of interstellar travel. They're here. They must have some knowledge of technology above their own if they are traveling to other worlds, in other times."

"What are you saying, Ensign?"

"It seems like it may be a good opportunity to at least find out more. Maybe something we learn will help us in the future."

Janeway thought it out a minute. "Mr. Kim, Mr. Tuvok, considering what you both have already mentioned, can you see a reason for us not to interact with these new arrivals, provided, of course, that we do not divulge where we are from, or when, that to them, we're just travelers, crossing the galaxy?"

Neither officer could come up with anything.

"Very well, Tuvok, Mr. Kim, you're with me. Chakotay, you have the bridge."

### Chapter 4

“There are no signs of blood. But there was a struggle. There are many spent cases scattered on the ground over that direction, and they continue all the way to the proximity of the DHD. Someone, with SGC-issue boots, made it as far as that Gate, stopped, and then went back. Then many prints that I do not recognize mounted the Stargate platform and went through, but did not return. Another large group of tracks later leads away from the Stargate, but these tracks simply disappear,” noted Teal’c.

“How do you do that?” O’Neill was stumped.

“Ordinarily, I would suspect a Goa’uld ring teleportation device, but I can detect no signs of one.”

O’Neill looked up suddenly. “Do you hear that? That hum?”

Teal’c turned away from the footprints and glanced around. He was the first to see the shimmering transporter effect. “O’Neill!”

“I see ‘em.”

Both swung their weapons toward the glow as three figures materialized about 30 meters away.

“Was it me or was that kind of Asgard-ish?”

“Yes, but those are not Asgard. That may, however, explain the disappearing footprints.”

As the transporters released their hold on her, Janeway glanced around, first at the Ring, and then she spotted the two individuals much closer to her. She turned toward them and began to walk toward them.

O’Neill let her close to about ten meters. “That’s close enough for now. Who are you?”

Janeway stopped, remembering that Tuvok had expressed his concern to her about just how well-armed these individuals were. Their weapons were antiquated by Starfleet standards, but deadly nonetheless. “I wish you no harm. I’m Captain Katherine Janeway, of the Starship *Voyager*. This is my Security Officer, Commander Tuvok, and my operations officer, Ensign Kim. We wanted to meet you.”

“That’s neighborly of you. Are you from around here?”

“No. Actually, we are a long way from home.” Totally true, thought Janeway, and really opens up the possibilities of where they were from. “We are simply traveling the galaxy, exploring.”

Carter and Jackson had seen the situation and came to the aid of their companions, Carter with her weapon ready and Daniel having slung his. To him, there was no need for threats and violence, yet.

“Jack, this is a first contact. Do we really need to begin it at gunpoint?”

“After what happened to SG-8 and that invasion this morning, yes.”

“That was hardly an invasion. Thirty individuals. What were they going to do?”

“Daniel, how many times have thirty people come through our Stargate uninvited?” There were times when Jackson really rubbed on O’Neill’s patience. He could be very naïve at times.

“Sir,” interrupted Carter. “I don’t think these are the same people.”

“Why not?”

“For one, they don’t appear cybernetic.”

Janeway caught that statement, and she could only think of one possibility: Borg.

“In fact, they look quite human. They may just be another of the seeded colonies who have advanced greatly.” Daniel saw them as quite normal humans, except for one set of ears.

Janeway noticed his examination of Tuvok. “I see you’ve noticed the ears, Mr....”

“Jackson, Daniel Jackson.”

“Mr. Jackson. And you are correct. Mr. Tuvok is not human, in the same sense that Ensign Kim and myself are. He was born on a different planet, called Vulcan.”

“Yet he’s a member of your crew?”

“Yes, as are members of other races, some very ‘human,’ others dramatically not.”

“Is this normal for where you come from?”

“Daniel?” There were days when O’Neill felt his coworker could be a little too friendly.

“It’s quite all right...Jack...was it?”

O’Neill didn’t see the use in playing coy anymore. As usual, his intellectual colleague had let the cat out of the bag. “Colonel Jack O’Neill, SGC. On your left is Major Samantha Carter, and on your right is Teal’c.”

Janeway nodded greetings for all. “To answer your question, Mr. Jackson, yes, it is normal. We are part of an interstellar federation with over 100 member worlds. Each is accorded the same respect and rights, and, in turn, each contributes to the betterment of the whole as they are able.”

“Nice answer.” O’Neill found it a little too nice.

“Oh, it’s not perfect, Colonel, but it works. And we are on friendly relations with hundreds of other worlds. I see no reason not to make an effort to include your world, yet.” Janeway was a little perturbed at having weapons aimed at her, but it seemed something had happened, possibly involving the Borg, and that made it seem reasonable for them to be a little more than averagely paranoid.

“And might I suggest, that we don’t give them a reason, Colonel.”

“And why is that, Carter.”

“For one thing, the weapons they appear to be carrying look pretty advanced, along with that scanning device the ‘Vulcan’ has been using on us.”

“Yeah, I noticed that. What is that?”

Janeway nodded her approval to Tuvok.

“It is referred to as a tricorder,” the Vulcan said. “It is a general purpose scanning device, which can detect a wide variety of technological, biological, and other scientific data. For example, I can detect the symbiotic life form inside of Mr. Teal’c, Mr. Jackson appears to have recently been suffering from a severe allergic reaction, and Major Carter was, at one time, a host to a similar symbiont as Mr. Teal’c, though the symbiont appears to have left or been removed.”

It didn't take a Betazoid to tell Janeway that the group was suitably impressed. "So, Colonel. It appears that we may have an opportunity to be suitably helpful to one another. May we dispense with the weapons?"

"So, judging from your reaction when Carter mentioned the word 'cybernetic,' I'd say you know who we're dealing with."

O'Neill and the rest of the SG-1 team had put their weapons away and were making an effort to work with what seemed to be a new-found ally.

"Possibly. It's someone we've dealt with before, though not wholly successfully." Janeway gave the SG team a brief synopsis of their knowledge of the Borg.

"So you think they were simply here to pillage this planet, probably for resources?" asked Jackson.

"That would have been my first thought, but if they were trying to come through your 'Stargate,' then they obviously had an alternative purpose. And the Borg always have a purpose." And what was it? Janeway understood that the Borg assimilated societies and their technology, but what were they trying to accomplish here with this alien device? "May we examine your Stargate?"

O'Neil started toward the Stargate with the others following. "Actually, Captain, it's not ours. We found one like it, in the desert on our world a number of years ago. Took us forever to figure out how it worked. Carter?"

"As best we can tell, it generates a wormhole between Stargates. And there seems to be a huge number of these scattered around the galaxy, and possibly beyond."

"Being artificial, I assume it is controllable in some way?" asked Kim.

"Through this." Carter walked up and put her hand on the DHD. "We call it the Dial Home Device, for lack of a better term. But the symbols on it work like the numbers on a telephone."

Kim glanced at Tuvok and mouthed "telephone?"

"By inputting a specific seven-character sequence, we can dial to whatever Stargate on whatever planet we wish, as long as we know the particular sequence for that world," continued Carter.

"How do you get the sequences?"

"A few years ago, Daniel was investigating a world called Abidos and discovered a room with thousands of addresses. A sort of intergalactic phone book. But, it's difficult to decipher. Our computers are still working on the bulk of it. The listings are very ancient. We have to use computers to allow for the movement of all the celestial bodies since it was first created. Consequently, it takes time and we only get one or two usable new addresses a month from the program."

"Since then, we've been exploring all over the Galaxy and beyond," added Daniel.

"You mentioned that you 'found' your Stargate. Do you know who created it?" asked Tuvok.

"We have it on the authority of an alien race, the Asgard, that another alien race, which even they call 'The Ancients,' created the Stargates. Supposedly, the Ancients took humans from Earth and seeded them all over the galaxy and beyond. That's why we find human colonies all over the place, wherever we find Stargates.

Janeway glanced at Kim and Tuvok. "Actually, Dr. Jackson, our scientists have found evidence of a similar race that we call the Preservers."

"I would love to get a look at your scientific journals on the subject," responded Jackson.

"And what does the rest of this stuff do?" asked Kim.

"That's part of the problem," responded Carter. "This is the first Stargate we have come across that has had this 'stuff' with it."

"Normally, the rest of this is not present?" asked Janeway.

"No. None of it. Only the DHD and the Stargate itself has been present before. But from the looks of it, someone has been trying to tamper with this Gate."

"It would be nice to know what they were trying to do. If you don't mind, Colonel?"

O'Neill glanced at Carter, who could only give a "why not?" expression back. Nodding his assent, he stepped in close to make sure he heard anything that might be said.

"Ensign, scan these devices and see what you can tell us about them."

Kim started on one side of the cluster and worked his way through. "Well, it looks like that one is a power generator. A large one. This appears to be a control and calibration unit. Those two on either side of the Stargate are field coils, and the rest I'm not sure. They are definitely Borg."

"So these Borg were tampering with the Stargate." That concerned Carter. The Stargates were very advanced. Even the Asgard didn't fully understand them. So what did the Borg understand about them?

"Colonel, I'm assuming that Major Carter is the closest thing to an expert on the Stargates that you have present with you?" asked Janeway.

"Actually, she is the expert. She was largely responsible for finally getting Earth's Stargate up and running. What are you suggesting?"

"As you might expect, I have some pretty technically capable people among my own crew. I am suggesting that I bring them here, combine them with the Major's experience, and then maybe we can come up with some answers."

O'Neill hesitated, still not trusting these people. "Carter?"

