

# MOON TREK – THE WRATH OF KUNO



STORY AND CONCEPT BY ERIN WINKING

Characters based on the characters of Ranma ½, Sailor Moon, and multiple original characters. Starfleet, the Federation, and various other parts based on Gene Roddenberry's Star Trek.

READER ADVISORY: This story contains adult language, situations, and violence. Recommended for readers 16 years and older.

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# PRELUDE

*Captain's log. Stardate 59998.1. We've just received our new starship. She's beautiful too. Not like that uncute tomboy of a fiancée of mine. Anyway, we've been blessed with the new Gosnell class ship. Her name? The U.S.S. Sisko. She was named after the Captain that led the Federation to victory in the Dominion Wars.*

*We've also been dispatched on our first mission. As soon as the rest of my crew boards, we will be off to the Finden system, where the Federation colonies have reported a fleet of fighter jet-type ships flying down and literally annoying the hell out of them. Reports say that the ships hover about 10 meters in the air, and just repeat the word 'NEWS' over and over again.*

Captain Ranma Saotome looks up from the computer he was recording the log entry in. Ranma leans back in his chair, his very comfortable chair. The chair he's worked his ass off for. Boy, would Akane be pissed. She's working her way up to Captain as well. But she has a long way to go. She needs to work on controlling her temper.

Ranma remembers a fun incident that happened once with Akane. Well, it was fun for him because he wasn't involved. It wasn't fun for the eleven crewmen with severe phaser burns. It turns out that calling Akane's cooking 'Klingon crap' when she was close to the phaser rifle locker was not a smart idea.

Regardless, he was glad he was in a meeting at the time. This had happened when he and Akane were stationed aboard the U.S.S. Minneapolis. He was the XO, and she was chief of security. That thought still made Ranma shudder.

"Captain," A voice behind Ranma said. The voice was from his tactical officer, and Chief of Security, Mousse.

"Yes, Lieutenant?" Ranma answered.

"We just received a message from the space dock. They say the last of the crew has boarded."

"Thank you, Mousse." Ranma grinned. He was looking forward to his XO getting to the bridge. Rumor had it she was a hottie. The strange thing about this assignment was that he wasn't able to pick his officers. An unnamed Admiral had done it. The other strange thing was that he wasn't given a list of who his officers were.

The turbolift doors opened. The hissing of the doors always startled Ranma. With all the technology of the 24th century, you would think they could make silent hydraulics.

Before Ranma could stand to see who it was, a voice greeted him. A familiar voice. A voice that made Ranma want to run for the nearest airlock.

"NIHAO!"

Ranma turned slowly but was taken down by an over-hyper Amazon girl. Shampoo had Ranma on the floor of the bridge, and she was in no hurry to let him up.

"Sh-Shampoo?" Ranma stuttered. "What - I mean, - What are you doing here?"

Shampoo giggled. "Silly Ranma! Shampoo new XO!"

Oh, Lord. Ranma tried to manage a smile, and get up, but it was somewhat hopeless.

WHOOSH! The turbolift doors again. Another voice bellowed his name. He wasn't sure whether he was more afraid of Shampoo or this one. His fiancée.

"RANMA!!" Akane screamed. "Maybe I came at the wrong time. I thought maybe we were going to go and, oh I don't know, WORK?"

"Akane!? This isn't what it looks like!" Ranma regretted saying that. He has learned in his years that using that line was like throwing Pop Rocks into a soda. Did a hell of a lot more harm than good.

Ranma finally managed to get out from underneath Shampoo. He sat her down in her chair and ran after Akane, who had stormed off into his ready room.

"Akane. Uh - Well, hi?"

"Ranma."

"Akane I - Well..."

"Ranma, forget it."

"Um, Ok. Uh, what are you doing here?"

Akane grew a look on her face. It was half 'what don't you want me here?' and 'don't you know?'

"I've been assigned as the Chief Medical Officer." She said, sitting down on the couch.

Ranma started to laugh until he realized that she was serious.

"CMO? But, you don't have any medical experience." Ranma slowly sat next to her.

"Don't you think I know that?" Akane shouted back, somewhat defensively. "Your stupid dad sent me here, and since this is the only position available, well, this is where I am."

Ranma nearly fell over where he heard those two words. "My Dad?"

Akane nodded. "People at Starfleet Command call him Admiral Panda."

Ranma did fall over this time.

"MY DAD IS AN ADMIRAL?!?"

"What? Didn't you know?"

"Obviously not!" Ranma began to pace his ready room. His father was an admiral. And he was responsible for this mess. Not that he was too upset having Akane aboard, but it was the other things. A man, who is nearly blind working his weapons, and her, Shampoo. His XO. For some reason, God wasn't happy with him this week.

"Ranma?"

"Yeah?"

"If you want me to leave -"

"Don't be stupid, stupid. I need a CMO. And you're it."

Akane stood up and walked over to Ranma. She then proceeded to flatten him with a semi-large mallet.

"Fine. Just don't call me stupid." Akane then stormed out of the room. Ranma sighed and sat down on his couch.

Ranma was on his third cup of coffee. He had started to read about the Finden system. Seems they have two Class M planets. It was odd that the ships were only bothering one of them. Maybe the other one had a secret alliance with whoever these people are.

Ranma's communicator chirped.

"Wo Ai Ni Ranma! Ship ready to go. Just no helmsman!" Shampoo cheerfully reported.

Odd. Ranma stood up and walked out of his ready room, coffee in hand. He walked onto the bridge. He now saw his Ops officer. She stood to greet him.

"Good morning, Captain!" The nearly drop dead beautiful blonde said. "Lt. Commander Mina Aino." The two shook hands.

"Welcome aboard, Commander." Ranma grinned, trying to maintain eye contact. Maybe this would be a good time to find out who, and where his helmsman is.

"Number One - " Ranma started, but was interrupted by 'Number One'.

"HI-YA! Shampoo number one to Ranma!" Shampoo pounced onto Ranma. Ranma was able to maintain his balance and stay upright this time though. Ranma chose to ignore the growling coming from the tactical station.

"Shampoo. That's what I call my first officer. Now you need to stop this, or I will assign you to photon torpedo tube cleaning!"

Shampoo almost seemed hurt, but she still managed to hold on to her smile. "Aye Captain. What was you were speaking?"

"Do you know who our helmsman is or where he is?"

"Shampoo no know."

"Does anyone know?"

Meanwhile somewhere in the drive section of the craft –

"WHERE ON EARTH AM I NOW?"

The computer chirped back. "You are not on Earth. You are on the USS Sisko, which is in orbit above the Earth at 22,102 kilometers."

The bandanna-clad man just groaned. "Ok smartass. Can you show me how to get to the bridge?"

Along the wall of the corridor, several flashing arrows began to point the way. The computer spoke up; to make sure this lost boy would know what to do.

"Follow the arrows. Then take the turbolift to the bridge."

"Uh, thank you."

The man straggled off in the direction of the arrows.

A COOL, SEMI PLAGIARIZED STAR TREK TYPE THEME SHOULD BE INSERTED HERE

Space. Final frontier. Shampoo XO of starship Sisko. Starship mission: to go where no one go before, to kill Akane Tendo, and to have Ranma all to Shampoo - HEY THAT'S NOT HOW IT GOES! - WO AI NI!!!

# CHAPTER 1 - A CREW EVEN CUSTER WOULD HAVE BEEN PROUD OF

The doors to the turbolift slide open. Ranma stands up and looks over to the doors. Well, I'll be a son of a - Ryouga Hibiki! Ranma was happy to see his old friend, well; he considered them friends, even though Ryouga considered them mortal enemies.

Ryouga walked onto the bridge and looked at Ranma.

"Ranma Saotome. So you're the Captain here?" Ryouga asked.

Ranma nods. Shampoo slides close to Ranma. "Shampoo Ranma's number one."

Ranma growls. Not quite as loud as Ryouga though. Oh great. Thought Ranma. Here comes the 'how dare you treat Akane that way you <insert dirty name of the week here>'

Ranma was surprised when Ryouga just shook his head.

"Ensign Ryouga Hibiki, Helm Officer." Ryouga turned around and took his seat at the helm.

Ranma was frightened. Space was big. Getting lost in space could be very unhealthy. Just ask that Will Robinson fellow. Ranma almost smiled as he envisioned Mousee-Duck flapping his wings screaming Danger Ranma Saotome! Danger!

As Ranma sat down he became more and more relieved that the computer did a majority of the steering, and the operations officer could override just about anything else. Maybe all would be well.

"Well. What say we ditch this popsicle stand and get to the Finden system?"

Ranma was greeted with a "Sure" from Mousse, a more enthusiastic "Let's Rock" from Commander Aino, Ryouga just groaned, and Shampoo, well, she was standing. Ranma assumed she wanted to guide the ship out of the space dock. Ranma grinned at her.

"Commander Shampoo. Would you do the honors of guiding us out of here?"

Shampoo brightly grinned. "Ok. Shampoo the boss now, Ryouga. Forward thrusters, 300 KPH. Go."

The engines began to hum. Ranma loved that sound. It made him feel at peace. It made him have a reason to live. It made him happy.

THUMP! KLANG! CRASH!

Thump? Klang? CRASH?! That's not good. Of course, when is Thump, Klang, Crash ever good? Ranma took a good look at the viewscreen. They were still in the space dock. He looked at Shampoo. Shampoo was not happy.

"STUPID BOY! SHAMPOO SAY FORWARD! FORWARD!"

"SORRY!!" Ryouga yelled back.

"Captain?"

"Yes, Mousse?" Ranma responded.

"The Captain of the USS Parkway Point McDonald's wants us to exchange insurance information with him."

Ranma scowled. He had just gotten the parking ticket from when he parked in the handicap space at seven-11-thousand a few months ago.

"Send the information. And Ryouga, please be more careful. Forward is the arrow pointing, well, forward."

Ryouga mumbled what kind of sounded like a "Yes I know" under his breath. The ship finally started to move forward. Ranma sat back down.

Shampoo steps up closer behind Ryouga to make sure if he hit the wrong button again, she could fix it before the damaged anything else. "Ok. Mousse. Get permission to depart." The amazon ordered.

Mousse stood up perfectly straight, gliding his fingers across his panel. "YES! Shampoo my love!"

"SHAMPOO NO LOVE YOU MOUSSE! Shampoo Commander. Mousse Lt. Mousse not call Shampoo, Shampoo."

That should have hurt mousse, but the years and years of rejection have made that man a brick wall. He just goes with the flow.

"Yes, Commander lover!"

Ranma quickly hopped up and snatched the phaser that Shampoo was drawing. He then sat back down.

Mousse grinned. "Permission granted! Space doors opening!"

Shampoo turned to the viewscreen. "Ryouga. Increase speed to 500 KPH. Once clear of big doors, set course 1-2-3 mark 2-0-9. Warp six"

"Yes ma'am." Ryouga complied. Ranma looked somewhat worried still. There was not that much extra room for the ship to get through the doors safely. But, all he has to do is keep her even and keep her going straight and - We're high. Ranma stood right up. Shampoo screamed.

"TOO HIGH! GO DOWN GO DOWN!" Shampoo screamed.

The ship was not going to clear the top of the doors. As a matter of fact, the ship was going to completely miss the doors by about 100 meters too high!

"RYOUGA! Z MINUS 350 METERS! NOW!!!" Ranma screamed.

Ryouga was frantically hitting buttons. Random button-pushing on a trillion-dollar starship is another thing that should be on the 'bad idea' list.

The ship started to do barrel rolls. Shampoo decided to scream again and hit the deck.

"SHIT! FULL STOP! HIT THE BREAKS!" Ranma screamed.

Ryoga hit a button. He then said "Oops."

Ranma's jaw hit the deck now. "Oops?"

The Sisko had turned completely upward and was flying at 800 KPH towards the roof of the space dock.

Ranma ran over to Mina's console. "AINO!! TAKE HELM! STOP US!!"

Mina started running her hands over her panel. Ryoga's went blank, and the helm configuration popped up on hers. She began to hit buttons, trying to stop the ship.

Mousse picked this time to freak out. "10 SECONDS TO COLLISION WITH THE ROOF OF THE SPACE DOCK!" Mousse began to run in circles, losing his glasses in the process.

"MOUSSE! SHIELDS UP!" Ranma yelled, the tension in his voice. He was rarely scared, but at this moment, he was scared shitless.

Mousse ran to his panel and hit a few buttons. A familiar sound was heard, but it was not the sound of the shields.

Outside from the front of the ship, a red glowing sphere flew towards the roof. Ranma knew what it was. He turned to Mousse.

"Did you just -"

"Fire a torpedo? Yes."

"Aw swell."

"Captain," Mina whimpered. "I shut down the engines, but we have too much forward motion. Even with reverse thrusters at full, we're going to collide!"

It was at this time the torpedo hit the roof of the space dock, blowing a hole in it. The ship managed to float right through this new exit, and safely into open space.

Ranma could only just stare at the screen. All the stars seemed to look like his ass being kicked by Rear-Admiral Happosai. The COM panel behind him beeped. Mousse, who had found his glasses, answered it.

"Captain, Rear-Admiral Happosai for you. He doesn't sound happy." Mousse sniveled.

Suddenly Happosai's face appeared on the viewer.

"DOESN'T SOUND HAPPY IS AN UNDERSTATEMENT!" The short man bellowed. "DON'T YOU MORONS KNOW HOW TO USE THE DOOR?"

