

STO ACADEMY

LUPUS INCOGNITUS



AN ORIGINAL STORY BASED ON STAR TREK ONLINE

Attilio

Stardate 87435.61

Part 1

Vice Admiral Juan Mal walked into Admiral James Hastler's office at Starfleet's embassy on New Romulus. It was a small office that Fleet Admiral Attilio Varrak and he shared. In the far left corner was Attilio's desk which was empty now. James's desk was directly to the right of the entrance. The room was sparsely decorated. Starfleet banners hung on the walls and a Starfleet rug lay in the center of the room. Behind each desk was a plant, probably just to give the room some much needed life.

James was sitting at his desk reading reports on a PADD. As Mal entered the room, James placed it on the desk and looked up. "Welcome back to New Romulus Admiral," James said.

"Thank you sir. Your communiqué said there was something important we needed to discuss." Mal sat in the chair opposite of James and tugged on his uniform to straighten it out.

"I've been in talks with Romulan, Klingon, and Federation leaders. As you know, the Romulan Republic was newly established when the Iconian War started. Their resources were already limited, and the war demanded much from them, as it did from all of us. While the Federation and Klingon Empire have the infrastructure in place to bounce back, the Republic does not."

Mal leaned forward and rested his arm on the desk. "How can we help?"

"We and the Klingons will be providing resources, materials, assistance, and defense where possible. Understandably the Romulans want to be able to stand on their own two feet, and we will help get them there. As a start, they have decided to recall all of their ships, including the Mol'Latas. All Federation and Klingon personnel will be unassigned from their posts aboard Republic ships and reassigned to postings within their faction."

"Which means I will no longer be in command of the Mol'Latas."

"Yes, I'm sorry to be the one to break this news to you. D'Tan has asked me to extend his gratitude to you. At a time when the Republic was low on command officers, and staff in general, you stepped up and not only commanded the STOA fleet's Romulan flagship, but did so with a mixed crew of Alliance members. I'm certain that was no easy task. Now that the war is over the Republic feels it is time to place only their own crews onboard their ships so that a new generation of officers may be trained."

"That's understandable. When should I return to the ship to collect my things?"

"Not so fast. Before you or any of the crew disembark I have a special assignment for you. What I am about to tell you is need to know." Mal leaned in with curiosity and interest as

James continued to explain the situation. "Recently we became aware that a Tal Shiar spy is part of the Mol'Latas's crew."

"What?" Mal furrowed his brow in annoyance. "How is this possible? For how long?"

"We don't know. The last crew transfers were a month ago, but the spy could have been part of the original crew. We just have no way of knowing."

"How did you find out?"

"D'Tan's people intercepted odd transmissions which were directed towards recently known Tal Shiar bases. They traced it back to your ship. The nature of the transmissions divulge information about the fleet and the Mol'Latas. I'm sure you recall the mission we recently sent you on to investigate a potential Tal Shiar base?"

"I do. It was abandoned."

"Subcommander Nadel had the Lleset investigate a week before you did. It was swarming with Tal Shiar activity. After you were given the assignment, they were observed abandoning the base. It was a test to see if their suspicions were true."

"Why wasn't I informed at the time?"

"The Republic kept this information a secret until after the fact. Starfleet wasn't aware until recently. When we found out we decided that once the war was over we'd investigate. For all we knew, none of us would survive the war so it wouldn't even matter."

"Let me guess, now you want me to find this spy?"

"Well you do have a certain, shall we say flare, when it comes to your command style. If anyone can bend the rules a little and get the job done, it's you. Just don't cross any lines that a Starfleet officer shouldn't cross."

"Way to ruin my fun," Mal said with a smirk. "So what's the plan?"

"All the relevant data is on here." James handed a small data module to Mal. "As for the plan... that, my friend, is entirely up to you."