"I think I could use all the help I can get. This may be a phenomenal opportunity, Sir."

"All right. On the condition that we are trading information freely, both directions."

Janeway nodded agreement.

"Then let's do it."

The Captain tapped her comm badge. "Janeway to *Voyager*."

"*Voyager* here. Everything okay?"

“Quite, Mr. Chakotay. I need B’Elanna and Seven to report to me here, right away.”

“Aye, Sir. I’ll locate them and get them there in a few minutes. Anything else?”

“Stand by. I’ll see.” Janeway looked straight at Harry Kim

“Not for the moment, but I have no idea what I’m getting into.”

“Actually,” interrupted O’Neill, “I was wondering. We’ve given you our little show and tell. I don’t suppose you’d be willing to do the same?”

Janeway smiled at him a bit. “You want to see *Voyager*. All right. Mr. Chakotay, we will be bringing a guest on board so put out the fine china.”

“I’ll have it retrieved from storage immediately. When can we expect company?”

Janeway glanced at O’Neill, who just shrugged. Anytime was good for him. “How about now? Three to beam up.”

“Actually, could Daniel come along?”

“Make that four. Ready on my signal,” Janeway stepped away from the group a handful of meters and gestured for O’Neill and Jackson to join her. She pointed to the appropriate positions on either side of her. Tuvok moved to a place behind her. “Energize.”

## Chapter 5

Daniel Jackson fought back a wave of nausea. "That was different."

Tuvok reached to steady him. "It is not unusual for first time transporter passengers to feel disoriented or ill. It should pass quickly."

Daniel took a deep breath, opening and closing his eyes a couple of times. "Yes. I'm feeling better already. I don't remember Goa'uld transportation rings making me feel that way."

"They don't. Neither does the Asgard system, though it feels closer otherwise." O'Neill had felt it, too but not as bad. Then again, how many times had the Asgard "beamed" him up? More than once.

"Everyone okay?" Janeway inquired.

"I guess you just get used to that?"

"Actually, yes. Sometimes we may do it several times a day. After a while, you don't even notice. This way."

She led them out of the transporter room and down a corridor. O'Neill noticed how much different this looked than the Asgard and Goa'uld vessels he had been on.

"My compliments to your interior decorator, Captain. This is much more appealing than what I've seen."

Janeway stopped at a door and waited. "Have you seen many, Colonel?"

"Only Asgard and Goa'uld. Both are much darker inside."

The door opened and the four stepped in. "Galley."

Jackson hesitated slightly before asking. "Are we moving?"

"It's called a turbolift. It allows us to get from one part of the ship to another quickly."

"It's like an elevator, but a heck of a lot smoother."

When the lift stopped, Janeway lead them to Neelix's makeshift galley. Picking up the pot of "coffee" that Neelix almost always left going, she poured them each a cup and passed them out. "I'm afraid my morale officer, who doubles as our cook, is on the surface foraging for supplies at the moment. When he returns, I'll see if we can't offer you a better welcome."

Jack took the offered mug and sniffed at it. "Then I take it that you can't make your own food."

"Ordinarily, we would, using what we call replicators."

Jack looked up quickly at the mention of the word "replicators."

"You're familiar with them?"

"I doubt it. The 'things' we call replicators don't take food orders. They tend to conquer other races to take over their technology," offered Jackson.

"Well, I can assure you that ours are much more docile."

Seven of Nine arrived at the Stargate site later than planned. "Mr. Kim, I apologize for my tardiness. Mr. Neelix found himself in an extensive 'entanglement' and needed my assistance to free himself."

"Is he okay?"

“He will be.”

“Good. First, you need to know. We already know these people are from Earth, of the past. Consequently, we can’t allow them to know who we really are or where we’re from.”

“I assume that the Captain has forged an adequate cover story.”

“All they know right now is that we are travelers crossing the galaxy. Not much else. Now, let’s introduce you to some new-found friends.” Kim led Seven to where Carter, Teal’c and B’Elanna Torres were examining a piece of the equipment left behind by the Borg.

“Definitely a power generator, with a serious output potential,” stated B’Elanna. “We could use this thing to help with our power needs on *Voyager*, if we could figure out a way to make the output compatible.”

“Judging from these cables, they were trying to get the extra power into the Stargate mechanism. But why?” Carter may have been the resident Stargate expert, but this was beyond her.

“Major Carter, Teal’c, this is Seven of Nine. She’s our expert on the Borg, mostly because she used to be one,” interrupted Harry.

“Wow. It’s a pleasure to meet you. I keep hearing about how bad these ‘Borg’ are. I’d begun to think that being ‘assimilated’ was a permanent thing.”

“In general, you would be correct, Major. I was fortunate. Captain Janeway rescued me and our doctor was able to remove most of the Borg implants.”

Carter pointed to her own temple. “Like that.”

Seven knew what she was referring to. “Yes. That is one of them. There are others, mostly internal.”

“That’s incredible. I’d love to get a look at your medical facilities.”

“Maybe there’ll be time,” said Kim, “but right now, we need to see what this stuff is.”

Seven moved to what looked like a control panel. “Clearly, the Borg were attempting to do something that this device was not meant to do.” She flipped through several screens of code, seemingly digesting the information as routinely as reading a dime novel as the others went back to examining the items under their scrutiny.

For Seven, though, she had a nagging feeling. Something she seldom had. It felt like a memory trying to surface, but of what? She had so many memories, thanks to having been connected to the Collective for years.

In the code she noted a reference to a race that the Borg had encountered decades ago. And, suddenly, everything lined up. She knew exactly where to look in the program. And she appeared to be right, but was her initial hunch correct? Leaving her console, she made her way to stand next to Teal’c. “You are Jaffa, possessing a Goa’uld symbiont.”

Even Teal’c could not withhold his surprise. “I am. Are you familiar with the Goa’uld?”

“Species 7966, assimilated stardate 44911.5.”

Teal’c’s expression changed. “I am not familiar with those designations.”

“Seven, that has to be eighty-odd years ago,” said Harry. He was recognizing the implications of her statement as well, and hoped the Major and her companion did not. Judging from Carter’s expression, she had caught the slip.

But Seven’s mind was racing ahead. And she needed to tell someone where it was headed. “Where is the Captain?”

“She returned to *Voyager*, along with the Colonel and Doctor from Earth.” Kim looked at Seven suspiciously. Was she seeing something they had not? Was there a threat here? “Is everything all right?”

“No, it is not. I must see the Captain, immediately.” Tapping her comm badge, she called for a beam-up and was standing on the transporter pad seconds later.

“Computer, locate Captain Janeway.”

“Captain Janeway is in the galley.”

In minutes, Seven was in the galley, strenuously requesting a conference with the Captain.

“Can it wait, Seven? I’m a little busy.”

“I do not believe so.”

Janeway could see the anxiety in Seven, something she had seldom seen before in the former Borg. “All right, just a moment.” Turning to her guests, she excused herself and went out into the corridor with Seven. When she turned to talk, after looking both ways in the corridor, her face was full of concern. “What is it that has you so upset?”

“I believe I know what the Borg are attempting.”

“What?”

“Time travel. After accessing the equipment they left, I now know that they were intending to travel back in time before First Contact, well before humans had acquired a significant space-going capability.”

Janeway understood. “Assimilate humanity, before it can help form the Federation. The Vulcans, Andorians and Tellarites were still quarreling. It’s reasonable to assume that without the efforts of humans, the Federation would have never come to be.”

“I found evidence that since the defeat at Wolf 359, the Collective has made the assimilation of the Federation, and humans in particular, a priority.”

“So, we’re No. 1 on the hit parade. That doesn’t surprise me.”

“Bridge to Captain.”

And when it rains, it pours. “Janeway here”

Chakotay’s concern was obvious. “Sir, that Borg cube, it’s on its way back.”

“How long?”

“One hour, twelve minutes, present speed.”

“Damn. All right, senior staff to the conference room. And begin recalling the away teams.” Turning back to the galley, she went to get her guests. “Colonel O’Neill, Dr. Jackson. I’m afraid we have a change in plans. If you will come with me.”

## Chapter 6

“What’s up, Colonel?” Samantha Carter and Teal’c had accompanied Harry and B’Elanna back to *Voyager*. Upon arriving, there had been a myriad of things Carter wanted to take the time to investigate, but the urgency shown by the *Voyager* crew told that this was not a time to satisfy her scientific curiosity. They had come to the conference room with the senior staff and found the Colonel and Daniel.

“Don’t know yet. The tall blonde showed up, demanded to see the Captain, and then we were brought here.” Jack looked around and did not see the crew apparently doing anything against them, like surrounding them, restraining them, or packing more of the sidearms they had worn down to the planet. In fact, even the Vulcan had dispensed with his. “You haven’t seen or heard anything, have you?”

“Just one thing. The blonde approached Teal’c and identified him as Jaffa, that he had a Goa’uld symbiont, and noted that they had been ‘assimilated’ on a given date that I didn’t understand. Then the Ensign said that was about 80 years ago.”

“Eighty years. How....Are you thinking time travel?”

“It’s been proven that it can be done, given the right circumstances.”

“Last time it was back in time, to 1969.”

“Yeah, but if it can go back, there’s no reason I can think of to prevent it from going forward.” Sam looked worried about what they had gotten themselves into.

“You guys okay though?” The Colonel was more worried about the safety of his team at the moment.

Carter glanced at Teal’c, who gave his customary half-nod of affirmation and continued to observe the *Voyager* crew. “They’ve been nothing but friendly to us. Seven seemed a little cold, but maybe that’s her style. We only met her fifteen minutes ago.”