Ranma looked up at the admiral. "Sorry?"

This is another term Ranma had learned usually does more bad than good. This time, it seemed to make Happosai's face change from the beet red it was, to a mixture of beet red and really pissed off blue.

"SORRY? YOU BETTER BE! THE NEW ROOF IS COMING OUT OF ALL YOUR PAYCHECKS! NOW GET TO FINDEN NOW!" The screen returned to stars. Ranma walked over to Shampoo and helped her up. Shampoo was still in shock, so she didn't even think of glomping onto Ranma.

"Well, Number One. You heard him. Set a course to the Finden system. Warp eight this time. And also, call a staff meeting of all the senior staff in the conference room in ten minutes."

Shampoo only had the ability to nod at Ranma, as he walked into his ready room to cry. There goes the Lexus!

Akane had just made herself comfortable in her office chair again. The jostling of the ship had knocked her on her ass several times. She finally decided she would just stay on the floor till everything was better. It finally stopped. She sat back in her chair propped her feet up and then the chirp. She hated the chirp.

Of course, they weren't polite enough to use the comm badges to contact her. They used the ships comm. system. Which of course was on the other side of sickbay.

"The chairs here may be comfortable, but the designers need to have a mental evaluation," Akane grumbled out loud to herself. A couple of medical techs threw a look her way, but she dismissed it. Just because she talked to herself doesn't mean she was crazy.

"Does it?" She asked no one.

It pissed her off to no end when she found out it was Shampoo on the other end of the communication. Then she found out she would have to trek all the way up to the bridge for a conference.

"No, they can't put the conference room in a more central location, can they?!" She growled. She noticed the techs checking her out again.

"AS YOU WERE!" She screamed. The techs ran to a different part of sickbay.

Akane just starts to walk out of sickbay when her door slides open. A young blonde girl with really odd hair walks, no hobbles in. She's bawling up a storm. Akane rushes right over to her and helps her up onto an exam table.

"Are you OK?" Akane asks the girl.

"WAAAAAAAAA! I think not! I think I broke my epidermal!" The poor slob of a girl cries. Akane has no idea what the girl is talking about, but it works out okay because the girl doesn't have any clue either.

Akane grabs her tricorder and scans the girl. It appears she sprained her ankle. She sure is making a big deal out of it.

It's about this time Akane notices the pips on her collar.

"Lt. Commander?!" Akane gasps out loud. What kind of Lt. Commander is this kind of a cry baby?

"Yes?" The girl responded between sobs.

"What's your name?" Akane walked over to a cabinet, hoping to find the sprain-fixer-thingamajig.

"Serena. Serena Tsukino."

"Well, Commander, you have a sprained ankle. No biggie, easy to fix. I think." Akane walked back over. She found some device that looked like it should work, so she decided to try it. She ran the device over Serena's bad ankle. She then checked it with the tricorder. It worked. The ankle was good as new.

"Serena. Tell me how you did this."

"Well Doc, I was in engineering and when the ship shifted real hard earlier, I fell down and, well, you know the rest."

Akane was confused now.

"What were you doing in engineering? That place is very dangerous."

Serena giggles. "That's what I keep telling them, but they said since I am Chief Engineer, I need to spend a majority of my workday down there."

Akane collapses. "YOU!? You're the Chief Engineer?"

"Yup. Funny isn't it?"

Sure. In sadistic whips and chains sort of way.

"Yeah." Akane tried to chuckle. "I guess you need to go to that staff meeting too then, huh?"

"Yeah." Serena grins. "Do you want to walk up there together?"

"Yeah!" Akane nods.

Serena goes to hop off the exam table but ends up on her face.

"WAAAAAAAAA!!!"

Farther down in the saucer section of the ship was the ship's councilor's office. The young lady who got that job was busy unpacking, and it took Shampoo a couple of tries to get her attention.

This kid was pissed. Seems to be a recurring theme with this crew. She had finally gotten the picture of her Grandpa to hang straight when BOOM! The whole damn ship shook, not only knocking it crooked but right off the wall. She decided that she wasn't going to get to that meeting until she got the picture set up again.

After a few seconds of fidgeting with it, she got it going. She smiled. The first time she has smiled since she was transferred off of the moon colony. She didn't want this assignment, but she

wanted to move up the ranks. Right now she held the rank of Lt. Commander, but she wanted to be a captain. But, that's everyone in Starfleet's goal. And as anyone will tell you, you won't become a captain sitting behind a desk.

The last thing she needed to do was put her name plaque on her desk. It's a special name plaque. It was given to her by an old friend of hers, that she hasn't seen for years. The plaque had her name inscribed, and a rose painted on it as well.

Well, now that that's done, time to get to the bridge. She walked out of her office, and the door hissed shut behind her.

"Damn that hiss!" She murmured. She hated that hiss more than just about anything. Even the automatic doors at Wal-Mart in the freakin' 20th century were quiet!

As she walked down the hallway towards the turbolift, she couldn't help but notice that there were some very handsome men on this ship. Even though she had no interest in being here she did have to acknowledge that it could do wonders for her love life. There were times when she didn't worry about those kinds of things, but it was different now. After he reportedly died at the hands of Mad Cow infected Big Mac, she stopped looking for men. She thought that the whole universe had it out for her. It was bad enough that he was DESTINED to be with someone else but just as they started to have some problems he died. Why did everything bad happen to her?

It was lucky for her though her grandpa had her apply at Starfleet Academy. While she was at the academy she met lots of men. But no one warned her about San Francisco. All the men were gay. Even the Vulcan ones! But they did teach her a few things about herself, including dealing with her bisexuality.

Eventually, she arrived at a turbolift. She had the distinct problem of always talking the longest route to turbolifts. She hated meetings, so she was never in a hurry to get to them.

The girl hit the call button and frustratedly taps her foot while she waits. She also hated waiting for a turbolift. For something called 'turbo', they sure as hell didn't move very fast. Lucky for her she doesn't have to wait long. Before she knew it the doors slid open. She nearly passed out when she saw who was in it.

"Serena?"

Serena turned away from Akane and looked at the girl. Her eyes widened and teared up. She hadn't seen this old friend in years.

"RAYE!" Serena embraced Raye in a tight hug. Raye returned the hug. Even though the two of them didn't get along that well, they were still very good friends. When the group of five split up, they figured they would never meet again.

Raye and Serena walked back into the turbolift. The doors hissed shut and the lift continued on its trip to the bridge. Serena turned to Akane.

"Akane, this is Raye Hino. A very good friend of mine."

Akane and Raye shook hands. "Nice to meet you, Raye. I am the ship's CMO. What do you do?"

Raye smiled. "I'm the ship's counselor."

"Oh! So you are headed in the same direction as Serena and I!"

Raye nodded. "It would appear that way. Serena, what on Earth are you doing here? And what are you doing wearing Lt. Commander pips?"

Serena giggled. "I'm the ship's Chief Engineer."

A look of doom came over Raye. "Wow, Serena. Someone must dislike the people on this ship."

Serena started the waterworks. "I haven't seen you in years and you're still mean to me! WAAAAAAAAA!"

Raye put her hand on Serena's shoulder. "Serena, you know I am just kidding." Raye turns towards the front of the lift car. "Sort of."

The lift came to a stop. The doors hissed open. The group stepped out onto the bridge. Akane looked around. "Where's Ranma?"

Shampoo walked up to Akane. "Ranma in ready room. Shampoo in charge. What you want?"

"We're here for the meeting you called." Akane fumed.

"Go to conference room. We be in shortly." Shampoo walked down the ramp and back into the Captain's chair.

"Well, Akane. I see you two are good friends." Raye mused.

Akane just let out a half chuckle half grunt as she led the others into the conference room.

Akane, Serena, and Raye were in a conversation of their own when Ranma, Shampoo, Mousse, Mina, and Ryouga walked into the room. Raye and Serena gleefully stood up and ran to Mina when they saw her.

"Mina! Long time!" Raye said!

"I've missed you, Mina!" Serena added.

Mina smiled. "And I missed you, my friends."

Ranma just stood there grinning. "I see you are all aquatinted! This will save us some time. Let's all be seated and get this over with. For those of you who don't know me, I am Captain Ranma Saotome. I will go around the table, so, to my left is our XO, Commander Shampoo.

"Next to her is our Chief of Security, and Tactical Officer, Lt. Mousse.

"Next is our - " Ranma has to pause and try and figure out the logic behind this one. "- our Chief Helm Officer, Ensign Ryouga Hibiki."

"Nice steering out of the space dock, Ensign." Raye scorned.

"Be nice, counselor." Ranma shot at her.

"Yes sir."

Ryouga just stuck his tongue out at Raye.

"Ensign!" Ranma spat.

"What?!" Ryouga whimpered, trying his best to sound innocent.

"Next to Ryouga is our Chief Medical Officer, Akane Tendo. As long as you don't let her make your chicken soup, you'll be OK." Ranma ducks a flying tricorder.

"Over here to my right is Lt. Commander Mina Aino. She's our Operations Officer and Chief Science Officer. Next to her is Lt. Commander Raye Hino. Raye is the ship's counselor. If you have any problems, I am sure she would be more than happy to help you out."

Raye, without being seen, shoots a 'yeah thanks a lot' look at Ranma.

"And last, but certainly not least, next to Miss Hino is Lt. Commander Serena Tsukino. She is our Chief Engineer."

Ranma paused for a few seconds, allowing everyone to throw a 'nice to meet you' nod at each other. He then continued.

"I think this will be one of the best crews Starfleet has ever assembled. I also think that with a lot of hard work, we can achieve things that no other ship has ever achieved. The Sisko is the most advanced ship ever built by the Federation. We should be very careful not to scratch her up." Ranma rolled his eyes toward Ryouga. "Anymore."

Raye leans over to Mina. "Yeah. New record. Ship to have the fastest warp core breach out of space dock." Mina just gives her the 'be nice' look.

"There will be a reception for you all in ten-forward at 18:00. I look forward to seeing you all there. First, let's take care of some business. Commander Aino, what's our ETA to Finden?"

Mina punches something up on her computer. "Twelve hours, Seven minutes sir."

"Good." Ranma grinned. "Time for some work, and some play. Dismissed all. Oh, Miss Hino, if you could, when you're not with a patient, please be on the bridge? In case we run into anyone where I could use your insight."

Raye nods. "Yes, captain." She rolls her eyes. Good thing I'm booked.

"Thank you." Ranma smiles as Raye walks off.

Ranma walks over to the observation windows. He gazes out at the stars flying by. He never understood how that if they are going faster than the speed of light you could see the stars to each side and behind the ship, but he wasn't worried about things like that. It was pretty.

Akane walks up next to him. "You really think this is one of the best crews?"

Ranma turns to Akane, then back to the stars. "No. We're screwed."

Akane turns to Ranma. "What's that supposed to mean?"

"Well, one, my XO won't keep her hands - uh - " Ranma notices how Akane is looking at him.  
"hands off my computer. My CMO has no medical experience."

"Hey," Akane interjects. "I cured a sprained ankle today."

"Well, I'm proud of you. But we will have more than sprained ankles if this report is true."

"What report?" She asked.

"I got a report from Starfleet Command a little while ago. The Kuno activity in the outer region is increasing. That's why they are sending us to Finden. The Federation doesn't give a damn about the ships. They're annoying, sure, but not something to send its most armed ship too."

"Oh, I see."

"My Chief Engineer has had more on-the-job accidents than the entire explosives team, the dangerous situations team and the on-purpose accidents team had combined!"

"She was the one with the sprained ankle."

"Figures. Our counselor has been reprimanded for being mean to the patients. My weapons officer is blind and my helmsman is an idiot!"

"What about Commander Aino?"

"She's a good officer, but she's never been in combat before. She'd be perfect if all we were up to was charting nebulas."

"Oh. Seems your Dad wasn't happy with you."

"It would seem not."

Akane sighed. "Well, come on down to ten-forward. Have a few drinks. It'll make you feel better."

Ranma laughed. "That's all this ship needs, a drunk Captain. Can you imagine that? A drunk captain."

Akane starts to walk away. "18:00. I will be expecting you."

Ranma sighs an acknowledgment. The doors hiss shut behind Akane. Ranma closes his eyes and just continues to stand, facing the stars as they whisk by.

## CHAPTER 2 - DUDE LOOKS LIKE A LADY

*Captain's log. Stardate 59999.0. We are enroute to the Finden system. Now that my crew is aboard, and everything is flowing as smooth as I suspect it will flow – that damned space dock incident is going to cost me around 275 thousand dollars, maybe we can deal with these pests annoying the Findens.*

Ranma takes the final sip of his coffee and groans loudly. He continues to record in his log.

*Oh, who the hell am I kidding. Being assigned this crew makes me wonder what I could have possibly done to piss dad off so much. I have sent him several messages, but none of them have been answered. I even broke into his secure line, but he didn't want to talk. I know this is an official log, but I don't care -*

BEGINNING FLASHBACK TO JUST A HOUR OR SO AGO...

Ranma slams his fist to the desk, and leans towards his COM terminal, making sure he is getting his point across.

"WHAT DO YOU MEAN YOU CAN'T TALK NOW?" Ranma screamed. "YOU CAN'T BE BUSY! FOR GOD'S SAKE, WHEN I OPENED THE COMMUNICATION YOU WERE SITTING THERE IN YOUR UNDERWEAR READING PLAYBOY!"

Genma, who was on the other end, was doing his best to explain himself.