Mal stared at New Romulus through the window of his ready room and considered what James had told him. How could a Tal Shiar spy slip passed him? Maybe it wasn't his fault. The Romulan Republic was so focused on opening a friendly hand to everyone and building their forces that they didn't check their personnel well enough. Then the war started and everyone was too distracted to notice anything.

He decided placing blame won't help find the spy. "Computer, show me all communication logs between stardates 87408.21 and 87419.17."

The Computer chirped in recognition of Mal's request and displayed the results on his desk console. He sat down and scrolled through the logs. There were communications with Starfleet, the Romulan Republic, other ships, personal ones to family and friends. Everything seemed normal.

"Computer pull up Admiral James's report XJ71-Alpha. Security clearance Mal Gamma Lambda Seven Five Unlock."

"Access granted," the computer replied.

"Does the report indicate if any relay stations were used during the transmission?"

"Negative."

"So the transmission was sent directly from this ship to the Tal Shiar base?"

"Affirmative."

Mal stood up and began pacing the room. "Cross reference the data in the report with the communication logs that you retrieved a moment ago. Could any of these transmissions have been the one sent to the Tal Shiar base?"

"Searching." After a moment the computer responded with a negative.

Mal stopped in his tracks. "Thanks computer. Delete all records of this search on the authorization of Vice Admiral Juan Mal, commanding officer."

"Acknowledged."

He stood there considering his options. If the transmission was not sent from the ship's computer then it must have been from a portable transmitter. Searching each room would tip off the spy. To catch an agent of the Tal Shiar one must be cunning. He tapped the combadge on his chest.

"Lieutenant Commander T'Pir report to my ready room."

A few minutes passed before the chime on his door rang. He opened the door and T'Pir entered the room. She was a Vulcan engineer from Starfleet and assistant to Chief Engineer Jetk, a Romulan Republic officer.

"Reporting as ordered sir."

"I have a question for you. If a transmission was sent from this ship in a nontraditional manner, would there be any way for us to detect it?"

"Sir?"

"Would there be a log of some sort? Anything that would indicate that a communication was sent from let's say a portable transmitter?"

"It would be illogical for any officer to have their own transmitter. However, if they did, the sensors may have detected and recorded the transmission. Shall I begin searching for such an occurrence?"

"Damn Vulcan logic, always one step ahead. You remind me of a certain Fleet Admiral. Proceed with the search, but keep this quiet. No one is to know."

"Understood. May I ask why you did not request this from Subcommander Jetk. He is my superior officer."

"No you may not. Dismissed."

T'Pir nodded and exited the office. Mal walked back to the window, leaned on the wall, and stared out into space. This would prove to be more difficult than he had hoped. Being able to only trust Starfleet officers may seed distrust in the crew.

A few hours later T'Pir returned with no new information. Nothing unusual had been detected by the sensors. If a transmission had been sent with a portable device it was so well concealed that the sensors could not detect it. A different approach to finding the spy would be necessary. He left the ready room and walked on to the bridge

"Helm pull up the coordinates of that Tal Shiar base we investigated recently. Set a course and go to warp 5 when ready."

"Aye sir," the helm officer replied.

Mal's first officer, Commander Sov'at, stood up and approached him. "Sir if you don't mind me asking, why are we returning? That base was deserted when we last investigated it."

"Classified orders from Admiral Hastler. I'll be in my ready room. Notify me when we arrive." Mal walked back into his room leaving the crew speechless.

It didn't take long for Sov'at to follow him in. "Sir may I speak frankly?"

"Always."

"I don't like being kept in the dark."

"I understand your frustration but I need you to trust me. I have my orders. Hopefully I can reveal them to you soon."

"What *can* you tell me? Is the Alliance aware of these orders?"

"This is sanctioned by the Alliance. For now, all I can tell you is that we are searching for something." The sound of the door's chime interrupted their conversation. "Come."

T'Pir walked in, "apologies for interrupting. I have some data for you to review Admiral."