“Seven?”

“The blonde in the shiny suit, that’s her name. Seven of Nine.”

Jack looked in Seven’s direction admiringly. “I wonder what the other eight look like.”

Janeway entered quickly, followed by a tall man with a tattoo on his left temple. They went to the head of the table, the Captain taking her place at the head with the other seating himself on her left.

“That looks Native American,” whispered Daniel.

“Everyone,” began Janeway, “first, this is Colonel Jack O’Neill of Earth’s Stargate Command, and his team. Major Carter, Dr. Jackson, and Teal’c.”

There were nods of greeting from all around, then the Captain continued. “I think you are all aware of the device that the Colonel and his people call the Stargate, which we discovered a few hours ago. And, yes, it does generate artificial, stable wormholes, capable of taking us home. But, we have discovered something very disconcerting. Seven?”

“While examining the equipment below, I have verified that it is, indeed, of Borg origin and intended to modify the use of the Stargate. The equipment introduces a temporal element.”

Jack hated “techies.” “Which means?”

“Time travel.” responded Carter, who was obviously intrigued.

“Oh, great. Not again.” O’Neill remembered 1969, twice. He didn’t want to go back.

Carter saw the connection. “Then those cyborgs that tried to get through our iris...”

“Were attempting to invade your world and assimilate it” completed Seven.

“I knew it,” exclaimed the Colonel. “But the iris stopped them.”

“Yes, this time.” Seven continued. “The Borg were familiar with the Stargate technology. It has existed for eons. At one time, Stargates littered this galaxy and beyond, providing real-time transit between planets at opposite ends of the galaxy. But they had never before encountered one with an ‘iris’.”

“Okay. You said ‘at one time’.” The Colonel did not like where this was leading.

“The Borg have found Stargates on thousands of worlds. Since it was deemed to be a technology they could not duplicate and represented a threat to the Collective, they have destroyed every Stargate they have found, until this one.”

Jack looked surprised. “Every one? How many has that been?”

“At the last count I was familiar with, which is approximately a year old, the total was 10,568 Stargates destroyed.”

“Wow” said Jackson. “We didn’t even know for sure that such a quantity existed.”

“I’m more interested in the other thing she said. The part about ‘until this one’.” Jack knew this was leading to something and wanted to get it out on the table. “I don’t suppose you found out why they haven’t destroyed this one?”

“They wish to use it to assimilate Earth.”

“But we stopped them.”

“The first time. However, the Borg were able to analyze your iris. The Borg cube left orbit to rendezvous with another cube that possessed a continuous wave polaron drill. They will acquire it and return to use it against your iris.”

Jack looked quickly at Carter. “That’s bad, right?”

“If I understand what they mean, yeah. It will go through the iris like a hot knife through butter. Then there’ll be nothing to prevent them from coming. We can’t shut off the wormhole since they dialed in. Their DHD will be in control.”

“Well, is there another way to stop this polaron thingy?”

“With the technology of your time, negative.” stated Seven.

“I think she’s right, Sir. The best way to stop it is to not let them fire it into the Stargate in the first place,” added Carter.

“Okay. So when they get here, we blow it up.”

“I’m afraid it’s not that easy, Colonel.” Janeway saw where O’Neill was trying to go. He desperately wanted to save the situation. “Even if we destroy

the drill, they can make or get another. There's only one item here that they cannot replace: the Stargate."

"So you want to just blow up the Stargate." O'Neill's exasperation was obvious. "I thought you wanted to use it to get yourselves home?"

"We had thought of that, but we also feel that the safety of an entire planet's populace is more important than the 150 people on this ship. And that is precisely what would be lost if the Borg made it through and assimilated Earth."

"Either way," said Daniel, "I was wondering. You indicated that you had no idea the Stargates existed until now, yet you were harboring the idea of using it to get home. Since I seriously doubt that you have a Stargate 'yellow pages,' it leaves me with one conclusion. You planned to dial to the same place we did. To Earth."

Janeway stared at Jackson for a moment, wondering what to do now. Chakotay turned her direction, a slight smirk on his face. "They're not fools," he whispered.

"Thank you for the astute evaluation, Commander." But either way, he was right. This Dr. Jackson wasn't someone you just blew by. "You are correct, Dr. Jackson. We are from Earth, or, at least, some of us are. From your late twenty-fourth century, to be precise."

"Then you really are a long way from home," commented Carter.

"Approximately 70,000 light-years."

"You'll never make it home, not in your lifetime, anyway." Sam could feel for these people. Heck, she'd been out there too, but she always seemed to have a Stargate handy.

"Then if I were you, I wouldn't be in such a hurry to destroy the Stargate." O'Neill finally felt like he was making headway.

Tuvok listened intently until he found what he considered to be the right moment. "We must consider one other aspect. Is it even possible to get back to Earth in our time using the Stargate?"

"Theoretically," answered Carter, "you can simply disconnect all that 'stuff' down there and it will take you back to Earth in real-time."

"However, I can find no evidence of this Stargate in our historical archives. Perhaps it was destroyed in some event on Earth between your time and ours. Perhaps the records were destroyed. It is impossible to say. But we cannot assume that there is an active Stargate on Earth in our time. What would happen if we tried to 'dial' Earth and the Earth Stargate was no longer operational?"

"It simply wouldn't generate a wormhole. You'd get nothing."

"At which point, we would have wasted our efforts. Captain, may I suggest that the best we can do is get Colonel O'Neill's team home and then destroy the Stargate to prevent its future use by the Borg."

"At the moment, I'm inclined to agree with Tuvok." Janeway glanced around, seeing a surprising number of people agreeing with her. The important part is to get Colonel O'Neill and his team home, to their time, and then make sure the Stargate is not available for the Borg to use. And just how do we do that?"

“A barrage of photon torpedoes should suffice,” answered Seven.

“But how many? We have a set number of remaining torpedoes. I’d like to save them if possible. Any other options?”

“We could disassemble it. Take some key parts, or all the parts, with us,” offered Torres.

Tuvok disagreed with that plan. “It would require too much time, even with Major Carter’s expertise.”

“Maybe she is on the right path, though,” commented Carter. “Your transporters, I’m assuming, work on a mass-energy-mass conversion principle?”

B’Elanna nodded agreement.

“Then can it be made to operate on a mass-energy conversion and stop there, simply directing the energy out into space?” asked Carter.

B’Elanna thought about it for a minute. “It’ll mean overriding some safety protocols, then to be sure, we should erase the pattern buffers, but that can be done after we escape the Borg.”

“No. It needs to be done immediately.” Janeway was adamant. “If something should go wrong and we are captured by the Borg and assimilated, it may be possible for the Borg to recover the energy patterns from the buffer and once they have that, they can make their own Stargates. We’ll be worse off than when we started.”

“But I thought the Borg couldn’t duplicate the Stargates?” asked Torres, glancing from Janeway to Seven.

“That is correct. However, I do not believe that the Captain is concerned with the current Borg.”

“Exactly.” Janeway stood, walking around the edge of the conference room. “We have to remember, the Borg could simply store the patterns for future use, then start assimilating races trying to find the technology they need to reproduce the Stargates. It may take them a couple hundred years, but, once they have it, in combination with this current ‘time-shifting’ ability, they could still do exactly what they are trying to do now. How much time?”

“Thirty-eight minutes,” replied Chakotay.

“All right, B’Elanna, can you make the changes you need to before the Borg arrive?”

“If I start now, but it’ll be close.”

“Get on it. Can you keep the transporters available for the away teams?”

“I’ll write the changes as a program then upload it to the transporter controls when we’re ready.”

“On your way. Everyone else is dismissed. Colonel.”

“Yeah, looks like we need to rush home.”

“I wish we had more time, under better circumstances, but the Borg wait for no one. I’ll have someone meet you in the transporter room with your equipment. What about your drone? It’s still usable.”

Jack shrugged. “Aaah. We lose ’em all the time.”

Tuvok stepped up to the group. “Perhaps it will not be a total loss. I was able to retrieve all the data from your drone’s memory. I then accessed our

archives and found the format for the data collected as well as a means of transferring it.” Tuvok held up three shiny discs. “I believe you call it ‘DVD’.”

Jack glanced at Carter, whose eyes were a-sparkle.

“That’s wonderful. I’ll at least have some information to analyze when we get back. Thank you, Mr. Tuvok.”

“You are welcome. I will take this time to wish you a safe journey, as I will be returning to the bridge momentarily.” Tuvok gave them a Vulcan salute. “In the words of my people, Live Long and Prosper.”

O’Neill tried to imitate the salute, but his fingers just wouldn’t do it. “Yes...uh...” Jack shrugged and folded his arms. “Best wishes to you as well.” He glanced to either side and saw Carter, Daniel, and Teal’c all returning the salute with apparent ease.

Tuvok nodded his approval and proceeded to the bridge, along with most of the command staff.

Janeway summoned an ensign to escort the SG-1 team to the transporter room where they were met by another ensign with their gear. The room was busy as personnel beamed back from the foraging operation, bringing with them what food and supplies they were able to acquire. One, a short stocky alien stopped in front of them.

“You must be the visitors from Earth. I’m Neelix, the Morale Officer. It’s a pleasure to meet you. Can’t talk, unfortunately. Lots of things to get put away properly. Have a pleasant trip. Best of luck.” Neelix rushed off with the crate of food he was carrying, something that looked like purple oranges.