"Look, boy. You wouldn't know what an admiral has to go through around here. Be happy I gave you a crew at all."

"I could run this ship better by myself."

Genma turned on the offensive this time.

"You little ingrate! Show some respect to your father. You should thank your lucky stars you have a crew! Why, when I was a Captain I had to run back and forth from engineering to the bridge just to make coffee! And they didn't even have turbolifts back then!"

Ranma just scowled. His father's attempt to reverse the blame wasn't going to work this time.

"Ok pop. Just tell me. Why did you make Shampoo my first officer?"

Genma got up and ran to another part of his office. We still hear his voice.

"Computer, one glass of cold water. Five degrees Celsius." The computer complies. Then, splash!

"BRAGGH!" Genma-Panda explains to his son while holding up a sign. <Sorry, son! Can't talk! On my way to a diplomatic mission!>

The screen popped up to the United Federation of Planets logo and the phrase 'Transmission Terminated.'

"DAMN!" Ranma yells.

END OF FLASHBACK. WE NOW RETURN YOU TO YOUR READING

Ranma set his head down on his desk. He was damn near ready to start crying again, but a sudden feeling came over him. It was the 'If I do well I will show the old man a thing or two' feeling. Ranma sat up. Yes, that was how he was going to get his dad back. He was going to get his crew into shape and have them kicking ass by the end of the day.

Ranma stood up and walked out onto the bridge. He noticed none of his senior officers were there. He looked at his watch and realized that no one in the future wore watches. He looked over a no-name's shoulder at his panel. 18:25. Everyone was down in ten-forward.

He didn't want to go, but he had promised Akane. He also thought to himself that he could use a drink. Ranma wasn't really a drinker, but when he thought about his crew another feeling came over him. This feeling must have been the 'maybe if I get drunk they'll fire me and I can go back to lifeguarding at the Y'. Ranma didn't much care for that either, mainly because he had to stay in female form, but it was a living. Besides, he met those nice village people. Funny how he got along with them better when he was in his male form.

Ranma nodded to himself in approval and skipped into the turbolift.

"Deck ten." He told the computer. The lift buzzed to life and whisked the captain to meet what might be his new friend. A man named Jack. Jack Daniels.

In ten-forward, there were a lot of people chatting with each other. There was also music playing. Some of the crew was near the windows dancing. Serena was one of them.

Actually, it seemed more like Serena was going into an epileptic seizure than dancing, but whatever floats your boat. After she knocked over the sixth crewmember, she sulked her way over to the bar and had a seat with Raye and Mina.

Raye was the first to start ragging on Serena about her dancing if you can call it that.

"Serena." She slurred. It would appear that Raye is drunk. "What do you call that dance you were doing up there?"

Serena, not realizing that Raye was being sarcastic, grinned. "I call that the 'Funky Monkey!'"

Raye laughed heartily. "I would call it the 'Help my finger's caught in a light-bulb socket'. It sucked girl!"

Mina just shook her head as Serena started to snifle.

"Serena, don't listen to her." Mina comforted. "She's drunk and she doesn't know what she's saying."

Raye shook her head. "I know what I'm saying! I'm saying that Serena sucks!"

Serena let out one of her patented bawls, as she bolted from the bar, and out the door.

"SERENA!" Mina called after her. But, it was too late. When she's upset that girl can really sprint.

Raye turned to Mina and grabbed her shoulder. "Let her go. She knows I was just giving her a hard time. She'll get over it. She always does."

Mina was still upset with Raye, and this time her half-assed explanations weren't going to get her out of a lecture.

"Raye. Serena is a sensitive girl. She can't handle criticism like you and I. I know you just think that your giving her the riot act is all in fun, but she doesn't understand that. I want you to apologize to her. What do you say?"

Raye just looked Mina in her baby blues, and said, "I have to pee. Excuse me." Raye stumbled off her seat and headed towards the restrooms. Mina just chugged the rest of her drink.

"Women problems, eh?" A deep voice says to Mina. She looks up. The voice belongs to the bartender. The bartender is a handsome man with dark hair pulled back into a ponytail. He had a goatee and was wearing a 'Home of the Whopper' apron over his Starfleet uniform. He didn't have any rank pips on his collar, making Mina assume that he was just an enlisted crewman.

Mina laughed at the remark. "Yeah, my friend Raye is always being mean to our other friend, Serena."

The bartender laughed. "Well, I feel that they really care for each other deep down." Mina nodded in agreement.

"But I still wish she would be nice to her. Serena is a great girl, who's far away from home. She's just a bit clumsy, and somewhat ditzzy, and not very organized-"

The bartender cut her off. "I get the point. However, I should note that we aren't really THAT far from Earth if you acknowledge how far away some other ships are."

Mina thought about this for a second. "You know what I mean though."

The man nodded. He noticed Mina's empty glass. "Another?"

Mina nodded her approval and slid her glass towards him. He walks over and fills her up. "So what's your name?" He asks.

"Mina. Mina Aino."

"Nice to meet you, Mina. I'm Gosnell." They shook hands.

"Any relation to the Gosnell the class of the ship is named after?"

Gosnell pondered this for a second. "You know, I've often wondered that myself. See, I think the class was named after a human named Gosnell. I'm not human."

"Oh? What race are you?"

"I am from a very distant planet known as Cantrell. The Kunos destroyed my home over a thousand years ago. They swept down and assimilated everyone in sight. Lucky for me I was gobbled up by a tornado, unrelated to the attack, and was somehow shot into space where an old man named Gargle Listerine saved me."

Mina was impressed. This guy was over a thousand years old. And he survived one of those damn shooting tornados. "So how did you end up here?"

"Well, that story is somewhat embarrassing. I bet the captain in a poker game that if he won I would be his bartender on his ship, and then follow him till he died, or till I got bored. Well, he beat me. All I had were a 10, Jack, Queen, King, and Ace of hearts. He had four sevens."

"Um, Gosnell. I hate to tell you this but you had a royal straight flush. That beats what the captain had."

The look on Gosnell's face could have shattered glass. He hung his head in shame. "Where were you before I signed that two-hundred-year contract?" Gosnell grabbed a bottle of vodka and downed it in one gulp.

"You going to be ok?" Mina asked.

"I am now. This stuff is STRONG!" Gosnell grinned.

It was about this time that Raye comes straggling back to her seat. She looks up to Gosnell.

"Hit me." She says.

Gosnell shrugs and draws back, and WACK! He punches Raye right in the jaw. Raye looks up and glares at Gosnell with a look that could have broken Gosnell's earlier look.

"WITH A DRINK YOU MORON!" Raye screams at Gosnell. Gosnell shrugs and grabs Mina's drink. He then throws the contents in Raye's face.

Raye leans over the bar and grabs the now frightened Gosnell by his collar. "I want you to put some Rum and some Coke into a glass and then set it on the bar, right here in front of me. If you hit me or throw another drink in my face I will rip all your hairs out one by one and toss you into a quantum torpedo tube and shoot you up the ass of a Klingon elephant. Got it?"

Gosnell nods and runs off to make the drink. Raye sits back down and wipes herself off. She notices Mina chuckling silently.

"WHAT?!" Raye scowls.

"Nothing." Mina grins.

It was about this time when the Captain walks into ten-forward. He glances around the room. No Akane. Just like her. Bitch and moan and whine to get me down here, but she's not down here herself. Well, at least Shampoo isn't down here either.

Ranma turned and walked up to the bar. He takes a seat next to Raye. He looks and grins.

"Counselor. Commander. How are you two?"

Raye looks at him slowly and tries to force a grin. "I'm happy!" Raye's head then smacks the bar.

Mina turns to Ranma as well, with a more sincere grin on her face, and doing a much better job of holding her head up.

"I'm good Captain. Looking forward to getting to the Finden system."

The captain smiled back at Mina and sent a chuckle to the back of Raye's head. He then looked up at Gosnell. "Hey, Gosnell. Hit me with water. Can't get drunk. On duty."

Gosnell grinned. "Coming right up!" He walked on over to the replicator.

Ranma started to feel concerned about Raye. "Is she OK?" He asked Mina.

Mina starts to answer when Gosnell walks back and throws the Captain's water in his face. Ranma becomes Ranma-chan (RC).

The look on Mina's face was one of shock. Of all her years in the Starfleet Science Corps, she had never seen a man change into a woman. Well, she thought. Do changelings count? Mina began to wonder about this. What if the captain was a founder? Think of all the press coverage she'd get if she found him out. Swarms and swarms of men would be swooning over her. Over Mina Aino. The savior of the federation!

Granted the war was over and the Founders were pretty much out of the picture, but one serving, as the captain of Starfleet's new flagship, has to be considered a big deal!

Mina stealthily looked to the captain. He was still thinking of some swear words to use on Gosnell. This was her chance. If she could get some blood from him, she would be able to prove he was a changeling.

Mina started darting her eyes all over. No one in the whole room had a medical hypospray. Gosnell having removed the medkits earlier for some unexplained reason that made sense in Gosnell's world. She then spied some silverware. It appeared she was going to have to use the crude method.

Mina slowly reached across the bar and grabbed the silverware. She decided on a steak knife. She figured that just in case she was wrong, a steak knife would do the least amount of damage to the captain.

RC was just coming out of the usual shock she felt when her uniform tightened up around the chest. And the pure thought that someone would just throw water in her face kind of shocked her too. RC opened her mouth to start swearing at Gosnell when she felt a poking at her arm.

She turned. Mina, having partially climbed over Raye, was hacking at her arm with a steak knife. It was a very dull steak knife. Mina was putting all her energy into it, but she couldn't even get it to break the skin. The knife blade just bent, and finally snapped off.

"AINO! What are you doing?" RC yelled.

"You're a changeling, aren't you?" Mina screamed back. She turned to Gosnell. "Hand me that beer bottle."

Gosnell, not one to sit idly by when he could help instigate trouble, complied. Mina took the bottle and SMASH right over the top of RC's head. RC screamed. That hurt! Mina also screamed when the blood from the cut she managed to make with the bottle didn't change into changeling goo.

"Oh damn." Mina moaned.

RC gave Mina the once-over. "Do that again, and watch what happens." She warned.

Mina slithered back to her seat. She decided now she needed to be on her best behavior. Maybe her last boyfriend was right. Maybe she was too suspicious. Naaa. She thought. He just said that to cover up the fact he was cheating on me. Mina nodded her approval to that thought.

RC managed to shake off the pain of the beer bottle. She turned to Gosnell. Gosnell wasn't sure if he should be afraid or not.

"WHAT DID YOU DO THAT FOR?!" RC bellowed.

Gosnell smiled. "You said 'hit me with a water.' So, there you go." Before Ranma could fly across the bar to kill Gosnell, Raye turned to her and grabbed her breast.

"Ooo! You're cute!" She said. "Well built too!"

RC screamed. She was not fond of it when her boobs were manhandled. Except when her doctor did her physicals. He has such soft hands.

RC started to back away. What was up with this chick? RC tripped as she tried to escape. Raye knew what time it was. She pounced on RC and proceeded to kiss her. Of course, due to RC's patented bad luck, Shampoo and Akane came into the bar at the same time from opposite sides of the room.

"RANMA!" They both screamed.

RC was about to try and explain, but the moment she opened her mouth, Raye slipped her tongue in. This of course made Ranma freak out and made Shampoo and Akane, well, freak out in their own way.

The two women jumped onto Raye, proceeding to pound the hell out of her. Well, Shampoo was beating Raye, while Akane was beating Ranma. Raye, however, was not one to take this lying down, so she fought back. This ignited a brawl between the three women, leaving RC to be trampled on the bottom of the dogpile.

One of the people who were dancing near the windows saw the fight.

"FIGHT!" He screamed. This was the fuse that set off a riot in 10-forward. Everyone in the bar started brawling with each other. Well, almost everyone. Ryouga was just sitting at his table. Alone. Nursing his drink.

Mina decided that she'd gotten into enough trouble for one day and that it would be best for her not to be included in any of this. She vaulted over the bar and hit the floor. She noticed Gosnell ducking behind the bar as well, screaming into his COM panel.

"Yes, Mousse. I said RIOT! Now get your lackeys down here now!" Gosnell closed the connection and grinned at Mina. "I must now do my duty and try and stop this fight." He started to stand.

Mina grabbed Gosnell's shoulder and began to object. Gosnell placed his index finger to her lips. "Quiet child. I will be OK." He kissed Mina on the forehead and began to stand.

Mina sat back, in awe. The man. Gosnell. He was so brave.

Gosnell hopped on top of the bar. "PEOPLE! PEOPLE!" He bellowed. Everyone stopped fighting and looked at him.

"Can't we all just get along?" He pleaded. His cries went unheard as several glasses came flying at his head. Gosnell let out a scream that resembled a seven-year-old girl and dove back behind the bar. He looked to Mina, who somewhat looked disappointed.

"Nice try." She comforted. A crewman came flying over the bar, slammed into the wall, and slid to the floor.

The doors to 10-forward hissed open and about 50 of Mousse's security officers came running in, all armed with duck-shaped potty trainers. The security officers immediately went to work beating the rioters.

Ryouga was starting to get frustrated. How was he supposed to properly wallow in self-pity with all this damn noise? It wasn't till someone's tooth fell in his drink that he snapped.

He hopped up onto his table.

"HEY! SHUT UP!" He screamed. It was at this time that he received a duck-shaped toilet trainer to the head.