"Very well. Sov'at you are dismissed." Sov'at lingered for a moment and then walked out. When the doors closed T'Pir handed Mal a PADD.

"Admiral, after my report earlier I decided to look into the logs some more. I was able to retrieve fragments of a deleted record. It seems to indicate a transmission from a portable device. Although we cannot be certain."

Mal reviewed the data on the PADD, "well done. We are headed to the abandoned Tal Shiar base. When we arrive I want you to beam down with the away team and try to retrieve their communication logs. Perhaps they will provide some clues. In the meantime, set the computer to notify me if a transmission of the type you found is sent again."

"Yes sir."

After T'Pir left the room Mal hailed James at the embassy. "It's good to hear from you Mal. What did you find out?"

"I've been able to confirm that a transmission was sent from a portable transmitter. We're going to investigate the Tal Shiar base again to attempt retrieving their communication logs. Perhaps that will shed some light on this mystery."

"Understood. Keep me updated. Good luck." The screen turned black as James closed the communication.

Part 2

The Mol'Latas arrived at the Tal Shiar base. It was built on a small asteroid in the rings of a gas giant. Mal ordered an away team to the surface which was comprised of Sov'at, T'Pir, Lieutenant Kaqok, a Klingon security officer in Starfleet, and Subcommander Vatai, a Romulan science officer in the Republic.

The base was dimly lit. A few consoles that they used on their previous visit were still turned on. Sov'at had led the away team last time as well and remembered how the silence made this base feel haunted. "T'Pir get to work. Mal said you have your orders on what to look for. Vatai stay here and keep an eye out. Kaqok and I will take a look around while we're here. Maybe we missed something last time." Sov'at and Kaqok disappeared down a corridor.

T'Pir walked over to a nearby console and began searching the databanks for the communication logs, including deleted ones. Vatai was pacing back and forth not knowing what to do. "Is there anything I can help you with," she asked.

T'Pir continued to work as she responded. "No, thank you. I can manage."

"What are we looking for?"

"I am under orders not to disclose that information."

"So while Starfleet has you running around on a secret mission, the Republic has to play security guard."

T'Pir stopped typing and turned around to face her, "if you disagree with your orders perhaps you should discuss them with your superiors."

"If I didn't know any better I'd think you just expressed an emotion. Annoyed Lieutenant Commander?"

"I am simply trying to complete our assignment and would prefer quiet." She turned back around and continued working. From the corridor where Sov'at and Kaqok had went, sounds of phaser fire could be heard. Both officers turned their attention to it and drew their weapons.

T'Pir tapped her combadge, "T'Pir to Sov'at what is your status?" No response.

Vatai tried to contact Kaqok but she was also met with silence. She tilted her head so her ear was directed towards the corridor. "I hear footsteps. Someone is running this way."

Each of them took a position on either side of the door with weapons at the ready. The footsteps were getting louder as they neared. Soon they were able to discern that there were multiple lifeforms approaching, more than just Sov'at and Kaqok.

When the footsteps stopped T'Pir peaked around the wall only to be met by a plasma blast that shot passed her head. She quickly turned back around just before the doorway was riddled with plasma energy. She looked at Vatai, "Tal Shiar. There are too many."

"Vatai to Sov'at or Kaqok. Come in!" Still no response. "Vatai to the Mol'Latas, we are taking fire. Lock on to the away team and beam us up. The Commander and Kaqok may be injured, they are not responding."

The transporter chief acknowledged their request and beamed the away team straight to sickbay. When they materialized they saw Kaqok unconscious on the floor and a communicator near him. As the medical team rushed over to his aid, Vatai bent down and picked up the communicator.

She examined it for a moment and then looked at T’Pir, “it belongs to Sov’at.”

T’Pir tapped her combadge, “T’Pir to Mal.”

Back on the bridge, Mal had been waiting to hear from his away team. What could have gone wrong? “Go ahead T’Pir.”