“Seems friendly,” commented Carter

“Very.” Teal’c turned toward O’Neill. “It is a pity the Borg had to ruin our visit. I believe I could have enjoyed spending time with these people.”

“Yeah, well, we’ll just have to get over it. First things first, we have to get back and warn the General that these Borg exist. Then we’ll have to be very cautious for a while, just in case *Voyager* isn’t able to take care of the Stargate.”

B’Elanna tapped Carter on the shoulder. When the Major turned, she handed several sheets of written material to Samantha.

“You guys still use paper?”

“No, but I can’t send a P.A.D.D. back with you. I can give you these notes on how you may, eventually, be able to make your iris a little tougher, and maybe even resist a polaron drill.”

“That’s incredible.” Samantha looked at the sheets.

“Aren’t you changing the future?” questioned Daniel.

“Maybe.” B’Elanna smiled coyly. “But who’s to say we aren’t all Borg already unless I give you this information to take back.”

“In which case you could be said to be correcting history.” Daniel could see her point.

“I like the way she thinks,” said Jack.

Sam stuffed the notes into her vest and zipped it up for safety. They could be a matter of life or death. Well, sort of death.

B'Elanna went to the transporter console and began entering commands as the transporter chief continued to beam the foraged foodstuffs up. There was a surprising amount of it

That was exactly what Janeway thought when she entered the transporter room, having to maneuver around a stack of crates that had been set off the transporter pad to await a crewman with anti-gravs and orders for where they were to go.

"Looks like Neelix made the best of his time down there."

"Thankfully," commented B'Elanna.

Janeway smiled in the engineer's direction, and then turned to the SG-1 team. "We're going to set you down a few meters from the Stargate. You can proceed through at your convenience. We'll be around for at least twenty-five more minutes as we beam up personnel and supplies, but not a minute longer. So if something goes wrong, we'll be here to see it."

"What could go wrong?" asked O'Neill.

"Trust me, Colonel, I've learned not to ask that question. But if you're ready, I think we'd better get you home."

"Ready and willing. Good luck, Captain."

"And to you, Colonel." Janeway stepped to the transporter console and waited for the current sequence to complete and the new arrivals to be removed from the pads, then motioned for the SG-1 team to take its place. "Ready?"

There was a general nod from everyone.

"Energize."

Moments later, they were standing 20 meters from the Stargate.

O'Neill looked around, saw nothing that needed his attention, so he ordered Carter to dial them home.

"After reading these notes, I want to see the NID justify its claim that we never bring any advanced technology home."

"Anything to make Mayberry eat his hat," responded O'Neill.

"Yeah, well, they still need to improve their transporters," said Daniel. "Goa'uld rings never make me this nauseous."

"I just hope they haven't locked out our IDC code, or we'll be the ones running into the iris." Carter started the dialing process as the others stood aside. When the Stargate activated, she tried to transmit her IDC code...and got a response. "Looks like we just made it. We're not locked out."

Jack frowned. "Good old General Hammond. He's always punctual."

"Either way, we have to get home. Time has to be running out."

O'Neill waved her through and watched Daniel and Teal'c follow her. With a last glance skyward, he followed as well.

**Chapter 7**

He followed them into total darkness.

Carter was able to get the light attached to her MP-5 turned on and swung it around the room. There was no one there. The doors on either side were closed and the shield door protecting the control room was closed.

"Where is everyone?" asked Daniel, still trying to get his light working. He really wasn't used to these darn things.

"Power failure, maybe?" inquired O'Neill.

"Possible, but all the systems associated with the Gate have battery backups. Big ones."

"Could they have exhausted them already?"

"Not unless there was a lot of Gate activity. But we haven't been gone that long."

Jack was highly suspicious. "Well, we won't know till we find someone. Carter, try the control room, Teal'c and Daniel can cover that side, and I'll search this side."

They split up, going in their respective directions. Carter made it to the base of the control room stairs and looked up. It was pitch black up there as well, which made her a little concerned. She listened, hearing nothing, and started up the stairs as quietly as she could. Not easy in combat boots in industrial grade grating.

O'Neill turned left, moving along the corridor, trying to remain as stealthy as he could. There was no sign of anyone. No bodies, blood or anything like that. He did notice marks on the wall, looking very much like bullets had ricocheted down the corridor. This made him wonder about the Goa'uld, but there were no burns from staff weapons. It was possible they were using ZATs.

On the other side, Daniel and Teal'c were working their way toward the infirmary. They arrived to find the doors closed but not locked. Entering slowly, they shone their lights around. It was empty, completely. Nothing appeared to be operating. "Jack, there's nothing here. Not on this level, at least."

"Are you seeing signs of automatic weapons fire?" emitted from the radio.

Daniel glanced at Teal'c, who nodded silently before triggering his microphone. "Yes, Colonel, but nothing else."

"Same here. Carter, what about you?"

There was no response.

"Carter, are you there? Respond, Major."

"Here, Sir. I found power in the batteries. I'm trying to boot the systems."

"What about the lights?"

"Working on it, Sir, but I really want to get these computers up before we try anything else. They may be able to tell us what happened."

"Step on it. I've got a bad feelin' about this. Daniel, Teal'c, meet me back at the Gate Room."

"We're on our way."

Okay, thought Jack. It was possible they had a serious power failure. But if that were the case, where were all the techies trying to fix it? This looked like it had been abandoned, perhaps after a short fight.

“Oh my god, Colonel, I know what’s wrong.”

“What?”

“We missed.”

“What do you mean ‘we missed’? This looks like the SGC.”

“It is. But according to the computer, the date is August 12...2007.”

“Oh, that kind of missed.” Jack was quite worried now. “Any suggestions?”

“I don’t know. We don’t have the ability to control the temporal aspects of the Gate. I don’t know how to get us home. I might be able to, in time, but not now.”

Jack entered the Gate Room and quit using his radio, shrugging to Carter in the control room above him.

“Sam,” came Jackson’s voice. “Can’t we dial back to where we just came from? Theoretically, we should go back to the same time again, Maybe our friends on *Voyager* could help,”

“As long as *Voyager* hasn’t already destroyed the Stargate.”

“Guys. I don’t know about you, but 2007 is a lot closer to home than the twenty-fourth century.” Jack couldn’t believe these people. They were so close and they still wanted to go back.

“Jack, we want to go back, NOW!”

“Why?”

Through the base’s PA system, they heard a deeper voice. “We are the Borg. Surrender your weapons. Resistance is futile.”

“What the?”

“They just got off the elevator. A bunch of them.” After a pause, Daniel added, “And off the second elevator.”

Jack had now changed his mind. “Major, dial us out!” Then he left the gateroom to help Daniel and Teal’c.

The Borg were advancing as Daniel and Teal’c backpedaled, trying to decide what to do. They heard the Gate start its dialing sequence and knew they would have to hold the ground till it could complete the process. Out of ideas, Teal’c hefted his staff weapon and fired. One Borg went down, disappearing in a transporter like effect. Then another, but that was all. The Borg had adapted.

O’Neill saw the last shot fail and decided to pull his team back to the gateroom and seal the doors. As they withdrew, Daniel triggered the sliding door that would shut off their side of the room while O’Neill went for the controls for the other door.

“That should hold’em,” said Daniel.

A loud crash sounded as something hit the door from the outside and physically dented it.

“Or maybe not.”

Jack started the door on his side closing as he glanced up at the control room. Sam was at the Stargate controls, making sure the process went

according to plan. She didn't see the Borg drone approaching her from behind. The Colonel shouted at her, loud enough to make her realize she was in trouble. With a rapid keystroke, she locked out the dialing computer and threw herself off her chair and onto the floor to avoid the Borg Drone's grasp. When the drone overshot and struck the monitor, getting a nasty electrical shock through himself, Carter made a dash for the stairs to the gateroom level.

Sam hustled down and started to turn toward the gateroom when another appendage caught her by the throat, lifting her off the floor. It swung her around and smashed her against the concrete wall, seemingly intent on knocking her unconscious. But she held it together well enough to see the right fist get raised and pointed at her. Fortunately, she remembered what Kim had told her about the Borg. The tubules that injected the nanites were about to extend, and out of reflex, she thrust the MP-5 up in front of her face and neck as she looked away. The tubules impacted on the side of the gun's receiver and continued to push her back. Glancing back at the weapon, Sam saw the tubules begin to push their way through the near side of the receiver! Pushing with all she had left, with both her hands and feet, she forced the drone's body back, just far enough...

For O'Neill to hit the Drone with a head shot. Then another, and another, until the drone released Carter and she dropped onto the floor. Scuffling to get out of its reach, she nearly escaped before it reached out and grasped her leg. Then the drone's other machine-like appendage came down hard on her leg and she heard a frightening snap.

O'Neill heard it, too, and knew he had to do something. "Teal'c!" He started to move toward Samantha as three more drones came around the corner, then more. Raising his MP-5, he let loose on the drones, full automatic.

Sam tried to twist to see what grip the Drone had and saw the others coming. Yanking her pistol out of its holster, she pointed it at the drone's head. "Assimilate this, bastard!" and she proceeded to empty her magazine into the drone's cranium until it went dead and disappeared as the last round passed through the air where it had been.

"Teal'c, grab Carter and get out of here!" O'Neill was still trying to stop the Borg advancing but there were too many of them.

Teal'c grabbed Carter's combat vest and pulled her safely into the gateroom as Daniel joined him. The Stargate obligingly erupted in its usual manner and settled. "Quickly, we must get her through the Gate."