"Ok bitches." He grumbled. "BAK-SI-KEN-TETSU!!" Ryouga applied the breaking point to the table. As it began to explode, he realized what a horrible mistake he had just made. This table was glass. He screamed. "DAMN!"

Sickbay was the location most of the rioters were at. The others were in the brig, being sobered up. Akane's staff was busy, mostly pulling glass fragments out of various locations.

Akane got the patient who took the most damage. Ryouga. Normally the breaking point doesn't hurt him, but usually, he does it on rocks. Rocks will bounce off the body. Glass on the other hand will embed itself in a person's skin.

Ryouga was lying face down on Akane's exam table. His pants were pulled down to his knees. It seems that all the large pieces of glass ended up stuck in Ryouga's butt. This made Akane very uncomfortable. She was doing her best to remove the fragments without looking at, well, it. His butt.

Akane's embarrassment was nothing though. Nothing compared to what Ryouga felt. There is no color of red to describe what color his face was. This wasn't just because of him being pants down in front of Akane, but also because this was secretly a fantasy of his. Well, minus the horribly painful glass shards.

The doors to sickbay opened. Ranma walked in. He was all male again. He had finally managed to explain to Shampoo what had happened. That had taken him a while, and Shampoo was the easy one. Now time to work on Akane.

He walked up to where Akane was.

"Hi?" Akane just ignored him.

"RANMA!" Ryouga screamed. "THIS IS ALL YOUR FAULT!"

Ranma looked around. He didn't see Ryouga anywhere. Did he? He looked at the table. Yikes. Not a sight he wanted to see. He walked around the front of the exam table and squatted. Yup there, with his head hanging over the edge of the table, was Ryouga.

"Ryouga!" Ranma chirped. "You're looking well!"

"SHUT UP!" Ryouga yelled back.

Ranma chuckled and walked back to Akane. "Akane. I'm sorry. Even though it wasn't my fault."

Akane stopped and turned to him. "It's never your fault, is it?"

Ranma missed the sarcasm in that. "Usually not."

Akane just shook her head. "I have work to do."

Ranma, realizing it was useless at this point to argue further walked off, deciding the bridge is a much friendlier place now.

He walked out the doors of sickbay and up the hallway to the turbo lift. He hit the call button and waited. He was mad. It's been a long time since he was mad like this. He wasn't mad at Akane, at Mina, or even at Raye. He was mad at himself. He felt he was getting slow, even sloppy, lately. There were times when no one could have gotten him the way Gosnell did.

Ranma realized that he has been distracted lately. That and he has become complacent. Ordering people to do things for you is an easy way to get out of the practice of doing things himself.

Ranma realized that if he was going to have a chance against the Kuno's, he was going to have to work on his mental discipline. If he continued to get distracted it might mean the death of him and his crew.

He really didn't know what was distracting him though. He hoped he could figure it out before too long. It's hard not to be distracted when you don't know why you're being distracted in the first place.

The lift hissed open. Mina was in there. He stepped in with her. The doors close.

"Bridge," Ranma ordered the lift.

"Computer, pause." Mina cut in.

Ranma turned to Mina.

"Captain. I'm sorry. I'm sorry I tried to stab you with the knife and sorry I hit you with a beer bottle." Mina said shyly. It wasn't like her to be this shy, but she really felt stupid for what she did.

"Commander, your intentions were good. Didn't do any real damage and I heal fast." Ranma replied. He smiled at her with the old Saotome charm, trying to lift her spirits.

Mina smiled back. The last man she hit with a beer bottle didn't take it so well. But he deserved it. Ranma didn't.

"Continue," Mina told the computer. She, however, was curious. "What's up with that whole guy/girl thing?"

Ranma sighed. Just thinking about it hurt his stomach. "You ever hear of Jusenkyo?"

Mina shook her head.

"It's a cursed springs training ground. I fell into the spring of drowned girl. Now whenever I get hit with cold water, I turn into a girl, and hot water reverses the effect."

"Gotcha. Is there a cure?"

"Yes, but it's in China."

"Oh, I see," Mina replied. She wasn't sure why the Captain didn't just beam down there and cure himself when they were in orbit around Earth, but she was sure he had his reasons.

The lift doors opened. Ranma and Mina walked onto the bridge. The first thing they saw was Shampoo and Raye choking each other. Ranma ran over and broke up the fight.

"WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON?" Ranma screamed.

Shampoo grabbed a hold of Ranma. "Stupid girl try to steal Ranma!"

Raye interjected. "I did not! She's pissed for some reason! She said I kissed her fiancée in 10-forward!"

Ranma groaned. "Shampoo. Sit. Raye, don't worry, you didn't." Ranma felt the less Raye remembered, the better off he'd be.

The doors hissed open again. Ryouga came walking, very slowly, out of the turbo lift and down to his station. He placed a pillow on his chair and sat down extremely slowly.

"Captain," Mina said. "We're approaching the Finden system."

"Good, Ensign, slow to impulse, standard orbit over Finden Three."

"Aye, sir." Ryouga groaned. The ship shuddered and slammed to a stop.

"Ryouga?" Ranma asked.

"Sorry," Ryouga responded.

"Engineering to the bridge!" Serena's voice came over the communicator.

"Go ahead, Commander," Ranma replied.

"Tell whoever did that not to do it again. That's not good for the clutch or the structural integrity field, or something that has a lot of flashing red lights on it. You know it would be a lot more useful if they'd spend as much money on labels as they did on pointless flashing lights!"

"Already under control, Serena. Thanks. Saotome out." Ranma stood up and walked to Ryouga. "Did you catch that?"

Ryoga scowled. "I said sorry!"

Ranma walked back to his seat. "Mousse. Do you see anything on the sensors?"

Mousse gave the panel a good look. "No!"

Shampoo turned to him. "PUT YOUR GLASSES ON STUPID!"

Mousse slid his glasses that were on top of his head over his eyes. "Oh yeah. Eleven fighter-type ships and one battlecruiser in orbit on the other side of the planet."

Ranma groaned. "Ryoga, catch up with them and match their orbit. Mousse, hail them."

Both officers complied. Mousse was the first to answer. "The battle cruiser commander is hailing us."

"Ah, well on screen," Ranma answered as he stood.

On the main view screen, an older man appeared. He was wearing a suit and tie. He had gray hair. He looked at Ranma and started to laugh.

"You want something?" He asked.

Ranma didn't know why he was laughing. But he wanted to know. "I am Captain Ranma Saotome of the Federation Starship Sisko. Why are you pestering the people of Finden?"

The man stopped laughing. "The Federation, huh? Well, I am Roy Captain Sha'Na Nana. And this planet needs to be taught proper articulation."

This threw the whole bridge crew off. "What?" Ranma asked.

"We have been monitoring their newscasts. They have mispronounced too many words. For the sake of good journalism, we must step in."

Ranma was a little confused, but he knows what they meant. He's seen Finden newscasts. They did mispronounce quite a few things. Regardless Ranma knew what he needed to do.

"I understand your intentions, Captain Nana. However, the Federation wants me to ask you to leave." Ranma told the old man.

"NO! We will not leave until our work is done! If you don't let us continue, we will destroy you!"

Ranma doubted that is possible. He turned to Mousse and signaled for him to mute the transmission. Mousse complied. Ranma turned to Shampoo.

"What are their defensive capabilities?" Ranma asked.

Shampoo looked at her terminal and grinned. "Silly men had two Xenon Rocket Launchers on each fighter and a low yield plasma cannon on the cruiser. That all. No match."

Ranma nodded to her. He then turned to Raye. "What do you think?"

Raye sighed. "They're willing to die for their beliefs. They truly think what they are doing is just."

"All right. Open channel." The speakers chirped. "Captain Nana. We understand what you are trying to do, but this planet is a member of the United Federation of Planets, and you must leave it be. The Federation grants these people certain rights, including the right to misarticulate. I will warn you now, if you don't leave on your own, we will remove you by force."

Captain Nana just about blew a gasket. "Right to misarticulate? We'll see about that!" The screen went back to the shot of the Roy ships as Captain Nana closed the channel.

"Great. Mousse shields up. Shields. Not a torpedo." Ranma ordered.

"Yes sir." Mousse replied. The shields buzzed to life.

Outside, the Roy ships assumed an attack posture. They fired. Fourteen rockets came out of the Roy ships. Each rocket hit the Sisko's shields and bounced off.

Ranma didn't want to fire on the ships, but what choice did they have? Hopefully, they would get the point after the first shot and buzz off.

"Mousse, target the third ship to the left. Fire one torpedo." Ranma ordered. Mousse obeyed. The torpedo fired from the Sisko. It hit the targeted Roy ship. Once the fireball dissipated there was just a small amount of debris.

"Captain," Mousse said. "The Roy Captain is hailing us."

"On screen." Ranma grinned at the Roy Captain appeared. He was white with fear.

"Captain Saotome. Our work here is done. We will be on our way! Give the Federation our best!" The screen returned to the external view as the ships warped towards home.

Ranma grinned. "Good work everyone. That was a job well done-" Ranma was cut off by a frantic Mousse.

"CAPTAIN!!!" He screamed. "A SHIP! LONG RANGE SENSORS! AHHHHH!!" Mousse was slapped very hard by Shampoo.

"STUPID MOUSSE! GET AHOLD OF SELF! WHAT WRONG?"

"A cubical-shaped ship is on an intercept course at warp 9.75."

"Cubical shaped?" Ranma looked confused.

"Err – Cube shaped." Mousse replied.

"Thank God. I was worried that the people from the planet Dilbert were pissed again-" Ranma cut himself off when he realized that cube-shaped was much worse than cubical-shaped.

"Mousse! Can identify?" Shampoo asked.

"Yes." Mousse whimpered. "It's Kuno."

Everyone on the bridge gasped.

"Mina," Ranma said. "Time to intercept?"

"Two hours, Captain."

"Send a priority one message to Starfleet, Mousse. Let them know what's up and request instructions."

"Shampoo have instruction. Run like hell."

Ranma nodded. "Ryouga. Set course, 1-7-5 mark 0-1-6. Maximum warp."

Ryouga complied. "Course and speed laid in, sir."

That felt good. Ryouga just called him sir. He'd been looking forward to this day for a very, very long time. It made Ranma feel that he had finally won their 'battle.' Ranma was king. King of the world!

"CAPTAIN!" Shampoo screamed.

"WHAT?! Oh yeah, Engage!" Ranma chuckled nervously. Again with the distractions.

The ship turned about-face and shot off.

"Captain," Mina spoke up. Ranma knew this was bad news. The Ops officer rarely spoke unless spoken to unless it was bad news. "At our current speed, the Kuno cube will still overtake us in four hours."

Ranma hit his communicator. "Engineering! Serena, can we get any more speed?"

Serena got up from the terminal she was playing computer solitaire on.

"I'll see what I can do, Captain. Engineering out." Serena walked to the middle of engineering.

"OK PEOPLE! We need to get more speed!"

"But Commander!" One of the engineering crew complained. "We're already going warp 9.55!"

Serena screamed. "THAT'S FAST!!" She sat back down. "Well, the captain said we need more, so give us more!"

She was responded to with several 'yes ma'ams. She whimpered for a bit, but then stood up. I'm going to show that Raye, she thought. I am going to show here that I can be a good officer. I'll show here that I am not a klutz! Serena looked around. Which one is the engine computer? Serena noticed that most of the crewmen were standing around one particular station. Serena ran over to help her crew on the warp engine, but she tripped on her hair and fell to her face.

"WAAAAAAAAA!"

# CHAPTER 3 - SOME THINGS WERE JUST NEVER MEANT TO BE

Akane sat back in her office chair. She loved this chair. It was so big and comfy. Much better than any other chair. When they designed these new ships they took into account comfort that was for sure.

Akane took a sip of her coffee. She never really drank coffee until she started getting supervisor positions. Seems that if you are a supervisor, coffee is a requirement. That and cigarettes. The only problem with cigarettes is that it's hard to find a place on the ship that you can smoke without setting off some kind of alarm. Either a fire alarm or a smoke alarm. The redundancy of that made Akane's head hurt. Obviously, if there is smoke there is fire and vice versa. Why have two separate alarms for people to monitor?

Luckily she figured out a trick. All she had to do was call security and tell them that she was running an open flame experiment and they would shut down the alarm sensors for sickbay. Being in charge had its perks.

"God, now that I am thinking about them, I am going to have to have one!" She complained to herself. She pulled out her pack of Camel Turkish Gold and made the call to security. She then lit one up, using her plasma torch she stole from engineering, took a big drag, leaned back and –

HISS. The doors to sickbay shot open and scared her. She fell back on her butt.

"Akane?" Ranma called.

"Yeah – yeah I'm in here." Akane shot back, quickly putting her cigarette out in her petri dish ashtray.

Ranma walks into Akane's office. He looks around and takes a sniff.

"I thought you quit?"

"Quit what?"

"Akane, you can't fool me. Give them here."

Akane pulls the pack out of her pocket and tosses it to Ranma.

"How'd you get a uniform with pockets?" Ranma complained.

Akane ignored that comment. You have to be special to get pockets. "You know Ranma," Akane grinned. "I think if you can make out with girls on the floor of 10-Forward, I think I should be able to smoke."

"Now just a—" Ranma cuts himself off. Did Akane just make a joke? Ranma starts to laugh. "That was funny and fair."

Ranma tosses the cigarettes back to Akane. "The thing in 10-Forward probably won't happen again."

Akane laughs. "Yes, it will. You're a pervert!" Akane winds up and POW! Right out the door, Ranma flies.