“Sov’at did not return with us. We only found his communicator when we beamed back.”

“Scan the surface for his life signs.”

The security officer, who had taken over for Kaqok while he was on the surface, turned in his chair to face Mal. “Sir, a Tal Shiar vessel is decloaking aft.”

“Raise shields. Put them on screen.”

“Too late they are — ,” the officer was cut off as the Tal Shiar ship opened fire. The Mol’Latas rocked from the impact sending personnel flying into walls and out of their chairs.

“Evasive maneuvers! Return fire!”

Some of the crew climbed back to their consoles while others tended to the wounded. The Mol’Latas took an evasive route trying to avoid getting hit. Both ships danced in space and exchanged plasma fire.

“The shields are down,” the tactical officer reported.

“Get them back up! Mal to med bay, we have wounded on the bridge.”

“We cannot get a clear shot with our forward cannons, they are trailing us too close,” the security officer said.

The ship continued to rock from the assault that came from the Tal Shiar ship. Then there was silence. Mal looked around the bridge and saw injured crew helping and checking on each other. “Status?”

The tactical officer, who was thrown out of his chair from the last attack, climbed back up. “Admiral, they are gone!”

“That doesn’t make sense. They could have destroyed us. Scan the system, and ascertain the status of that ship.” The Mol’Latas rocked again, not as violently as before but still strong enough to knock the crew off balance. “I thought you said they were gone!”

“They are.” The security officer turned to look at Mal, “that was the station. They must have set it to self destruct.”

“Damn! What’s the status of our ship?”

“Reports coming in now. The singularity core is disabled. Minor injuries throughout the ship, except in engineering. They have critical injuries, medical teams are on the way. No deaths.”

“Find the Tal Shiar ship. Mal to Engineering.”

“Jetk here.”

“When can we have our singularity core back online?”

“We’re in pretty bad shape. We have a lot of injured here. Medical teams are on the way, but until they can patch us up, my team is in no condition to fix anything. If I had to estimate, 12 hours.”

“You have two.” The turbolift opened allowing T’Pir and Vatai to enter the bridge. Both approached Mal who turned his attention to T’Pir. “Did you find anything on the station?”

Vatai spoke first, “nothing we barely had time before we were attacked.”

“I was able to recover some data,” T’Pir said. Vatai looked at her in surprise. “I assume you want to go over this data privately.” She handed Mal a tricorder.

Mal looked at Vatai then T’Pir, “yes thank you. I’ll be in my ready room.” He took a few steps towards the ready room then turned to face the bridge crew, “notify me when our status changes.”

Mal walked into his room and used the console on his desk to download the communication logs that T’Pir stored on the tricorder. Over the next half hour shock overcame him as he reviewed the logs. Communications from Sov’at were sent to this Tal Shiar base over the course of a few months. As he was deep in thought the door chime rang. “Come in.” Vatai entered the room and just stood there in silence. “Something I can help you with Subcommander?”

“Sir,” she paused for a moment. “I gave this a lot of thought and ran the events over and over in my head.” She stopped talking again.

“Go on.”

“Sir, there is no way T’Pir had the time to gain access to the console and download data to that tricorder. I don’t know what she gave you but I’m certain it’s not from the station.”

“We did visit the station once before, perhaps the console had already been unlocked.”

“If it was anything of value we would have retrieved it last time. My guess is that we needed either something of insignificant value that, at the time, we ignored, or something with high security. Either way, it would have taken additional time to access.”

“Are you saying that T’Pir has falsified the data?”

“Not at all! I have no evidence of anything. T’Pir and I have worked together since we arrived on this ship. I have friends in engineering who think highly of her. I would never accuse her of such an act. I just don’t understand where that data could have come from so quickly. Maybe it was planted.”

“Thank you Subcommander. I’ll take it under advisement. You are dismissed.” Vatai exited the ready room. Mal leaned back in his chair and stared at the door. *What is going on here?* He thought.