"Go! I'll be right behind you," shouted Jack, still trying to gun down drones. From the other side, they heard a grinding sound and realized the Borg were trying to cut through that door.

Daniel helped Teal'c get Carter up in his arms and turned to help Jack as the big Jaffa hustled his charge through the Stargate. "Jack, come on!"

O'Neill glanced back to see Teal'c can Carter gone and Daniel beckoning him to come. His second clip went empty. "Hell with this." He yanked two grenades off their pins, released their safety handles and tossed them into the crowd of Borg, then turned to run. "Move it!"

Daniel raced up the ramp and through the Gate, emerging on the other side seconds ahead of O'Neill leaping through. Then the Gate closed

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Making it to his feet, Jack shouted to Daniel “Dial the Gate!”

“To where?”

“To anywhere. Just make sure they can’t come through.”

Daniels did as he was ordered, remembering the address for a barren, frozen planet they had visited just weeks before. ‘That should do the trick,’ he thought.

“How’s Carter?”

Sam had apparently collapsed, perhaps from the pain.

“Her injury is severe. She needs medical attention,” replied Teal’c.

“Yeah. We need help in general, here.” O’Neill did not know if *Voyager* would be listening, but he had to try, Keying his radio, he called, “*Voyager*, are you still there?” There was no response. “Come on. Captain Janeway, we have a problem.”

There was the beginnings of a faint hum.

“I think they heard you,” commented Daniel. Oh, this transporter thing again.

## Chapter 8

"Thank you!" exclaimed Jack. He and the SG-1 team had arrived on the *Voyager's* transporter pad, alive, but not well. Carter's break was obviously a compound fracture, having broken the skin. Blood was apparent all over her pant leg.

B'Elanna Torres was still there, finishing up the programming she needed to destroy the Stargate by transporter. She saw the injured Carter and responded quickly. "Medical emergency. Four to beam directly to sickbay."

Before Jack could protest, they were standing in an unfamiliar room. A few feet away, a bald man appeared to beam in as well.

"Please state the nature of the medical...oh my. Over here." The EMH directed Teal'c to the main surgical bay. "Sickbay to bridge. Can you spare Mr. Paris?"

"It's serious?" Jack recognized Janeway's voice.

"Yes. She appears to have lost a significant quantity of blood."

"We're on our way," replied Janeway as she and Paris rose to go to the turbolift. Chakotay called for a replacement helmsman and then took the helm himself until the crewmember arrived as Janeway ordered them to break orbit and get to safety.

Laying Carter on the surgical bed, Teal'c backed away to allow the Doctor to work. Daniel and Jack joined him as observers. This was beyond any of their medical training.

"Will she make it?" asked Jack.

"I believe so. I need to get this bleeding stopped and get replacement blood into her." The Doctor glanced at them for a second. "You are not from the *Voyager's* crew?"

"No, we're the guys from way back when."

The Doctor looked distracted for a fraction of a second. "Ah, the members of SG-1. Pleasure to meet you, but I am quite busy." The EMH had raised the surgical hood into place and was working on Carter's leg.

The door to sickbay opened and Janeway entered behind Paris.

"What do you need, Doc?"

"Blood. She appears to be a normal human. I am detecting a common blood type. Please assemble some donors, then return to assist me."

Janeway took the P.A.D.D. that Paris had picked up. "I'll get this, you help the Doctor." She read the names at the top of the list, already categorized by suitability based on recent donations, current medical status, etc. She called the respective crewmen to sickbay and then turned to the Colonel. "What happened?"

"We 'missed' as the Major stated it." When Janeway looked confused, O'Neill continued. "We made it to the right place, but not the right time. We arrived almost seven years after we left. The Borg had beat us to it."

Janeway was stunned. How could that have happened? She was rapidly running ideas through her head and no matter how she thought of it; she came to

the same conclusion. The Borg equipment on the surface had, somehow, been changed.

Having returned to the conference room, the SG-1 and the *Voyager* crew puzzled the recent failure.

“Are you sure no one changed anything?” asked Janeway.

Harry Kim did not know what to say. Seven, B’Elanna, Tuvok and himself had been called to the conference room to try to figure out what might have gone wrong and how to fix it. “One hundred percent sure? I can’t say. It’s possible.”

Janeway needed to not be as concerned with how it got changed as much as how to fix it. “If we assume we did do something, even completely by accident, how do we fix it?”

“Well, B’Elanna and I have some pretty detailed scans of it from our first observations, plus others from just before we left. We could compare the two and see if we can find a difference.”

“That does not preclude the possibility that the change occurred between your last scan and your departure,” commented Tuvok. “To be certain, we would need to examine the equipment as it is now and compare it to the original scans.”

“That’s the only way to be sure,” replied Kim.

“I don’t think the Borg are going to allow that.” Janeway was pacing again. “By this time, they have returned to the Stargate and either attempted what they were doing or discovered the error. What I don’t get is: if the Borg had conquered Earth, why are we still here?”

Everyone puzzled the idea, but only Seven voiced her thoughts. “It is logical to assume that the change in the timeline did not occur until the SG-1 team emerged from the Stargate in the wrong time. By returning through the Stargate almost immediately, they have reset the timeline. They are, once again, at a point where the timeline could go either way, depending upon their next actions.”

“That’s one thing that went right today. Good thinking, Daniel,” noted O’Neill.

“Thank you, but what I am concerned with right now is: what is being done to prevent the Borg from using the Stargate now.” Daniel looked around at the others in the room. “Can’t the Borg just go through now and do their assimilation thing?”

“Before they can make another attempt, they will have to set up the polaron drill. That task should require at least three hours,” responded Seven.

“One way or another, we have to destroy that Stargate,” said Janeway. “B’Elanna, how was your program coming?”

“I need a few more minutes with it, but, otherwise, we’re ready.”

“Captain, if need be, SG-1 is willing to stay here, if not trying to get us home will improve our chances of eliminating the Stargate.” It was drastic, but O’Neill could live with it. Heck, they’d managed to survive when they shouldn’t have so many times. Maybe their luck had run out. Besides, technically, they had survived, just not in their own time.

"I'm not giving up yet, Colonel. There has to be a way to get you back to the right time and destroy the Stargate." Janeway was still looking around the room for any glimmer of hope.

"Perhaps we are discounting what could be our greatest ally in that respect," offered Seven.

"Who would that be?"

"The Borg."

Janeway did not follow Seven's reasoning. "Please explain."

"The Borg have already successfully tested the system for temporally shifting the wormhole. It would be illogical for them to attempt to use it with modified settings given its success previously. We can be assured that once they have detected the possibility that others have been in the vicinity of the equipment, they will conduct extensive checks to assure that it is back to original specifications."

"You believe they will attempt to change whatever has been altered back to its original settings before proceeding?" asked Tuvok.

"Yes."

"Then we can let the Borg fix it," responded Janeway. "But how will we know when they have?"

"Logically, they will retest the Stargate when they are ready. Our sensors should be able to detect such a test from a safe distance."

"That won't give us much time to get back there, especially if they have the drill set up and are ready to begin," queried Janeway.

"Could we make our first priority be destroying the drill, with a phaser shot?" asked B'Elanna.

Tuvok considered it. "Possible, though we would run the risk of destroying or damaging the temporal shifting equipment as well."

"Could it be done from the ground?" asked O'Neill.

"That is conceivable, but those involved may have to fight their way to the drill. Once you show indications of being a threat, the Borg will make every attempt to stop you."

"Not even with something like an RPG?" O'Neill realized that they were not familiar with that term. "A hand-held rocket launcher, small, something probably a lot less powerful than your...phasers, were they?"

"Would there still be the chance of collateral damage?" inquired Tuvok.

"Actually, there would. They use explosives to blow up items as large as light tanks."

"I am afraid that it would still be a threat to the other equipment."

"We can't take that risk." Janeway continued to try and think of other possibilities. "And whoever goes to the surface has to be able to defend themselves, at least for a while."

"The good news is we proved that our MP-5's are something they can't adapt to," smiled Jack. "Problem is, we're down to two of them and we've used some of the ammunition, though I think we're all right for now. Teal'c's staff weapon is useless as well as the ZATs. They already adapted to those."

Teal'c had another concern. "I believe we could successfully make it to the Stargate. However, if this Borg ship is as powerful as you stated, can you be sure that you can make it back to the area to destroy the Stargate?"

"He has a valid point. We've survived encounters with the Borg before, but they're a tough opponent. Can we get back after we lure the cube away?" Janeway glanced toward Tuvok. "Or for that matter, even if we can, if they delay us long enough, they could still make it through the Stargate before we can destroy it."

"Okay. Question: What would we need to do to knock out their ability to use the Stargate?" asked Jack.

"Destroying the polaron drill would safeguard Earth for now," said Seven.

"But," interrupted Kim, "if you knocked out the control console for the time shifting apparatus, they couldn't go anywhere but Earth of our day. Am I right?"

"The main console controls both the function and the supply of power to the field coils. Destroying that would prevent them from controlling it or powering it accurately. And if we happened to destroy the power generator as well..." said B'Elanna.

"Then all they have left are two tall pieces of some rather exotic materials," smiled Janeway. "They won't go very far with that. Excellent, now how do we do that?"

"It would have to be done after SG-1 made it through the Gate. Otherwise, it may prematurely destroy the equipment and send them to another time," Kim cautioned.

"I think we can take care of that." O'Neill glanced at the other members of his team.

"The C4 we brought, and the timed detonators," responded Carter.