Ranma sits up. No matter what I do, I can't seem to make her happy. Maybe I should just tell her I want to cancel the engagement. I mean, I'm a starship captain. I shouldn't have my CMO hitting me and stuff. It's pretty obvious that it was never meant to be.

"It's determined then. Assuming we survive." Ranma nods to himself. Ranma pauses. He shakes his head and walks on. She can't be it, can she?

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Aboard the dark, gray cube-shaped Kuno ship, Principal Kuno paces the corridors. His mind was full of thoughts. Not just his, but of course the rest of the Kuno collective. It was driving him nuts.

First, there were the thoughts of Tatewaki. He wanted to beat that boy. All he thought about constantly was himself, Akane Tendo, and the Pig-Tailed Girl. The principal even found himself waking up in the middle of the night screaming 'I SHALL DATE WITH YOU!' Nothing will scare a drone more than shouting that as he's walking by.

Next, there was Kodachi. She was a twisted, twisted girl. The only dreams she ever had were dreams of her and Ranma Saotome – well, being friendly. Principal Kuno wanted to hurl. But it did raise a question, but seeing Ranma naked to verify probably wouldn't happen.

Then there is George Kuno. He was adopted. It was painfully obvious of that too. For one he was sane. Well, sort of. For two, he was black. He was very smart and very, very evil. So evil that he almost scared the Principal. And that was hard to do, considering he was considered the quadrant's second vilest being. Only the Rosie O'Donnell clone was eviler, according to Neilson Evil Research.

"Dad?" The principal turned around. It was George.

"Yes, son?"

"When we catch the Starfleet ship, can I keep Shampoo's eyes? They are very pretty. I'd like to put them on my desk with my beanie babies."

Principal Kuno shuddered a little. "Sure son. Whatever you'd like. But that means you will have to capture her before we destroy the ship. And where, may I ask, did you get a desk?"

"I will do that, father. I will make you proud of me. And I built it myself with the spare parts I found in the assimilation repository." George walked off and starts laughing like a mad man. The principal walks over to his chair and takes a seat. That's weird. The only thing in that repository is leftover body parts. What could he have made the desk – Oh my."

Suddenly black rose petals filled the hallway. The principal groaned to himself.

"Greetings father! I, Kodachi Kuno, the black rose of the Alpha Quadrant, say good morning to you!" Kodachi spins around a few times and sits next to her father.

"Hi, Kodachi." The principal grumbles.

"So when we get to them we are going to beam Ranma over here to me and then blow up the ship with the wretched Akane Tendo?"

"Sure." The principal said, somewhat unenthusiastically. He could remember when he used to enjoy blowing up ships and their crews, but lately, it's seemed more like a job than it did fun. Seems to have started after he brought his family into it.

"DESTROY NOT AKANE TENDO OR THE PIG TAILED GIRL!" Tatewaki screamed from the other side of the room. The minute he heard the thought of Akane or The Pig-Tailed Girl being destroyed he leaped from his regeneration chamber and ran as fast as he could up to where his sister was. Bokken in hand, he is ready to fight his sister for the life of Akane and Female Ranma.

"Brother dearest, if you think that you can defeat me, you are SADLY mistaken." Kodachi grinned.

"Now now – my kiki shouldn't fight like this. We all need to be bruddahs and sistas in this endeavor. If we fight we cannot take ova the galaxy!" Principal Kuno got up and stepped between the two.

Kuno lowered his bokken and Kodachi her rhythmic gymnastic tools. Principal Kuno smiles and sits back down. Kuno walks past his sister, but as he does he lays in a few passing words.

"Akane Tendo and the Pig-Tailed Girl will not be touched."

Kodachi just grins. "Neither will my love Ranma."

The two laugh maniacally and walk off. The Principal can just sit. Sit and cry.

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The area where Ranma was pacing could easily be seen in the rug. It looked as if he had been pacing for years, but it had only been about 20 minutes. He was very worried. The Kuno ship will overtake them in a little over three hours, and when they did it would not be pretty.

Engineering had gotten the ship up to Warp 9.77, but the Kuno ship had increased to 9.95. Even if they could get the ship to 9.95, the Kuno's could maintain that speed for a longer amount of time, and therefore still overtake them.

Ranma had a plan though. Sort of. If we get to a place where we would have a tactical advantage, then we will be okay. Maybe. But then again something always comes up and disrupts my plans.

"Ranma?" Shampoo was starting to worry about Ranma. He had been pacing ever since he got back from sickbay. "Ranma okay?"

Ranma stops and looks at Shampoo. "Yeah – I am okay. Just worried you know."

"Ranma have nothing to worry about. Shampoo here." Shampoo smiled big when she said that.

"No, I guess that does make it all better." Ranma slumped down into his seat. As he slumped down farther, Ranma closed his eyes. He remembers when life was so easy. He was just a lowly ensign on a transport ship. At first, he didn't like the idea of taking orders from people, but he soon realized that it had its benefits.

When you take orders your responsibility level plummets. If anything ever went wrong all he had to do was say 'I was just following orders'. That fixed just about any problem. It could also be a nasty catch 22 as well. If all you did was follow orders and never do anything on your own, you will never go anywhere. Ranma had the nice quality of being able to do both. This had helped him hit Captain so fast. How his father got to be an admiral was beyond him though.

"Captain?" Mousse peeped.

"Yes, Lieutenant?"

"We are being hailed by Ambassador Soun Tendo."

Ambassador? Good grief, what has happened to the galaxy?

"Put it on screen."

The viewscreen blinked to life and Soun Tendo appeared.

"RANMA!!!!!!!!!" Soun bellowed.

What could I have possibly done now?

"Ranma! Please come and rescue us!" Soun continued.

"Rescue you? What's the problem?"

"PIRATES!" Soun screamed and then began running around in circles on the view screen.

"Pirates? Which pirates? The Ferengi? The Pirates of the Caribbean? The Pittsburgh Pirates?"

"SPACE PIRATES!!!!!!!!!" Soun began to bawl now.

Ranma looked to Shampoo who just shrugged. Mina turned around. "Sir, I have heard that a group calling themselves 'Space Pirates' have been attacking small colonies and taking their beer."

"Ambassador Tendo – where are you at right now?" Ranma asked.

"I'm in the basement hiding."

Shampoo almost giggles, but a stern look from Ranma stops her.

"What planet are you on?"

"California V"

"Okay – We will head that way and assist." Ranma signals for Mousse to kill the link.

"What about Kunos?" Shampoo asks.

"We will deal with them later. Right now we have to go and take care of these pirates."

Shampoo nods and stands up. "Ryouga! Change course 4-4-4 mark 1-6! Current speed! ENGAGE!"

Ryouga, who is still sitting a little awkwardly, obliges. The ship slams to a stop. Everyone on the bridge goes flying forward.

Ryouga's eyes get wide. "Whoops."

Shampoo manages to scrape herself off the viewscreen. She then walks up to Ryouga with a small hammer and smacks him in the head. "WHOOOPS?"

"OW! Sorry yeah just hit the emergency stop button instead of the engage button."

Raye looks to Mina. "And he couldn't figure that out in space dock?" Mina simply floats a shrug.

"How you do that stupid?" Shampoo bellowed.

"Don't call me stupid. It's a simple mistake. They start with the same letter."

Shampoo tosses the hammer and goes for her phaser. Ranma runs over and grabs her arm and drags her back to her seat.

# CHAPTER 4 - NOT ALL PIRATES HAVE PARROTS

*Arr! Pirate Captian's Log date –*

The Pirate Captain, Captain Brian Treeman looks up from his recording device.

“Does anyone know what the date is?” Brain screams across the bridge of his Klingon Bird of Prey. The captain had picked it up at a surplus auction the Klingon's had a year ago. He's only started to use it recently because it took almost 8 months to get it to smell decently again.

Brian was a tall, skinny human. His uniform was white with gold trim. He never made his lackeys wear uniforms, but he thought they made him look spiffy. He also thought that his female officers looked good in them too, so they were required to wear them. Brian was usually a quiet person but was very loud when he wanted to be. He knew the most important thing was that he had the respect of his crew.

“I SAID DOES ANYONE KNOW THE DATE?”

“Shut your cakehole.” A female voice called back. It was his XO, Commander Lita Kino. “Do you want the stardate or the real date?”

“I want a date, beautiful!” Brian grinned back

Brian's grin was immediately met with a shoe to the mouth. The shoe still happened to be on Lita's foot, so it made contact very hard. “You got a girl.” She grumbled.

“UmmmHmmm –” Brian murmured. “The real date will work fine.”

“April 7th, 2388.”

“Thanks,” Brian replied. He spun in his chair and started his log entry again.

*Captain's Log – April 7th, 2388. Having dropped our taxes at the post office with 8 days to spare, we have decided to do some plundering. What better place to do it than California V. A planet of pacifists. Hopefully, these hippies will have plenty of beer and money for us.*

“Captain!” One of the no-name officers on the bridge yells.

“Yeah?”

“A Federation starship has just done a U-iey and is on an intercept course!”

“Uh oh.” Lita mumbles.

“No no no!” Brian hops up from his chair and walks over to Lita. “Uh oh was last month when we had that old Ferengi rat trap! We have a powerful ship now – and a cloaking device!”

“Oh yeah!” Lita grins. “Ensign! E-T-A of the ship.”

“Twenty-eight minutes.”

“Good. Get all the specs on the ship and tell the away team that they only have twenty minutes of plundering left.”

“Yes ma’am.”

Lita walks over to the view screen and looks down on the planet. Brian comes up behind her.

“You know –” Brian starts. “We could get a lot done in twenty minutes.” Brian rubs Lita’s butt. Lita starts to laugh.

“Yes, we could.” She turns around and WHAM – sends Brian flying across the bridge. “But I don’t want you to get hurt.”

Brian remains on the ground and laughs. “Hahaha Federation! Try your best!”

“Sir –” The no-name perks up.

“What?” Both Brian and Lita answer.

“It’s Gosnell class.”

“Uh oh.” Both Brian and Lita murmur.

“As soon as the away team is on board engage the cloak,” Lita ordered.

Brian managed to drag himself back up to his chair. “Tell them to hurry, but remind them that they will be shot out an airlock if they don’t bring me a lot of Captain Morgan.”

Lita didn’t care for the fact that he was an alcoholic, but he seemed to handle it okay. So for the most part she didn’t say anything.

“SIR!” The no-name screams this time.

“WHAT WHAT WHAT? Can’t you freakin’ tell me everything at once? Is that so damned hard?” Brian screamed back.

“I’m sorry. More dramatic this way! Regardless, there is a Kuno ship on an intercept course with the Federation ship!”

“Well that’s just swell,” Brian murmured.

----

Down on the planet, the capital city of Mountain Doo (no copyright infringement here) was being ransacked by the Captain’s chief ransacker, and current girlfriend, Be’Yach. Be’Yach was one-quarter Klingon, but she was a hottie. This is why the Captain made her the chief ransacker. Her looks often distract local police which allows the ransacking team to do its pillaging.

In the Federation Embassy, Soun Tendo is sitting in the corner along with Admiral Genma Saotome. Genma had decided to drop by to play some games with Soun in an attempt to avoid Ranma.

However, he was starting to realize that this might not have been the best idea he has ever had. Not only was the colony being ransacked, but Ranma would also be there shortly.

While the two of them were riding out the attack, they decided to get a few games of Go in. As usual, Soun was beating the pants off of Genma.

“When is that ingrate son of mine going to get here?” Genma grumbled.

“The people working the communications device said that they should be here within fifteen minutes,” Soun replied. “Gotcha.”

Soun moved his piece and it drove Genma nuts.

“THIS IS NO TIME TO BE PLAYING GAMES!” Genma screams, knocking the board over.

“It’s never a good time when you are losing is it.” Soun glared.

“Now, now – “ Genma said, backing away from an angry Soun. “- Now is no time for fighting between friends.”

Soun stopped and thought about this for a second. “You’re right. We will settle this after the raid.”

Genma nodded when a large explosion broke up his nodding very close to the building.

“What the hell was that?” Genma yelled.

An ensign working in the embassy began checking screens. “It appears the pirate ship is firing plasma charges at us!”

They have never done anything that would actually kill anyone before.

Outside of the building, Be’Yach, who was sent head over heels from an explosion missing her and her group by less than 20 meters, is making an attempt to regain her senses. “What the hell?” She pulls her communicator out of her pocket and opens a channel.

“This is the MGD Mad Dog here.” Lita’s voice is heard over the comm line. In the background, you can hear red alert sirens blaring.

“This is Be’Yach! What the hell are you doing?”

“We and the planet are being attacked by the Kunos!”

“What about the Federation ship?”

“I don’t know! They changed directions.”

ONBOARD THE SSKO

“Ryouga!” Ranma screamed.

“I don’t know what happened. I didn’t touch anything!”

Ranma started to pace again. They were lost. Lost in space. Ryouga was right though. He didn't touch anything. It must just have been his aura. It caused the ship to start making course corrections. And now they were lost. At least the Kuno's had stopped pursuing them. Unfortunately, they continued onto the planet that Soun was on.

"Captain!" Mousse screamed. "They are attacking the planet!"

Ranma growls. "Ryouga – get us there A-S-A-P!"

Ryouga nods. "I will." He leans to Mina. "Can you do it?"

#### BACK ON THE PLANET

Be'Yach takes off running towards the Embassy. Five of her lackeys are trailing behind her. One of them stops.