A while later Mal walked on to the bridge. “Have we located the Tal Shiar ship?”

“We think so sir,” Jetk said. He had come to the bridge to coordinate the search as well as repairs. “We need to confirm our readings.”

“What’s our singularity core status?”

“We’re patching it up now. Just another hour or two before we’ll be back at warp.”

“Good. As soon as we can, let’s find that ship. Do we have a report on Kaqok’s condition?”

“He is unconscious. Whatever knocked him out must have been strong enough to take down a Klingon. The doctor said there is not much we can do right now. His redundant organs need time to take over and heal his body.”

Part 3

Once the singularity core was back online they were chasing the Tal Shiar ship. Mal had order their cloak to be enabled in the hopes of taking the Tal Shiar by surprise. It took some time but they finally found and caught up with the ship.

“Markings are confirmed, this is the ship that attacked us,” the tactical officer said.

Mal stood up from the Captain's chair and stared at it on the viewscreen. "Mal to Commander Halloway. Gather a few of your best MACOs in transporter room 3, fully equipped, I will meet you there."

"Acknowledged."

Mal addressed the bridge crew. "When I signal you from the transporter room decloak then disable them. We're mounting a rescue mission. Sov'at is coming home."

He walked into the turbolift and was followed by T'Pir. "Sir may I ask why we are attempting to rescue a traitor?"

"What makes you say he is a traitor?"

"Simple logic. The evidence from the station say communications were sent by him. Further, the Tal Shiar had the chance to capture both Sov'at and Kaqok, but they only took Sov'at. The only witness to that event is in a comma. That is no coincidence. Clearly Sov'at did not want Kaqok to tell us he left willingly. As you see Admiral, my logic is —."

Mal cut her off, "logic can betray you if the facts are falsified. I'll trust my instincts over your logic any day." The turbolift doors opened and as he walked out he said with a laugh, "maybe Vulcans should try it sometime." The doors closed leaving T'Pir alone in the turbolift.

Mal joined the team of four MACO's in the transporter room and found them adjusting their equipment. Aside from Commander Halloway there was Lieutenant Tohn, a Bajoran male, who was their strategic specialist, Lieutenant Commander Rina, a Human female, who was their tech specialist, and Mitch, a Lieutenant Human male, who was their medic.

Commander Halloway looked at Mal as he entered, "looking good Admiral." Mal had stopped at the equipment locker before going to the transporter room. He was wearing full Omega armor and holding the helmet under his arm. It was a variant of the MACO armor that was originally designed to combat the Borg. "Shall we," Halloway asked.

Giving him a smirk Mal said, "we shall. Listen up team. We get in, we find Sov'at, we get out. Based on old schematics that the Romulan Republic's intelligence provided, we should be beaming into a cargo hold near their brig. With any luck he'll be in the brig. He may not come willingly, so be prepared. Helmets on. Weapons to stun. Let's roll out."

In unison they put on their helmets and took their positions on the transporter pad with their rifles held at an angle. "Mal to the bridge, begin attack."

The Mol'Latas decloaked and opened fire on the Tal Shiar ship in an attack that mimicked the one they recieved earlier. The battle ended as soon as it began. Sensors indicated that the Tal Shiar ship had been disabled. "Bridge to transporter room, they are disabled."

“Understood.” Mal gave the signal to energize the transporter then said, “Halloway, do you know what they call this?”

In a shimmer of light they vaporized. Then inside the cargo hold of the Tal Shiar ship a familiar hum could be heard. A blue light appeared and the away team materialized. Mal lifted up his rifle and stunned two Tal Shiar crew members who were repairing a conduit but had just looked up in surprise. “They call it cowboy diplomacy.” They all laughed.

The away team walked to the door and took up positions on either side. Using the control panel, Rina opened it. Once they confirmed the hall was clear they quickly headed down it with Mal in the lead, Tohn and Rina behind him, Mitch behind them, and Halloway bringing up the rear.