"Exactly. We set the C4 to go off in, say, two minutes, and then dial home. We're gone before it blows and they can't follow us."

"If you are referring to the plastic explosive colloquially called 'Composition C4' in the twentieth century, I must question if it has sufficient power." asked Tuvok.

"I don't think the Borg planned on anything being a threat to that equipment. They don't appear to have done anything out of the ordinary to protect it," answered B'Elanna. "I think it'll work."

"Then we'll just have to set the Colonel and his team down as close as we can and cover them as best we can. We can tie up the Borg cube for a while, but I'm afraid that you'll just have to fight your way to the Gate. Hopefully, there won't be too many drones on the surface. How long will it take to have this 'C4' ready, Colonel?"

"It's pretty elementary, actually. Half hour at most," shrugged O'Neill.

"All right, then. Make your preparations and then have your team ready to go as soon as possible."

## Chapter 9

“General, it’s time,” reported the Lieutenant.

Hammond had returned to his office to await the report or return of SG-1. But now, the four-hour deadline had come and gone, with nothing from the team.

What had happened out there? They had found nothing even remotely dangerous with the remote probes they had sent. The planet had seemed totally safe, at least in the area of the Stargate. If it had not been for the violent-sounding transmission they had received from O’Malley, he would have believed it to be something more mundane, like a virus or something that they hadn’t detected with the probes. That was always a possibility.

But that just wasn’t the case here. O’Malley and the rest of SG-8 were obviously under some form of attack and were trying to warn the SGC. That told Hammond that this involved some seemingly hostile force, be it natural or technological. But either way it was obviously a threat.

Hammond didn’t like what procedure required him to do now, but the security of Earth was quite possibly at stake. No matter how much it pained him. “Lock out SG-1’s IDC code and then lock planet P4F783 out of our dialing computer. From now on, it is off-limits.”

“Yes, Sir.”

The lieutenant returned to the command center to do as he had been ordered, leaving Hammond to reflect on the cost. His best team, theoretically lost. Along with SG-8, that made eight men and women, lost or missing in the line of duty, and he couldn’t even tell the families why. Well, most of them. He could inform Carter’s father the next time he made contact with the Tok’ra. But other than that? Now their only hope was a little device that looked a lot like the pen he was holding in his hand. It didn’t seem like much.

Suddenly, thought of retirement began creeping around his mind again.

O’Neill and the rest of the SG-1 team were ready in the promised half an hour. All their remaining equipment had been brought to the transporter room and prepared. The EMH had protested doing so, but had finally agreed to do what he could to stabilize Carter’s broken leg first, in case they had to run. Then he began to work on actually healing it.

But they were fortunate. The Borg gave them nearly four hours to prepare. The EMH had Carter’s leg mended, shocking the Major. She joined her team in the transporter room, amazed that she was doing so without crutches and a cast.

“You’re sure you’re all right?” asked the Colonel, equally surprised by this advanced technology.

“It does feel a little odd, but that seems to be going away, slowly.” Carter had rolled her pant leg up to look at the leg. There was no sign that she had ever been injured. At least, not on the outside.

“Just the same, Teal’c, keep an eye on her, just in case. I don’t want her folding in the middle of this,” stated O’Neill.

“Really, Colonel, I’m fine. You’ll need...”

“Teal’c to cover your butt and Daniel to cover mine. It’ll work fine. The main thing is to get through and let the Gate close before the C4 goes.”

“We must also make sure that the Borg are unable to hold the Gate open. The wormhole must collapse before the charges explode,” added Teal’c

“Right, so as soon as you set your charges at the power generator, get through the Gate. Daniel will dial us home while I’m setting the other charges. He should have it up and running when you’re ready.”

“I’m more concerned about what the Borg will do,” said Daniel.

“Well,” responded Carter, “if they react as everyone says, they’ll ignore us until they determine that we’re a threat.”

“But when will they decide that? When we first arrive? When we set the charges?”

O’Neill preferred to be optimistic. “Hopefully, when it’s already too late.”

“There is one other problem, Sir.”

‘And leave it to Carter to remember it,’ thought Jack.

“We are way over due. If General Hammond follows procedures, our IDC codes are already locked out. The iris will be closed when we go through.”

“Already taken care of,” responded the Colonel. He reached into his pack and pulled a small item out of a hidden pocket. It looked like a pen to everyone else.

“Jack, what is that?” asked Daniel.

“A special, one-shot transmitter. Burns itself out after use so no one can capture it and duplicate it. It contains a backup code that will be received on the other side and will alert General Hammond that it is okay to open the iris.”

“Seems almost as risky as our other transponders being captured,” noted Sam.

“Except that as soon as one of these is used, the code is changed and new transponders issued.”

“I didn’t know those existed,” replied Carter.

“That’s the idea. The fewer people who know about them, the better.” Handing the transponder to Daniel, Jack continued. “As soon as the Gate opens, send our old code. If you get a lockout signal, send this. If not, we may have a problem.”

“You’re assuming that General Hammond won’t breach procedures and not lockout our IDC code?” inquired Daniel.

“At this point, General Hammond has to be concerned about an invasion. He’ll follow procedure because the stakes are too high. So unless something else has happened, we’re already locked out.”

“So, if I don’t get a lockout code...”

“Then something else is wrong,” answered Jack.

“Like?”

“I have no idea. And by then, I’ll be out of ideas.”

“There. A temporal signature!” Harry Kim had noted it instantly. Seven had been right. They could have picked it up from even farther away.

Janeway glanced toward her operation officer, thankful that the waiting might be over. “Can you detect the polaron drill?”

“Negative, but we may be too far for that.” Kim watched his sensor readouts for several more seconds. “It just disappeared. I think it was shut down.”

“So they did test it,” remarked Chakotay. He was surprised they had risked doing it again. But then again, the Borg may not have considered *Voyager* to be a threat.

“And that’s our cue. Bring us to red alert. Mr. Paris, take us back there,” ordered Janeway.

In the transporter room, SG-1 heard the red alert sound through the ship.

“I’d say we’re on our way,” commented O’Neill.

“Bridge to transporter room.” They recognized Janeway’s voice. “Colonel, you had better get your people ready. We’re headed back at maximum warp.”

“We’re ready,” responded O’Neill as he grabbed up his pack and MP-5. Daniel had already been prepared and he and Teal’c were helping Carter up and on with her pack. She may have said she was okay, but Jack could see stiffness and caution in her actions. Either she wasn’t as okay as she thought or she was having a little trouble believing it herself.

B’Elanna returned to the transporter room and went to the main console, preparing to upload the program she had created. O’Neill joined her.

“Whatever it is you were supposed to do is ready, right?”

Looking sheepishly at the Colonel, B’Elanna tried to decide how to respond. “Uh, yes. I was ready a few hours ago actually. You really don’t get along with technology that well, do you?”

“Actually, I love technology. I’m not sure it always likes me.” Jack smiled sheepishly in return.

“Don’t worry, Colonel, we’re all professionals here.” B’Elanna returned to entering commands as Jack tried to figure out what was going on.

“Any idea how long?”

“Let’s find out.” B’Elanna entered the necessary commands to allow them to monitor the bridge. They could see most of the bridge, including Janeway and Chakotay at their posts.”

“That’s cool.” Jack came around the end of the console so he could see better.

Janeway wanted desperately to will the ship faster, but there were limitations to everything. “Time?”

“Twelve minutes, forty-two seconds to system boundary,” responded Tuvok.

“And the Borg?”

“No change. They are either ignoring us or have not detected us.”

“Not with Borg sensors. They know we’re here; they’re just trying to decide what to do with us. That cube has to supply power to that polaron drill, so they’ll try to stay where they are. We need to lure it away.” And at the moment, the best defense seemed like a good offense. “Mr. Kim, see if you can detect what might serve as the power tap for that drill. Mr. Tuvok, when he finds it, I want to hit it with a full barrage.”

Minutes passed. Kim was obviously getting frustrated. “Sir, I can detect six possibilities, but we can’t take them all out at once.” ‘I’m not sure we can take out any of them,’ thought Harry.

“Seven?”

The ex-Borg examined the scans, using her considerable knowledge against her former masters. “There,” she said calmly.

“Approaching system threshold,” reported Paris.

“I see it. Tuvok?”

“Confirmed. Targeting all weapons.”

“I’m detecting an energy buildup, exactly at that point,” said Kim.

Janeway knew exactly what that meant. “Take us as close as you dare on warp, Mr. Paris. Standby on those weapons. Colonel O’Neill? It’s time.”

Hearing the statement, Jack turned and hustled onto the transporter pad. “We’re ready, Captain.”

B’Elanna was too, already scanning ahead to try and find a safe transport location. “Careful, Tom,” she commented, noting that they were already inside the ‘safe’ area. They should not have been in warp this close to the system, but giving the Borg the least amount of time to react was paramount.

*Voyager* dropped from warp, but even at sublight, the planet was fast approaching. Scanning the sight, B’Elanna saw that a new wormhole was already in existence.

“They’ve activated the Stargate already.”

Sam looked toward O’Neill, then back to B’Elanna. “Are we too late?”

B’Elanna watched a little longer. “No. They took out the power feed to the polaron drill with torpedoes.” Suddenly the ship shook violently. “And pissed them off.”

Watching the view on her screen twist and roll, B’Elanna realized that Paris was taking some rather unique evasive actions. She thought she heard the phaser collimators discharge and knew that the Captain was trying to aggravate them. She wanted that Borg cube to follow *Voyager*. But, they were still within transporter range. Scanning again, B’Elanna became concerned.