"We can't go in there!" He exclaims. "The Federation will arrest us!"

Suddenly a plasma charge hits a nearby building, causing it to fall inches from the frightened lackey.

"Well, I guess being in a jail would be better than being out here, eh?" The lackey decides to run in behind his boss and fellow lackeys.

At the door, there are two Federation Police Officers standing. One moves to block the entrance to the door.

"I have to let you know that if you enter this building you will be arrested and severely beaten." The officer says.

"Whatever!" Be'Yach yells. "Just let us the hell in!" The guard steps to the side. Be'Yach and the lackeys bolt through the door and down into the basement where Soun and Genma are. One of the officers that were in the basement sees them.

"ADMIRAL! PIRATES!" He yells. Genma turns around and sees the pirates.

"Stay back! I'll shoot you!" Genma screams. Soun leans forward and begins to whisper in his ear.

"Saotome – you don't have a phaser."

"So I don't!" Genma replies. They both start to laugh hysterically. Be'Yach just looks at the others.

"Don't worry – " Be'Yach explains. "We don't want to hurt you. Well, not anymore. We just want to hide here till the attack stops."

Soun comes forward. "So, you aren't responsible for the attack?"

Be'Yach shakes her head. "No. The Kunos are in orbit. They attacked our ship and it was forced to flee. Last I heard though there was a Gosnell class ship en route."

"RANMA!!" Genma cheers. "He will come and rescue me!" Soun glares at him. "Us. I said us!"

“Sir?” One of the ensigns pipes up. “Shouldn’t we take them into custody?”

“No!” Soun declares. “They have learned their lesson I am sure. Forgive and forget is the Anything Goes motto!”

“Huh?” Says everyone, except of course Genma.

“Thank you, Ambassador.” Be’Yach bows.

Several more explosions are heard in quick succession. Then they suddenly stop.

“Is it over?” Genma asks.

The Comm panel chirps to life. Mousse’s voice is heard. “Sisko to Embassy. Stand by – we are engaging the Kunos.”

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The bridge of the Sisko was lit with only the dark blue lights that set the mood when there was a battle, the red flashing alert lights, and the light coming from the crew’s consoles. Ranma was sitting in his chair, legs crossed. He loved battle. Exploration didn’t really suit him. He was in it for the fight.

Shampoo was standing behind Mousse. Normally this would put Mousse into a coma, but during battles, he seemed very intense and into it.

Ryouga was sitting very still, mostly because if he moved much it would send a shooting pain through his ass. He wasn’t quite sure that Akane had gotten all the glass out, but he really didn’t want to go back to sickbay for another session of pluck the butt.

Mina was ready for anything. She had her panel set up so that she could take over anyone’s console and do their job. She needed to be ready for that for the simple fact that the slightest hit could make someone’s panel explode. Except hers. They made the science officer’s console out of material that wouldn’t explode. Why they didn’t do that with all the other ones was beyond her, but that wasn’t important right now. What was important is that she stayed focused.

“Mousse,” Ranma said, standing up. “Open a channel to the Kuno ship.”

“Aye, sir.” The Comm beeped and Principal Kuno appeared on the viewscreen.

“Aloha!” The principal said.

“Principal Kuno. What are you doing here?”

“Why destroying the planet!”

Ranma hated this guy and his cockiness. His whole damn family was like this. Nothing worse than cockiness. “You won’t destroy them. We will destroy you first. We are better than you and you know it!”

“Oh – we see about that pig-tailed boy!”

The screen clicked back to the external view. The Kuno ship swung around and came towards them.

“Fire quantum torpedoes!” Ranma yelled.

The Sisko shot out a round of blue torpedoes from the front of the ship. They all directly hit the Kuno ship.

#### ONBOARD THE KUNO SHIP

“Oh, they got dem mean weapons!” The principal screamed, dodging the steam that was shooting out of the wall. The principal was in no way ready for that kind of impact. They had only dealt with the Federation when they had photon torpedoes.

Tatewaki comes screaming down the hallway. “ON GUARD FATHER! HOW DARE YOU FIRE UPON AKANE TENDO!” The principal just rolled his eyes.

“In case you being blind, they be the ones firing on us!”

Tatewaki looks at all the damaged parts hanging off the walls. He turns to his father and reattaches his bokken to his belt. “Fair enough father. It seems the cretinous Saotome has defiled the great cube of Kuno. We shall smite the!” Kuno begins to cackle and presses some buttons.

Multiple torpedoes fire out of the Kuno ship and create a fierce glowing when they come in contact with the shields of the Sisko.

#### ONBOARD THE SISKO

The impact sends everyone sailing. Most people take it in stride. Except for Ryouga. He slides right out of his chair and onto the ground. Landing on his butt.

“OWOWOWOWOWOWOWOWOWOWOW!” Ryouga screams. He taps his communicator. “Hibiki to transporter room! One to beam directly to sickbay!” The familiar sounds are heard and Ryouga vanishes.

“RYOUGA! DAMN IT!” Ranma screams. “SHAMPOO TAKE HELM!”

Shampoo vaults over the tactical console and sits in Ryouga’s seat. She begins to bring the ship about and into a defensive position.

“She’s wonderful!” Mousse cheers. Shampoo just turns and gives him her patented glare.

“Mousse – Full volley of quantum torpedoes, followed by two volleys of photon torpedoes! Aim to kill.” Ranma ordered, sitting back into his chair.

“Bwa haha! Aye, sir!” Mousse said. Even though they fought a lot, Mousse had learned to respect Ranma in battle. He made a good enemy, but an even better ally.

From the front of the ship, the spread of quantum torpedoes shot out at an incredible rate. The explosion that they caused was even more incredible. Then the photon torpedoes followed. About 10 of them. All impacting where the quantum torpedoes did. It turned the Kuno cube into what more resembled a triangle.

#### ONBOARD THE KUNO SHIP

Principal Kuno's many years in space had taught him a valuable lesson. You gotta know when to hold em, know when to fold em, know when to walk away, and know when to run. This was the time for the latter. The principal turned the ship around and shot out of there at warp 9.99. Kodachi comes running up to her father.

"DADDY! Turn around! We need to rescue my darling Ranma from Akane Tendo!" She whined. The principal just glared at her.

"You're nuts. We ain't going back there till will make some repairs and adjustment!" He explained.

Kodachi began to pout and then finally bounded away in a flurry of black rose pedals. The principal just groaned, put his head in his hands, and began to cry. "Why me?!"

#### ONCE AGAIN ON THE SSKO

"Wow!" Mina gasped. "Look at all the debris!"

Everyone just stared at the viewscreen. The part of the Kuno ship that they had blown off was just floating there. In many, many pieces.

"Shampoo never see Kuno defeated so fast!" Shampoo said as she got up from the help station. "Mousse! Stand down from red alert!"

"Aye aye buttercup!" Mousse obliged.

Ranma just sat in his chair lost in thought. He didn't even acknowledge Shampoo vaulting over him to attack Mousse. He couldn't quite figure out why the Kuno's were so easy to beat. Could it actually be that Starfleet developed a useful weapon?

"Captain?" Mina called.

Ranma was still lost in thought and didn't notice her. Until he was shaken to his senses by a plasma charge, that is.

"WHAT THE —" He screamed. He looked to the view screen. Shampoo climbed off of Mousse and looked up. What appeared to be a Klingon Bird-of-Prey was sitting right in front of them.

"Klingons?" Shampoo mumbled.

Mina began to shake her head. "I don't read any Klingon life signs on the ship. Just human."

That's odd. Thought Ranma. What kind of humans would be on a Bird-of-Prey?

"PIRATES!" Ryouga screamed, hobbling off the turbolift.

"Welcome back," Ranma grumbled.

"No time for that now!" Ryouga panted, running down to his station. "Them are pirates!"

"Shit! Shields up then!" Ranma screamed. It was too late though. Another shot was fired at the ship. The shot rocked the ship hard. One of the aft panels exploded and the lights went out. A familiar sound was heard, then the pirate ship reloaded.

There was some murmuring, and then some of the lights came back on. Ranma peeled himself off the floor and back into his seat. "Arrgh. Mousse, status report."

"MULTIPLE DECKS DAMAGED! MULTIPLE HULL BREACHES!" Mousse screamed.

"Okay! Bridge to sickbay! Report!"

A male's voice is heard. "Lots of injuries, but so far none serious!"

"Understood. But where is Akane?"

"Dr. Tendo –" This caused Ranma to groan. "- is not here! She disappeared after the lights went out!"

"What?" Ranma looked behind him. "Shampoo check for –" Ranma suddenly realized that Shampoo wasn't back there. He looked around the bridge. Mina, Ryouga, Mousse, a couple of extras – no Shampoo.

"Mousse! Check for missing –" Ranma was cut off by Mousse's bawling.

"MY SHAMPOOOOOOOOOOO!"

"Okay then, Mina – run a check for missing crew members," Ranma said, standing up and looking at Mina's panel. After a few blips, the display showed that there were four crewmembers missing.

"Mina, do a roll call. I want everyone accounted for." Mina nodded her acknowledgment. A few moments her display changed to just four names.

"The missing crew members are Commander Akane Tendo, Commander Shampoo –" Mina paused for a few seconds and then continued to read the list. "Lt. Commander Serena Tskino and Lt. Commander Raye Hino."

Ranma put his hand on Mina's shoulder to comfort her. "Run a scan for bodies outside of the breeches."

Mina nods and runs the scan. "None." She runs another scan real quick. "I did think I heard a familiar sound and – yes I am right! There is a transporter trace right over there behind Mousse! Where Shampoo was standing."

"THE PIRATES STOLE MY BEAUTIFUL LOVE SLAVE SHAMPOO?!" Mousse screams. He begins punching buttons on his panel but it blacks out on him. "That's odd."

Suddenly Ranma's chair explodes. Everyone dodges the debris, but the subsequent fire sets off the sprinklers. Soon the cold fire putting out water douses everyone.

RC can just stand there. "Why me."

Mousse flies up onto his console. "QUACK!"

Ryouga just sits in his seat. "BWEEEEEEEEEE!"

Mina can only gasp, and reach for the steak knife that she stashed under her panel.

## CHAPTER 5 - A CHANGE IN TONE

Admiral's log. Stardate – uh... Tendo – what's the date? I don't know! Who are you talking to? You can't make a log entry while in jail! Oh, so I can't!

Genma leans back on the cold, Klingon brig bench. He looks at Soun. Soun is not doing as well as Genma is. Soun had gotten used to warm beds and friendly embassies as Ambassador. You weren't supposed to take an ambassador hostage! You just weren't! Soun made a point to file a complaint when he got rescued. If he got rescued.

"We are getting rescued right, Saotome?" Soun said, sitting right up and staring at Genma.

"Of course we are, Tendo! The boy wouldn't let us down!" Genma lied down completely and started to nap.

Meanwhile, one cell down Serena is in the corner crying while Akane is making her best attempt to calm her down.

"Raye!" Akane called. Raye was on the other side of the cell, just sitting.

"What?"

"Help me get her to stop crying!"

Raye just scoffed. "What makes you think that I can do anything to stop her?"

"You're a counselor right?"

Raye growled. She hated it when people brought that up. "Okay – Serena please stop crying." She didn't.

"Um-" Akane noted. "I tried that already."

Raye just looked at Akane. "Who's the trained professional here, huh?" Akane shrugged and sat down on the bench where Shampoo was. "Serena, it will be okay. The Captain will come and rescue us!" Raye finished with a smile.

Serena stops crying. "He will? Just like Darien?"

Raye's smile disappears. "No – not like Darien. No one is like Darien, but Captain Saotome will come and rescue us."

Serena nods and gets up, and walks with Raye over to the other side of the cell and they have a seat together. Akane gets back up and walks to the force field keeping them locked up. She touches it and an electrical charge shoots through her body.

"God damn!" Akane yells, falling backward. A man wearing jeans and a Grateful Dead T-shirt walks over to them. He is carrying a phase-rifle.

"Whatcha doing, girlie?" He snickers.

“I’m Commander Akane Tendo in the United Federation of Planets! Who are you? Release us at once!”

The man just laughs. He stops laughing when he sees Be’Yach walk in with Brian. He stands at attention. Brian just shoves him out of the way so that he can get a better look at his prisoners.

“Wonderful! The babe transporter worked! Four babes!” He takes a look at Akane. “Excuse me. Three babes and one super babe!”

“Ahem!” Be’Yach groans.

“Baby! You know you will always be the most-superest babe!” Brian grins, pulling her closer and giving her a kiss. “But I can look, can’t I?”

Be’Yach grins. “Sure baby.” She looks to Akane and scowls. “You are not that hot, miss thang.” She laughs and walks over to the other cell. Brian stays to talk to the girls.

“Who is the senior officer here?”

Shampoo gets up and walks forward. “Shampoo is.”

Brian looks at all the girls. “Which one is Shampoo?”

“I Shampoo stupid!”

Brian raises an eyebrow. “You’re pretty hot yourself! Regardless, you are all my prisoners. And it’s going to take a lot of gold-pressed Latium to get you four released.”

Brian motions for the guards. They come over, drop the force shield and grab Shampoo. She starts to resist until Brian pulls out his sidearm and points it at Serena.

“Come on. Fight us so I have an excuse to waste one of your friends.” Brian grins. “I don’t like having prisoners and if you want to give me a reason to get rid of one of them now, feel free.”

Even though it isn’t in Shampoo’s nature, she stops fighting and cooperates.