About a meter down the hall they approached an intersection which three Romulan security officers turned from. Mal spotted them first and was able to stun one of them. As he went down, the other two took cover behind the walls of the intersection and began firing. The away team didn't have any place to take cover, and limited room to move, but they had been trained for such combat scenarios.

Tohn threw a smoke grenade down the hall to limit the Romulans' view. Using the HUD in their helmets, the MACOs were able to see their targets even through the smoke. Red and green energy streams shot back and forth along the hall until both Romulans went down. They slowly approached the unconscious bodies just as a fourth Romulan turned the corner and wildly opened fire. Mitch was hit just before the Romulan was stunned.

Halloway rushed over to his officer's side. “I'm ok sir,” Mitch said. “This armor is strong, and I'm stronger.”

“Heh, I don't doubt that soldier. Can you move?”

“Not quickly, he got my leg. I'll only slow you down. Help me to stand against the wall then leave me here.”

Halloway helped Mitch up. When he was steady Halloway pointed to Tohn, “you stay with him. We'll be back soon.” He acknowledged the orders, then the rest of the away team continued to the brig.

They encountered some more resistance along the way but were able to overcome it. When they found the brig they used chroniton mines to blast the door open and then rushed the room expecting a fight. To their surprise the brig was empty, except for Sov'at who was standing in the center wearing a Tal Shiar uniform. “Looking for me?”

Mal removed his helmet, “I don't believe it.”

“Do you honestly think the Romulan Republic has a chance at surviving? It is only a matter of time until they fall and the Romulan people are united once again under the rule of the Tal Shiar!”

Mal raised his rifle, “under the authority of the Federation and Romulan Republic, you are under arrest.”

“Oh come now. Do you think you can arrest me? Take me alive? I won’t allow it.”

A monotone male voice came over the ship’s comm, “self destruct in two minutes.”

“Damn,” Mal said. He fired his rifle at Sov’at to stun him but what happened next was unexpected. Both Sov’at and the wall behind him faded away, revealing a smoking holomitter and a cell where the real Sov’at was laying unconscious. Mal looked at Rina, “take down the forcefield around the cell. I’m going to try downloading their most recent communication logs. Holloway, guard the door.”

Mal and Rina were accessing consoles in a race against the clock. Thanks to her expertise Rina was able to take down the force field rather quickly. Mal ordered Holloway to carry Sov’at and Rina to guard the door. Then Mal stopped typing. He took a step back from the console but continued to stare at it. “Captain,” Rina said, “we have company.”

At the same time the self destruct countdown stopped and a voice came over the comm. “Attention intruders, this is Captain M’Bek. Surrender and you will not be harmed.”

Mal tapped his combadge, “Mal to Mol’Latas beam us out now! We left Mitch and Tohn a few meters back.”

“Acknowledged.”

“One more thing. Arrest T’Pir.”

Just before the Tal Shiar security team arrived the transporter activated and beamed them out. Their view of the Tal Shiar ship was replaced with that of the transporter room on the Mol’Latas. Mal looked at the transporter officer, “good work Chief.”

“Sir, I was unable to beam out Mitch and Tohn.”

“Why not?”

“Jetk to Mal.” Jetk was on the bridge of the Mol’Lats in temporary command while Mal was away.

“Go ahead.”

“We have a problem. T’Pir must have heard your order to arrest her. She killed a few officers and stole a shuttle.”

“Lay in a pursuit course. Go to warp when ready.”

Halloway stood in front of Mal, “what about our other officers? They are still on that ship.”

“Of course. You’re right. Bridge delay that order. Put a tractor beam on the Tal Shiar ship. I have a plan. Hallway get Sov’at to sick bay then meet me on the bridge.”