“There must be a hundred Borg down there.”

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“All at the Gate?” shouted O’Neill.

“Scattered somewhat, but in the general area.”

“Can you set us down behind cover so we can see what’s happening?”

“Yes. Get ready. Energizing!”

**Chapter 10**

“Offworld activation! All security to the Gate Room.”

Hammond heard the summons and hustled from his office to the command center. “Seal the iris.” He would take no chances.

Once the wormhole had been established, Hammond waited a few moments. “Anything?”

“No, Sir. No IDC codes, transmissions, nothing.”

Suddenly, there was a loud shrieking sound, like an energy build-up. Hammond couldn’t tell exactly from where the sound was coming, but it was definitely getting louder.

At the center of the iris, the metal started to show signs of heat, the surface taking on a tempered effect. For several seconds it continued to grow more pronounced.

“What the hell?”

Then as suddenly as it had started, it stopped. Seconds later, the Gate shut down.

Hammond went down to the gateroom and up the ramp to the closed iris. But from several feet away, he could feel the heat; not overwhelming, but still obvious.

Someone had a way to burn through the iris!

O’Neill and the SG-1 team arrived behind an outcropping of rock, shielded from the Borg below; visually, anyway, but O’Neill was pretty sure the Borg would know they were there.

Peering over the edge of the rocks, he noted the polaron drill, directly behind the DHD and sited at the Stargate. Off to the side was a group of about forty drones, lined up in pairs, apparently prepared to march through the Gate. Dozens of others were attending to either the drill or the other equipment.

“That’s a lot of Borg, Colonel. Any idea how we are going to go about this?” asked Carter.

She was right. It was more than O’Neill had expected. “How many grenades have we got left?”

“Fifteen. It’ll do a lot of damage. Thinking about starting a fight and kill as many as possible?”

“That was one thought. I was also considering using these rocks to get behind the Stargate and approach from the rear. Keep us under cover for as long as possible.”

“According to B’Elanna, they don’t use any projectile or directed energy weapons. At least the drones don’t. But they have plenty of other ways to hurt you, if they can touch you.”

“I wonder if they’re pretty quick?”

“Come to think of it, I’ve never seen one move at much more than a brisk walk,” said Daniel.

“Nor have I,” added Teal’c. “Perhaps speed and agility will be our greatest allies.”

“Which means that if we can get behind the Gate, most of them will have the farthest to travel to get to us. Maybe we can get the C4 planted before they reach us?” Jack hoped.

“Maybe, but I call that a long shot, Sir,” reacted Carter.

“Any other ideas?”

None.

“Okay, then let’s see if we can get to that low spot in the rocks without being seen. We approach from there. Teal’c, I want you on Carter’s side of the Gate, covering us.” O’Neill handed his MP-5 and his grenades to the Jaffa. “Carter and I will set the charges. Daniel, get to the DHD and start dialing home.” He removed the pack of C4 that the scientist was carrying. “When I signal, finish the sequence. When it opens, go through. Teal’c covers Carter’s retreat and I’ll be last. Got it?”

A nod came from all.

“Okay, here we go.” Jack backed away from the rock edge and headed around behind the Stargate, using the rocks for cover. The Borg appeared to be ignoring them for now, though Jack doubted that the situation would continue.

They made it to the gap in the rocks and carefully, O’Neill crawled over the top, heading to his left toward the control consoles. Carter started off to the right, toward the power generator. Daniel was about to join them when he looked up.

“Uh-oh.”

Jack looked up and saw four drones had changed paths and were heading in their direction. “So much for being ignored.”

“Borg cube is pursuing,” reported Tuvok.

“Make for open space, Mr. Paris. Let’s take them away from here,” ordered Janeway. She knew she had hurt them, but now she needed to make sure that the cube was not involved in the battle that would come on the surface. “Draw power to the aft shields. Keep them going as long as possible.”

*Voyager* veered away from the planet and passed between the planet and its moon, on a course toward the system’s star. Paris made a close approach, then proceeded to slingshot around and come out traveling perpendicular to their approach. Unfortunately, it was the kind of maneuver that the Borg could match and they were following closely. So when the space was available, Paris took the ship to warp.

Unfortunately, the Borg were not that taken. The cube refused to follow, turning instead to return to the planet.

“Tough audience,” commented Paris.

“Time for us to play the cat. Take us back in there. We have to keep them busy.” Janeway was a little surprised they had broken off.

Seven knew why. “The damage done to the power tap was minimal. They have already repaired it.”

“All right, time to undo their repairs. Mr. Paris, I want that power tap again.”

“Aye.” Paris rolled *Voyager*, changing his approach to bring the power tap into view.

But the Borg understood his actions. They began to roll and rotate the cube, trying to keep the power tap away from *Voyager*.

“Unorthodox, but effective.” Tuvok continued to target the port as the combatants whirled around each other. “As long as we can force them to continue this, they are unable to make the necessary connections with the drill.”

“But how long can we keep this up?” Chakotay was grasping the arms of his seat to help secure himself. The inertial dampeners were being pushed to the limit.

*Voyager* buffeted hard, apparently hit by something.

“About that long. They’re shooting at us. Helm is sluggish,” responded Paris.

“Evasive action, pattern lambda,” ordered Janeway. “Then get us back in there. How is SG-1 coming?”

“They’ve nearly reached the controls and the power generator,” answered Kim.

*Voyager* was buffeted by another hit.

“Shields are down forty percent,” stated Tuvok.

“Keep trying for that power tap, Mr. Tuvok. Mr. Paris, can you get us in closer?”

“Uh, I guess so. But our phasers will have a restricted firing arc,” responded the helmsman.

“And so will the Borg’s,” countered Tuvok.

“Good point.” Paris brought them in even closer and the Borg cube seemed to want all the more desperately to get away.

“Teal’c!”

“I see them, Colonel.” The Jaffa rested his staff weapon against the Stargate and took up his MP-5. Dead reckoning, he started firing and was pleased to see his skills were as good with this earth weapon as with his staff. The first Borg went down rather quickly, though the second was a little tougher.

And, he noticed that the Borg were sending reinforcements. Four more drones were now coming their way.

O’Neill made it to the control consoles, where only one drone was stationed. He quickly dispatched it with his pistol and proceeded to set the charges. “Start dialing, Daniel.”

Jackson slung his MP-5 and made for the DHD. At this point, he was closest to the Borg by a few yards and he found it unnerving to have to turn his back on them, especially when he saw Teal’c release his hold on the submachine gun and pull out a grenade.

Pulling the pin, Teal'c estimated the distance to the four drones and threw. The grenade landed a couple of meters in front of the lead drone, bounced nicely off the hard ground and detonated, sending the first three drones down and the last one struggling to stay upright. Teal'c finished it with the MP-5, as more Borg seemed to take notice of the situation.

O'Neill peeked his head over the console he was setting a charge on and saw the results. "More of those, Teal'c. Keep 'em busy. Carter?"

"One more." Sam rushed to set her last charge.

"Daniel, finish it."

Teal'c turned his attention to the main body of Borg and decided to take the battle to the enemy. Pulling the pins on one grenade after another, he hefted them into the air to fall on the unsuspecting drones. Bursting among their targets, the grenades were making casualties. Moments after each explosion, more bodies would shimmer out of existence.

Daniel pressed down on the last character and then laid his hand on the central sphere. Immediately, the Gate erupted and then settled. Now, hopefully, it was going to the right time.

They would know soon enough. Jackson sent the old transponder code.

"Unscheduled offworld activation."

Alerts were again sounding through the Cheyenne Mountain Complex. General Hammond knew that meant trouble. He had already been forced to lock out SG-1's transponder code. Now there was only one hope left.

Entering the Command Center, Hammond asked for a report.

"We're getting an IDC code. It's SG-1," responded the lieutenant.

"Leave the iris closed. We can't take any chances."

"Sir?"

"Per protocol, Lieutenant. We can't open it until we are sure."

They waited.

"New incoming signal. It's an emergency transponder."

Hammond's heart jumped, but it still needed to be authenticated. Would the computer recognize it?

"Verified! Current SGC emergency code. And all emergency transponders are accounted for except SGs 1 and 8."

Reaching for the microphone, the General hoped this wasn't a fake. But how could it be? "Colonel O'Neill?"

"Dr. Jackson, Sir. We're all here, but under fire. We need the iris opened,"

Hammond looked back toward the lieutenant. He still had a bad feeling about this. "Open the iris, Lieutenant."

"I'm done," yelled Carter.

O'Neill glanced up. Carter was, indeed, moving toward the Stargate. "Reset them for remote trigger!"

Sam stopped in her tracks. "Sir?" Was he insane?

O'Neill's hand held up a remote trigger then pointed toward the Borg. Despite the grenades and Teal'c's considerable throwing skill, the main body of drones was advancing, rather quickly.

She hobbled back to the power generator and reset the triggers, then began to hobble back toward the Stargate. Her injury, especially to the bone, may have been healed, but the muscles around it were not. They were fatiguing, fast. And Teal'c was more than a little busy. "Daniel?"

Jackson saw her falter and went to her aid, passing his MP-5 to the Jaffa as he passed. Taking her under her right arm, he hustled her up the stairs and through the Gate.

O'Neill was rushing, trying to get the last two charges set. Unsure where to put it, he decided that the top of the console was a good place. Blowing those shiny computer interfaces straight to hell would guarantee they couldn't fix it quickly. He hoped.