The guards drag Shampoo off. Brian walks over to where Be’Yach is taunting Soun and Genma.

“Hahaha! Baby, can you believe that these idiots told the guards to not arrest us because we had learned our lesson?” Be’Yach lets out a hardy laugh for that one.

“Yeah – why wouldn’t you be able to trust a pirate?” Brian asks before he falls to the floor laughing.

Genma, who is already pissed from being woken up from his nap, has had just about enough of that. He stands up and walks over toward the force shield.

“Now listen just a damned minute!” Genma yelled. “I am an admiral! You will treat me with some respect!”

Be’Yach and Brian look at each other. Be’Yach lowers the force field, and Brian steps in. He walks over to Genma, who is now cowering in the corner.

“You want respect, old man?” Genma just weakly nods. “Some R-E-S-P-E-C-T? Want me to tell you what it means to me? Here’s some respect for you!” Be’Yach hands Brian a big bucket of water with ice cubes in it. “Coldwater torture!” Brian splashes the water on Genma, and then screams when sitting in front of him is this huge panda.

“WHAT THE F-“ Brain screams, turning and running for the exit. Be’Yach, in a total state of shock, hurries to raise the force shield, but mistakenly does it before Brian is out of the cell.

ZAP!!

That is all that is heard when Brian slams into the force field at full running force. Then a scream is heard. “LET ME OUT LET ME OUT!”

Be’Yach manages to drop the force field and let Brian out. She then raises the shield. Then the two go running from the holding cell area. All the while, GenmaPanda (GP) remains cowering in the corner. Soun on the other hand has moved from the other corner to the middle of the cell and begins to sob.

“Dad?” A voice is heard from the cell next door. Soun’s ears perked up.

“Akane?”

“Dad! What are you doing in there?”

Soun runs over and comes as close to the force shield as he can without being zapped. “Daddy was kidnapped by the pirates! Saotome is over here too!”

“Dad we’re working on a way to escape. Just sit tight. We know for sure that Ranma is trying to rescue us as well!”

Soun goes back to the bench in the back of the cell. He sits down. He begins to sob into his hands. He feels a furry paw touch his shoulder. He looks up and sees GP standing there with his portable Go board. Soun smiles. “Game on!”

-----

Brian was pissed. He didn’t get scared very often. Before this, the last thing that had scared him was the nude Bea Arthur pictures that he had accidentally plundered. Other than that, and the occasional alcohol prohibition that the Federation all too often tried to implement, nothing scared him.

Except for pandas.

Brian knew exactly where his fear of pandas came from. Unlike most phobias that are formed from a traumatic experience at a young age, Brian’s experience happened just last year.

*FLASHBACK TIME! WHOO HOO! LOCATION: CHINA LAND RESORT. (A REGISTERED TRADEMARK OF THE COMMUNIST PLANETS OF DISNEY/AOL/TIME WARNER.)*

The captain and Be’Yach are enjoying their vacation. The resort was very clean and state-run. The fifteen heavily armed police officers monitoring the park gave the two a wonderful sense of

security. The lack of an extradition treaty that Disney/AOL/Time Warner had with the Federation also helped. Yes, this was turning out to be the most perfect vacation. Who says communism is all bad?

Unfortunately, the increased sense of security and the feelings of bliss the two had dulled their senses for trouble. Neither of them could feel the pair of beady eyes peering at them through the bushes.

“More potato salad my love?” Brian asked the cooing Be’Yach.

“DID SOMEONE SAY COUP?” One of the guards screamed.

Brian and Be’Yach both casually pointed to an overweight, yet still incredibly sexy man sitting behind a computer. The man screamed as the guards rushed him.

“I’M JUST TRYING TO WRITE A GODDAMNED FANFIC!” The man screamed as he bolted towards the woods, with all the cops in hot pursuit. “I’M NOT VERY TALENTED AND YOU GUYS AREN’T HELPING! OW!”

Be’Yach smiled. “I’d love some, Hunny bunny!”

Brian fed his girlfriend a spoonful of the yummy store-bought potato salad. Suddenly out of the bushes a very large, and very angry-looking panda stomped out. “Panda want potato salad.” It growled.

Be’Yach just grinned. “Don’t worry. The guards will get him.”

Brian returned the smile, turned to call for the guards, and then realized that they had all taken off after the brilliant, yet misunderstood writer.

Brian stood. He knew that he was going to have to defend the very expensive potato salad. This wasn’t just KFC potato salad. This was the good stuff. The kind that they only keep in the back room of the local Jewel/Osco. Brian used most of his favors that the Jewel people owed him from when he was produce manager.

Be’Yach cleared her throat.

Oh yeah. He remembered. Gotta defend Be’Yach too.

Brian took up a fighting stance. The panda did too. Brian now more than ever hated the fact that weapons were banned at the resort. He really hated the body cavity search that he had to endure too.

The captain took a swing at the panda. The panda easily and effortlessly avoided the swing. It would seem that the panda was well versed in hand-to-paw combat. The fuzzy combatant took a swing back at Brian. Brian had a little bit harder time avoiding that swing than the panda did. Brian was practically useless in hand-to-hand combat. In fact, he lost his balance.

The panda moved in. He shoved Brian’s back, knocking him onto his hands and knees. The panda then began to do the most unthinkable thing that a panda can do.

Be’Yach can only stare bug-eyed, as her man is dry-humped by the panda. (Yes, Brian was still clothed. Don’t be hentai.)

The panda is really into it. You could tell he's done this kind of thing before. He slaps Brian's ass and lets out a growl.

"GROWL! Who's your daddy bitch? Whose potato salad is it? Show me some respect, and show me what it means to me!"

Brian, who is bawling, attempts to reply. "You're my daddy!! It's your potato salad!! R-E-S-P-E-C-T!!"

The panda stops his violation, climbs off his victim, and picks up the potato salad. He turns to Be'Yach. "Be nice to my bitch. Make sure he calls."

The panda kicks some dirt onto Be'Yach and walks back into the bushes with his bounty. Be'Yach crawls over to Brian, who is still crying and still in the position the panda left him in. Be'Yach pulls out her communicator.

"Be'Yach to the Jose Cuervo. Two to beam directly to sick-bay."

The transporter beam grabs them just as the police officers return, dragging the obviously persecuted writer behind them.

"Look!" One of the officers bellowed. "They left some potato salad!"

A low grumbling growl is heard from the bushes.

As the flashback ends, Brian allows his head to slam onto his desk. He resumes his crying.

"Hun?" Be'Yach calls.

Brian slowly lifts his head back up. The depression from the flashback and the fact that the console was made out of metal put him in a state of sadness. "Yeah?"

"Lita has the prisoner ready for –" Be'Yach cuts herself off, noticing Brian's puffy eyes. "The panda?"

Brian nods.

"You want we should abandon him somewhere?"

Brian nods.

"Okay. I'll see to it."

Brian hugs Be'Yach. Brian wasn't usually very emotional or affectionate aboard the ship where others could see him, but the thing with the panda on the planet, and now in the brig was starting to really get to him.

"As I was saying. Lita has the prisoner ready for interrogation."

Brain sighed and nodded. Taking prisoners wasn't really his thing. Wasn't his gas. Wasn't what he liked to do. He was more into it for the plundering. Brian never really wanted to hurt people. He just wanted to get rich. Sometimes the two go hand in hand, so Brian hired Lita to do the dirty work.

Brian chuckled to himself. He remembered how he had to delete Lita's transporter access because she would end up always taking prisoners when he wasn't looking.

Since he got that to stop she's been pretty well behaved. When they did take prisoners he had to watch her. She had the nasty habit of, well, killing them. But, Brian knew that in her heart, she was a kind person.

He remembered back to when they first met. She had almost killed him because he had 13 items in the 12 item express lane. Brian knew that she would be very useful. Since then the two had become good friends.

"HEY CAPTAIN DUMBASS! YOU WANT I SHOULD START WITHOUT YOU?" Lita screamed, over the familiar sound of a charging phase rifle.

"No, No, sweetie." He rolled his eyes toward Be'Yach who just giggled. "I'm a-coming."

Brian trekked into the room that the Klingons used for interrogation. He loved his girlfriend dearly, but her people were a fucked up race.

The room was dark, with one bright light in the center. Under the light is the interrogation chair. The chair was made of metal, like everything else on the ship. The chair had the capability of becoming a table, for the really icky interrogations.

Strapped to the chair was Shampoo. She had been stripped down to her underwear. The girl was doing her damndest to hold a straight face, but it was painfully obvious that she wanted to cry. She had bruises all over her body. She also had what appeared to be electrodes attached to her bare stomach and her neck. The area around them was black and blue. Apparently, Lita HAD started without Brian.

Nothing in Shampoo's years with Starfleet had prepared her for this. Of course, there were capture survival classes. But the cushy simulations that the Federation used were nothing like the real thing. She couldn't think anything could be like really being captured.

The thing that really astonished her that the girl doing the interrogation looked human. She couldn't imagine how one human could do this to another. Shampoo had no problem with a revenge killing or two, but torture? It was unheard of in the 24th century.

"So," Lita said after the door had closed. Her tone was much calmer than it was just a moment ago when she snapped on Brian. "How are you?"

"Shampoo. Commander. Serial number 2 Zulu 651 Lima 94." She grunted through her teeth.

Lita laughs. "That's all she seems to know how to say!"

"That's all she's trained to say." Be'Yach glared at Shampoo. She reviewed the PADD that had the information about their prisoners. "This is taking too damned long. We're going to end up being compromised with our proverbial pants down."

"Commander," Brian said, walking over to Shampoo. He squats slightly to bring himself eye-level with the detained Amazon. "I need you to tell me the technical information behind the multi-phasic shielding that the Federation has in place around their lunar Latium deposits."

Shampoo opened her purple eyes for what seems like the first time since this started. There were tears pouring out of them. "That all you kidnap us for?"

Lita leans close to Be'Yach. "I wonder what's wrong with the universal translator? Her syntax has been goofy since the beginning!"

Be'Yach just shrugs.

"That's all. Once we have the information we will put your friends in an escape pod and let them go." Brian replied, trying to put Shampoo at ease.

"What about Shampoo?" She asked.

"Well." Lita smiled. "We can't let you go till AFTER we get the Latium. After all, you know our plan now."

Shampoo grimaced. It would all be over if she just gave up the information. It wouldn't be a total betrayal of all she was sworn to protect. Just some lousy Latium.

She motioned with her head for Brian to come closer. "Shampoo tells only you."

Brian moved up so that he would be the only one to hear Shampoo.

Shampoo inhaled deeply and then – "YAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!" She screamed at the top of her lungs right into Brian's ear.

Brian just dropped like a sack of White Castle at a porn convention. Be'Yach ran to her lover's side while Lita came up and backhanded Shampoo with the phaser rifle.

"Ow." Brian groaned, returning to his feet. "Put her back in her cell and bring the engineer. She was already crying. She'll give it up."

Lita nods and motions for the guards to drag Shampoo out. They comply and Lita follows them out.

Be'Yach looks Brian over. "Are you okay honey?"

Brian looks at his girlfriend in total shock. "Did you just call me a gay dummy?"

Be'Yach laughs. "No, I asked if you were O-KAY HON-EY."

Brian shakes some of the loose parts out of his head. "I'd be better if you'd stop calling me gay. Both of you."

Elsewhere on the ship, the guards were dragging a still fighting Shampoo back to her cell. Even though she had been beaten and electrocuted she still had some fight in her. She had to. In most cases of capture, weakness meant death.

The guards lower the force shield and throw her in.

"Are you okay, Shampoo?" Akane asked, running over to check on her.

"Shampoo fine." She murmured as she falls to the floor and passes out.

The guards point their guns at Serena. "Okay meatball head. You're next."

Lita, who was standing outside the detention area, bolted in. The insult she heard could only be directed at one person. "Meatball – Serena?"

Raye and Serena glared at her. Serena resumed crying, but Raye ran to the edge of the cell. Only the guard's rifles kept her from pouncing on Lita.

"Lita? WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING?" Raye screamed.

Lita was no longer in her happy-go-lucky prisoner-torturing mood she was in before.

"I'm sorry. Not all of us fit in at Starfleet." She looked to Serena who was cowering in the corner.

Serena couldn't understand how someone she was so close to, someone who she had been a sailor scout with could have become a bad guy. She remembered when it had happened to Tuxedo Mask, but that was due to magical influence. Was Lita under some magical influence?

The look in Lita's eyes was much different. She could tell that it was Lita. Just not the Lita she thought she knew. Serena just couldn't figure it out. Sure, they had all pondered it. What it would be like to be a bad guy. What it would be like living by your rules and no one else's. But none of them had the heart to do it. None of them were evil. Well, at least she didn't think any of them were.

"Serena –" Lita's voice was breaking slightly. "I need to talk to you. Please, willingly, come with me." Lita's mind was starting to mess with her. She was starting to become overly emotional. Not something that happened a lot anymore. Except for anger. She was always plenty angry.

"NO!" Raye screamed. "If you wanna fuck with someone, fuck with me. I'll make it a little more fun."

Lita felt anger returning to her. "What's your job, Raye?" Lita grabs a PADD from the counter. "Ship's counselor?" Lita laughed at her own words. "What a joke. I don't need a damned counselor. Not that you'd help me anyway. I need engineering information, and it seems by some strange twist in fate Serena is an engineer."

"Well, you sure as hell won't get any of that from that lame-brain," Raye grumbled, chucking her thumb at Serena. "Either take me or kill me."