The tractor beam came to life and held the Tal Shiar ship in place. A few minutes later Mal met with his staff on the bridge and explained his plan. Within the next hour it was already in motion. In little to no time Rina and Mitch were safely back aboard the Mol’Latas with minor injuries and now they were making their way to Drozana station.

“Did our shuttle team confirm her location?” Mal, now back in his Starfleet uniform, was standing next to his helm officer. They had launched a shuttle to track T’Pir while they rescued Rina and Mitch.

“Yes sir. T’Pir beamed to Drozana station and there is no indication she left.”

“Good. Notify me when we arrive.” Mal left the bridge and visited sickbay. Mitch was sitting on one of the tables being tended to by a nurse. “How’s the leg Mitch?”

“It’s good. Usually I’m the one doing the patch work on injuries, not the other way around. Still, it will be nice to rest for a few days.”

Mal nodded, “you did good.” He patted Mitch on the shoulder and then walked over to the table where Kaqok was still lying unconscious. A nurse was examining his vitals. He looked at her waiting for her to give him Kaqok’s status.

When she was done examining she looked at Mal, “he’s stable. It seems like his redundant organs are doing their job, although I can’t say for certain when he’ll be out of it.”

“Thank you.” He turned and walked over to Sov’at’s table where the doctor was examining him. “How is he?”

“Everything checks out. He’s in perfect health, except he’s in a medically induced coma.”

“Can you bring him out of it?”

“I’d rather not. I don’t know what was used to put him in this coma and don’t want to risk pulling him out.”

“How long will it last?”

“Hard to say. A few hours. A few weeks. We’ll monitor him. At the first sign that it’s safe to bring him out we will.

“Thank you doctor.”

It took a few hours but they reached Drozana station and their shuttle team docked. They used the tractor beam to pull T’Pir’s empty shuttle into the shuttle bay as well. A scan of the station didn’t reveal her location and sensors hadn’t detected any ships leaving the area. She had to be here.

At the protest of the senior staff, Mal decided to go to the station alone in civilian cloths to find her. After beaming to Drozana station he made his way to the bar and ordered a glass of Saurian brandy. He turned his back to the bar and leaned on it, sipping his drink while scoping the area.

There was no sign of T’Pir anywhere. An Orion woman approached him and pressed up against him. “Hey you,” she said.

Mal smiled and put his arm around her, “hey yourself.”

“You look like a man who’s in need of a good time.”

“I probably am, but not tonight. I’m looking for someone.”

“For me?”

He laughed, “unfortunately no.”

“Another woman?” She tilted her head down and looked up at him pouting.

“A Vulcan female. Have you seen any around?”

“Vulcan? They don’t come here often. This really isn’t a place they enjoy. Not that Vulcans know how to have fun.” She ran her finger up and down his chest.

Mal gently grabbed her hand. “I’m sorry but I really must find her. She arrived not long ago.”

“I don’t know of any Vulcan, but a Romulan female came on a shuttle a little while ago. She’s in the cargo bay on level five. I think she’s trying to find passage out of here.”

“Thank you. You’ve been very helpful.”

He slowly slid away from her and walked towards the turbolift. He took a moment to look back at her and saw she was staring at him. He smiled, nodded, and continued walking.

The turbolift took him to level five which was dimly lit. He pulled out and activated his portable light drone which hovered over his shoulder and lit the area in front of him. Then he pulled out his phaser and cautiously walked down the hall to the cargo bay.

The doors were already open and he slowly walked in, staying vigilant and looking for T'Pir. "Stop right there." A familiar female voice came from behind him. He turned around with his phaser pointed right at her. It was the Orion from the bar.

"So this was just a setup to do what? Steal from me? I don't have any latinum, or anything of value."

"Not exactly." She pressed a jewel that was strapped to her right arm. The image of the Orion woman faded away revealing T'Pir in her place. "Holoemitters are an amazing invention, aren't they?"

"Indeed they are. Why the ruse?"