With one charge left, he reached over the top and secured it to the control panel. Then he felt an iron grip on his wrist. A drone had made it to the console and was quick enough to reach out and grab him. Struggling, O'Neill went for his sidearm. He fired several rounds into the drone's chest, which seemed to have minimal effect. Remembering that Carter had killed the one with head shots, he placed the muzzle of his pistol directly against the drone's forehead and fired.

It stopped. Jack was able to pull his wrist free and back away. It showed no signs of reviving, but didn't shimmer out like the other "dead" ones had. The weirdest part, at least in his mind, was the lack of blood. Weren't they, at least partially, alive?

Either way, there were more coming. And they were advancing on Teal'c's position. He wouldn't be able to hold it for long. O'Neill reached forward and quickly reset the last charge and ran for the Stargate. "Teal'c, get out of there."

"If I leave, they will make it through the Stargate." Two drones were now close enough to nearly touch him as he backed toward the event horizon.

"GO!" In a wonderfully NFL style, Jack threw himself at Teal'c and tackled them both through the Gate.

"They're gone!" shouted Harry Kim.

"SG-1?" asked Janeway.

"Yes. But there have been no explosions and the Borg are at the Gate."

Which meant that Earth of the past was still threatened. "Mr. Paris?"

"I'm on it"

"Transporter room, I want that Gate taken care of as soon as you can get a lock."

"Scanning," replied B'Elanna. It was incredible the amount of interference that thing, not to mention all the Borg technology, could put out. If she held out until they got closer?

"Borg have entered the wormhole," reported Kim

No time. B'Elanna widened her search and prepared to pickup everything down there, Borg and all. It would be a lot for the transporters, but it wasn't like they wanted to reassemble any of it.

Torres began the transport as the explosives detonated. The shock was contained in the transporter beam, reacting as an energy surge in the beam. A jolt of energy raced through the controls and knocked B'Elanna against the wall as the safeties attempted to kick in and control it but she had disabled them.

After a second or two, the arcing energy subsided. Torres returned to the panel and tried to determine the results. But this station was a mess.

"Transporter room? What happened?" Janeway sounded like she was on the edge of her seat.

"I don't know, Captain. A large energy surge. It's knocked out the transporters." B'Elanna just couldn't tell what had happened.

"What about the Stargate?"

"I was in the process of dematerializing it, then this energy surge hit. My panel is destroyed. I can't tell what happened."

Janeway turned quickly to her Ops officer.

"I'm detecting no sign of it on the surface. In fact, there's nothing there except the polaron drill and a few Borg."

"What about the Borg ship?"

Tuvok was keeping a watchful eye on it. "It appears to be more interested in determining what has happened as well."

"Fine, but what about the Stargate?"

"I can't find it," answered Kim. "It's not on the surface, in orbit, or anywhere nearby that I can detect."

"Transporter Room to Bridge. I think I found it."

"Where is it, Ensign?"

"I think it's still in the pattern buffers. There is a lot of stuff in there that I can only identify as debris."

"Suspended in mid-transport," said Tuvok.

"Can we get it out?"

"We have no need to. If we simply purge the buffers, its pattern will be eliminated, effectively destroying it."

Janeway nodded agreement. It was a simple answer. But for now, they needed to get out of harm's way. "Mr. Paris, take us out of here, best speed. Ensign Torres, I need damage reports and repairs as soon as possible. Emphasis on the engines and shields."

"What about the buffers?"

"Purge them. In fact, purge all of them, just in case."

O'Neill and Teal'c tumbled onto the ramp in the Gate Room. Turning quickly, O'Neill tried to trigger the remote detonators, and then realized that he had dropped the transmitter. Searching frantically, he spied it on the grating, several feet away. Scrambling for the device, he latched onto it as a boot came

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DEFINITELY NOT SWEDISH

down on his wrist. Looking up, Jack saw two Borg drones looking down at him. "Oh, crap."

Further down the ramp, Carter saw the Borg arrive and shouted to the assembled troops, "Kill them!"

Everyone opened fire, including the two machine gunners. The impact of the bullets forced the drones off balance and Jack was able to free his wrist. Staying low, so as not to be killed by friendly fire, he triggered the detonators.

Expecting a big boom, he was surprised when the wormhole collapsed. And even more surprised when one of the drones fell on top of him. These guys were not light.

"Cease fire!" shouted Hammond over the PA and the firing stopped. Turning to the Lieutenant, he ordered the iris re-closed and called for medical personnel to come to the Gate Room before leaving the Command Center.

Teal'c evaded the other falling drone and rushed to pull the first off of O'Neill. "Are you injured?"

"I'll tell you when I get my breath back. We get them all?"

"Both appear to be non-functional."

"Good riddance."

Hammond entered the room, passing Carter and Jackson first. "You all right, Major?"

"Yes, Sir. Just need to rest my leg a second." But she was already trying to make it up the ramp, with Jackson's aid.

Hammond arrived at the Colonel as Jack was getting his breath. "Are you all right, Colonel?"

"I will be."

"Good. Then may I ask what the hell those are?"

"Borg, Sir." With Teal'c's help, Jack got to his feet.

"Borg? Sounds..."

"Huh-UH!. Definitely not Swedish."

"Then I take it this will be an interesting debriefing," smiled the General.

## Chapter 11

Captain Janeway sat in her ready room, sipping her coffee. *Voyager* was ship-shape again and all the transporters buffers had been purged, twice. B'Elanna had not been taking any chances.

The situation that had evolved with SG-1 was still on her mind. Those people had been out, traveling the galaxy at a time when she had thought that most humans were still only interested in themselves. Before man had gone much beyond his own planet and moon, these people were behaving like good Starfleet officers, going where they needed to go, doing what they needed to do, to explore what really was out there. They were out here seeking the truths, and getting in trouble in the process. There were some things that never changed.

And more disturbing than all the rest was that the future didn't seem to even know about it. Tuvok had searched their historical files again and still found nothing.

Well, she knew. The *Voyager* crew knew. And if they ever got back to Earth, they would let the rest of the universe know.

Her door chimed. "Enter."

Chakotay strode into the room carrying a P.A.D.D., no doubt with the latest scans of the surrounding systems. Once again, the main concern in their minds was simple survival for themselves. "We've completed the scans, and it's not good."

Janeway took the P.A.D.D. and examined its contents. Her executive officer was right, it wasn't good. Nothing even remotely Class M in parsecs.

And supplies were again running low. She was even considering going back to the planet where they had met SG-1. At least it had food in abundance. They could resupply until the ship was bursting at the seams.

But, would the Borg still be there?

"If these 'Borg' are supposed to be trying to take over the galaxy, why haven't we run into them already?"

General Hammond had called the SG-1 team together for their official debriefing, along with Dr. Frazier, who had examined each of the team members after their return.

"No matter how we look at it, General, it's a pretty big galaxy out there. It's possible that they have not progressed enough for us to come across them or for the Goa'uld or Asgard to even notice them. For all we know, they may not even exist yet," replied Carter.

"It's a shame we couldn't have gotten a copy of the historical database that this ship had."

"Agreed, Sir. But frankly, I'm not sure we could have found a place to store it all. They claimed to have the histories of dozens or even hundreds of planets and races. The amount of information it contained had to be astronomical."

“And they were very careful about information around us,” commented O’Neill.

“Uh, yeah. They apparently have laws that forbid them from tampering in the affairs of others, or changing timelines,” included Daniel. “A very logical approach to space exploration, if you ask me.”

“And I understand their reluctance to take chances. Theoretically, one false move on their part could have erased the whole timeline, changed everything,” added Carter

“It sounds like these people were very advanced,” stated Hammond.

“Very. They had to be at least two or three centuries ahead of us, though we never found out what the exact date was in their time,” replied Carter. “The technology of their ship was phenomenal. She had FTL drive, made by these people rather than an Asgard design. Shields, directed energy weapons, advanced navigation, transporters...”

“And some exceptional medical capabilities,” added Dr. Frazier. “I’ve examined the major’s leg. Whoever repaired the bones was an artist. From what I can tell, they didn’t just set it and let it heal. They fused it back together, and in astonishing time.”

“But Major Carter is still suffering from the effects, am I right?”

“True. But not with respect to the bone. Major Carter’s injury was a serious compound fracture. Damage was done to the muscles and other surrounding tissue. Though these have been healed from a medical sense, she may have residual discomfort and fatigue for a few days. But if she had been injured here, though, she would be recovering for weeks, maybe months.”

“And all from humans from the future? It seems to bode well for our mission here.”

“Maybe, maybe not, General. They said they could find no record of us in their historical databases.” This was nagging at O’Neill. “It’s almost like we never existed. If we spend all this time saving Earth, surely somebody wrote something down about it that has survived. Unless, of course, something happens in the future where we fail.”

“Maybe what happens doesn’t involve the Goa’uld or Asgard or Ancients or Replicators or anyone else offworld?” Daniel looked around. “Maybe we will be our own worst enemy. Maybe what destroys all this will come from within?”

“Then we must be vigilant, both out there and here,” replied Teal’c

“Either way,” interrupted Carter, “if what we saw is from our own timeline, then humans have a promising future. Starships that travel the galaxy, technology on a par with the other races we know of.”

“Not to mention the fact that they are in some kind of an interstellar ‘federation’ that involves dozens.”

“Over a hundred, according to the Captain,” interrupted O’Neill.

“That involves members of other races working together for the common good. If we could achieve that, it would be a small miracle, with the way the Tok’ra and others all don’t seem to trust each other.”

“Maybe that means that, someday, we will,” stated the General.