"You got here sooner than expected. I should have been off this station already but now I need a hostage."

"You know the Mol'Latas will stop you."

"They won't even know where to find me. Boys!" Three Orion mercenaries came out of hiding from behind crates. All of them trained their weapons on Mal. "While they escape with you and project a fake Vulcan life sign on their ship, I'll be long gone on a different transport."

"You aren't Vulcan."

"Obviously. Once you asked me to search for transmissions I assumed it was only a matter of time until my cover was blown. I tried to derail you but you were so insistent. It must be a Human failing. Once we decided to rescue that pathetic Sov'at I knew I had to escape, and so I shall." She pulled out a communicator.

Knowing he couldn't let her go Mal fired at her and destroyed the communicator. In the same instant he jumped behind some crates avoiding the energy blasts from the Orion's weapons. He managed to stun one of them, but the rest, including T'Pir took cover and fired back. They blocked the only door in the room.

Mal tried his communicator but he couldn't get through. He figured T'Pir had a dampening field setup that only allowed certain signals through. They kept firing at his location so he couldn't get a shot off, aside from lifting his hand over the crate and blindly shooting.

The three of them stood up and approached his location. "Come on Admiral, there's no place to go. You can't beam out and we're blocking the door. Just give up."

Mal thought it over and decided that if he was going down he would at least delay her and give his crew the chance to capture her. He set his phaser to heavy stun. Lifted his hands up while still holding the phaser, stood, and walked towards them in surrender.

He was about to make his move to stun her when he saw two figures run into the cargo bay. They both fired at the Orions distracting T'Pir long enough for Mal to get his shot off. He looked at the figures as they walked towards him into the light.

"Admiral, what did I tell you about going on away missions alone?" So'vat said as him and Halloway walked towards Mal.

Halloway smiled, "he calls it cowboy diplomacy."

"It's good to see you both," Mal said.

Back in the ready room of the Mol'Latas Sov'at and Mal sat opposite each other at Mal's desk. "I never thanked you for getting me off that ship," Sov'at said.

"Don't thank me. I didn't know if I was rescuing a friend or capturing a traitor. When I saw that hologram I had thought you were the spy."

"I would have too if I were in your place. I can't believe T'Pir infiltrated Starfleet as a Vulcan and got posted here."

"Starfleet is launching an investigation into that. We need to make sure it doesn't happen again. There's something I need to tell you. Before we started this mission Admiral Hastler contacted me. Aside from notifying me of the spy he also told me that the Republic is ordering all non-republic personnel off their ships. They want to stand on their own, a fact that I and Starfleet can appreciate. I want you to know that I have recommended you for command of the Mol'Latas. I cannot make any guarantees but I'm sure you'll get the promotion."

"Thank you Admiral. It will be a different ship without you here."

"But she'll be in good hands."

One of the bridge officers spoke over the comm, "Admiral, you have a communication from New Romulus. It's Admiral Hastler."

"Patch him through."

"I'll give you some privacy." Sov'at stood up and walked out.

When the doors closed Mal pressed a button in his console and James appeared on the screen. "How are you James?"

"I'm doing well. I read your report. You did good."

"Have we learned anything from T'Pir?"

"Nothing. You know these Tal Shiar, they aren't direct. It's all about misdirection with them and not providing any information."

"We've gone over what we can here. The portable transmitter found in her room contained a record of all the information she sent to the Tal Shiar. We also found that the false data on the tricorder had been loaded in there before we investigated the base. Vatai believes that T'Pir set a silent self-destruct on the station instead of looking for any logs."

"That sounds reasonable. She fooled all of us for a long time. Who knows what else she was able to tell the Tal Shiar that we don't know about."

"Indeed. At least she's in custody now. After this I'm looking forward to some R&R on Risa before getting my new assignment."

"Attilio already approved it."

"Damn Vulcan logic. Always one step ahead." They both laughed.

End.