Lita's smile disappeared. She knew what she had to do. She drew her phaser and shot Raye. It didn't feel right, but she knew she had to do it.

The blast hit Raye and sent her flying against the wall. She slid down the wall and to the ground. Serena and Akane both screamed. Akane went to Raye's side.

"Grab her," Lita ordered.

The guards grabbed Serena. One of them started to twist her arm. Upon the scream let out by Serena Lita fired her gun and shot that guard.

"I SAID GRAB HER NOT HURT HER!" Lita screamed.

The guards complied and drug Serena out.

“Oh, grab that too,” Lita said, pointing to the guard she shot.

Another lackey came in and drug him out. Lita raised the force shield and began to walk away.

“HEY!” Akane screamed. “WHAT ABOUT COMMANDER HINO?”

Lita, never stopping or looking back called back. “Don’t worry. She’s just stunned. She’ll be up in fifteen minutes or so. Oh, but she will be twice as grumpy.”

“Gee thanks,” Akane mumbled to herself.

# CHAPTER 6 - THE BLIND LEADING THE BLIND LEADING THE STUPID

“MY DARLING SHAMPOO!” Mousse bawled.

Ranma groaned. “Okay then, Mina, can you get me a damage report?”

Mina checked out her terminal. “Main power out on all decks, backup power out on decks 6 to 14, hull breaches on decks 4, 5, and 17, emergency force fields are in place and stable. Weapons are offline. Shields, both navigational and defensive are offline. Warp engines are offline. Impulse power at ten percent –” Her panel chirped at her. “Nix that. Impulse power offline.”

“Any good news?” Ranma asked, not really wanting an answer.

“Ah – um – no. Wait, yes. Sort of. The Kuno ship is still retreating. I think. Long-range sensors and communications are-”

“Offline?” Ranma guessed. Mina nodded. “Okay, first things first. Get engines, shields, and weapons back online. We need to go get Akane and the others.”

“Aye.” Mina acknowledged.

Ryoga starts mumbling to himself.

“What was that, Ensign?” Ranma glared.

“I was just commenting to myself that I bet they don’t even notice the scratch I made,” Ryoga commented, never taking his eyes off the starfield on the viewer.

Ranma shakes his head and walks over to his ready room.

\*SMACK\*

Ranma rubs his face.

“Door hydraulics offline!” Mina calls out.

Ranma rolls his eyes as he pries the door open.

He walks over to his desk. He looks outside the window and notices the planet seems to be rotating in an odd direction. He then realizes that the planet is just fine. The Sisko seems to be doing cartwheels.

“Cool.” Ranma acknowledged. He walks back over to the door. “Hey, Mina. You might wanna put stabilizing the ship’s yaw on the top of your list before we spin into a star or something.”

“You know, I thought I felt something. Navigational thrusters are offline.” Mina grumbles in acknowledgment.

Ranma pulls his doors closed and sits down at his desk. He puts his head down. "Damn Akane."

Cool plagiarized Star Trek doorbell sound here.

"Come in" Ranma calls.

\*SMACK\*

"Doors don't work!" He could hear Mina yell. The person on the other side pries the doors open and walks in.

"Gosnell." Ranma acknowledges.

Gosnell rubs his face and slides the doors closed. He sets a glass on Ranma's desk. "Thought you might be thirsty."

Ranma sniffs it, then downs it. He screams. "WHAT THE HELL IS THAT?!"

Gosnell grins. "Vodka. Straight up. My old Captain loved it."

Ranma grins. "Thanks. Hey, I'm sorry I yelled at you earlier."

Gosnell shrugs. "It was my bad."

The two sit in silence for a few minutes. Ranma, totally lost in thought.

Damn Akane. If she hadn't been here she wouldn't have gotten captured. I can just imagine what her father is going to do to me once he finds out. Ranma notices that his glass is full again. He slams it and resumes his thoughts. Stupid pops giving me this assignment.

A shudder goes through the ship. His communicator chirps.

"Captain, Commander Anio here. Ships yaw stabilized. Also, I fixed the doors."

"Good work Commander. Saotome out." He looks at Gosnell. "So, what's on your mind?"

Gosnell smiles. "I was just about to ask you the same thing."

"You were not."

"Okay, so I wasn't. But you can talk to me if you'd like. I know that you aren't good at expressing your emotions, but it's not good for you to bottle them all up inside. I sense turmoil in your life."

Ranma sighs. "Is it that obvious?"

The bartender clears his throat. "We can't talk here though. Come with me."

Gosnell gets up and walks to the door.

\*SMACK\*

The door slides open. Gosnell glares at Mina, rubbing his face.

"It opened, didn't it?"

“Why are we going to the holodeck?” Ranma grumbled. He was starting to feel the vodka.

“I’m going to take you somewhere that will make talking to me a lot easier,” Gosnell replied. Once at the holodeck he hit some buttons. “Computer. Run Gosnell 71 Alpha.”

The computer chirped in compliance and the doors opened.

“Denny’s?” Ranma asked.

“Nothing loosens a tongue like Denny’s.” Gosnell grinned as they had a seat in a booth. A waitress gives them a couple of glasses of what appears to be water. Ranma sips his.

“More vodka?” Ranma asked. “Who did this previous captain of your work for? Exxon?”

“No. Was just easier for him to not deal with things. He was a good man. Not sure what happened to him.”

“I see.”

“So, what’s bothering you?”

“Akane was captured.”

“Ah. So I assume that our next order of business is to rescue her?” Gosnell asked, between sips of his glass.

“Yeah. Damn her. I always have to rescue her. She’s too stupid to know what’s good for her and just stay at home.”

“Is that really it?”

Ranma looks up from his menu. “What do you mean?”

“The only reason you are rescuing her? Is it because she’s too stupid to do things on her own?”

Ranma had never really heard his own words repeated back to him. Well, not from an independent third party. They sounded – cruel.

Ranma shook his head and stared at his menu. “Well – She’s not stupid. She’s just too stubborn to let me protect her.”

“Is that your job?”

Ranma makes eye contact with Gosnell and becomes somewhat defensive. “Of course.”

“Why?”

“Because her father will kill me if I don’t.”

“That’s why? No other reason?”

“Other reason?” Ranma didn’t like feeling weak. Ranma knew there was another reason but he couldn’t admit it.

“You love her?”

“WHAT? NO!” Ranma yelled and slammed the rest of his vodka. He immediately started flailing his arms at the waitress for a refill.

Gosnell rolls his eyes. “You do. You’re too defensive about it not to.”

Ranma’s eyes returned to his menu. “I like her,” Ranma admitted.

“You ever tell her that?”

Ranma thought back to all of the times that he had ALMOST admitted to her that he cared about her. “No.”

“Why not?”

Ranma let out a sigh. “She doesn’t feel the same for me.”

“You know that for a fact?”

“Well, she’s always yelling at me, hitting me, for various reasons, most of which aren’t even my fault.”

“Like in 10-Forward?”

Ranma nodded. He was glad Gosnell was finally seeing his point. “Yeah. So I think it’s obvious she doesn’t have any feelings for me.”

Gosnell sighed. “I understand. Just like you yell at her and call her stupid and you don’t have any feelings for her.”

Ranma stared blankly at the booth Gosnell was getting up from. He patted Ranma on the back. “I’m going to go see if I can help get the weapons online. Think about it, Captain. I had to see a good thing go bad.”

\*SMACK\*

“GAWDDAMEDDOORS!”

Ranma completely ignored the smack and the grumbling Gosnell. He was right. Whenever it came up she got completely defensive about her feelings for him. Just like he did when the subject came up. Only she did more so than him.

A lot more than him.

“OH MY GOD, SHE LOVES ME!” Ranma yelled out, catching the attention of the holographic patrons.

Ranma slides out of his booth and runs to the doors.

\*SMACK\*

What Ranma said next was inaudible, which is probably for the best considering the story is already borderline adult.

-----

“Daddy – My ass is sore.” George Kuno called.

The principal turned from the panel he was working on only to be confronted by his adopted son’s bare ass.

“EEK!” The principal called out, shoving George out of the way. “Don’t ever point that at me again. If your ass hurts go regenerate, otherwise help fix the ship.”

George turned, pulled up his drawers, and looked at his father. “What do you want me to do?”

The principal looked at his command console. “Find da otha kiekie and bring dem up here. I have a new plan.”

“Yes sir.” George walked off, moving somewhat gingerly.

The principal went back to work on his panel. “Damn that Saotome. How many times is he going to ruin my life?”

The memories of Ranma advising him to spend more time with his family continued to run through his head. The time when the principal was hiding from Tatewaki and Ranma pointing out his hiding place fueling his anger.

Sure, the principal was eccentric. A little insane, especially when it came to rules. But he was a kitten compared to the insanity levels that were Kodachi and Tatewaki. Then, once again upon Ranma’s advice, he adopts a new child. Who’d have known that he adopted the anti-Christ?

“What’s an anti-Christ?” George asks, scaring the hell out of the principal.

“Uh-Guy who is like you.”

“I see father.”

“It’s all good son! No worries!”

George smiled and nodded. He loved getting approval. He knew he was the favorite kiekie.

Behind George were Kodachi and Tatewaki. They both appeared to have been fighting with each other.

The principal can only sigh. “Have my kiekie been fightin’?”

“I shan’t tell a lie.” Tachi started. “This wench insulted the pig-tailed girl and Akane Tendo. I know it was my duty, the Blue Thunder of the alpha quadrant, Tatewaki Kuno, to defend their honor, even against my own sister!” Kuno then began his usual nutball laugh.

“Father!” Kodachi protested. “I was defending the honor of my darling Ranma Saotome! He called him an evil sorcerer!”

“He is! He has stolen the pig-tailed girl and Akane Tendo from me!” Kuno rebutted.

“Shaddup both of you.” The principal said, dropping his accent for just a moment. “I need de kiekie to help da fixin’ of da ship! That way we can capture the pigtailed girl and Akane Tendo for you my son and Ranma for you my daughter.”

“And Shampoo’s eyes for me, pa?” George inquired.

“Yeah. Shampoo’s eyes for my vilest keikei.”

George smiled. He then heard something in the back of his head. “DAD! I’m picking up a transmission!”

“From where?”

-----

Ranma stormed onto the bridge. “STATUS”

Mina turned to reply. “Impulse power back up. Shields are at 30 percent. Main power has been restored on all decks. Still no warp, weapons, or long-range sensors.”

Damn. Ranma thought. “What about the bird of prey’s plasma trail?”

Mina shook her head. “It’s been too long to get an accurate reading. For what it’s worth though they couldn’t have gotten too far. The cloak won’t work above warp 5 without leaving major ionization trails.”

“Making the cloak pointless. So where’s the farthest they could be right now?”

Mina checked her console. “Four light-years in each direction.”

Great. Only take us a few decades to search that at impulse. Ranma grumbled. “Get sensors back online A-S-A-P.”

“Aye.” Mina went back to work.

Ranma sat down in his new chair that an engineering crew just reinstalled for him. He didn’t really like sitting in it. After seeing the last one explode he got a little paranoid.

“Captain?” Ryouga murmured.

“What Ryouga.”

“Ranma, I think I may have found Akane.”

Ranma got up and scampered to Ryouga’s panel. “What? How?”

“I was practicing pushing the buttons when I accidentally got a communications sub-system online. I found this transmission.”

Ranma checked out the screen.

15 A 217 N 22.

“Coordinates?” Ranma asked Ryouga.

“No. Akane’s serial number.”

OH MY GOD, SHE’S CLEVER! Ranma’s brain yelled. Ranma smacked his head to try to get the voice to shut up. The vodka was making it hard enough to think.

“Mina! Can you trace this?” Ryouga demanded. Mina looked up to Ranma, who just acknowledged his approval of the unauthorized order.

“Yes – CAPTIAN – I can. One second.” She shoots Ryouga a dirty look. Ryouga returns a look of his own.

“Found them,” Mina replied. “They are traveling at warp 3 towards – Earth?”

What the hell are they doing? Ranma asked himself. “Set an intercept course. Best possible speed. Once warp is online do it.”

Ryouga grunted an acknowledgment and the ship took off, surprisingly in the correct direction.

Ryouga started to chuckle to himself. I’ll save you Akane! Ranma won’t!

Ryouga began to cackle out loud. Mina and Ranma looked at him, but he was completely oblivious.

My ass still hurts though!

-----

Akane almost enjoyed the fact that the other two were out cold. It was so quiet. Just the sounds of the ship. That and her father's soft sobbing from the cell next to her, but she had gotten used to that over the years.

What really amazed her that for once Ranma’s dad was useful.

MOMENTS EARLIER

“Is everyone over there okay?” Genma called over to Akane’s cell once the guard had stepped outside.

“More or less,” Akane noted. “Shampoo and Commander Hino are out cold.”

“Hrm,” Genma grumbled. “Do you have any ideas?”

Akane sat back. “Maybe if one of us still had their communicators.”

Genma began to dig through his pockets. “I have one.”

Akane ran to the corner of the cell. “How?”

Genma smiled. “I hide an extra one in the lining of my clothes!”

Akane scowled. “Get kidnapped often?”

Genma frowned. “More often than you’d think.”

Akane began to put her plan to work. One problem though.

“How do you get the communicator to me?”

Genma looked around the cell. He noticed there was an air duct on the wall that bordered Akane’s cell. “Is there an air duct at the top of the adjoining wall on your side?”

Akane looked. Sure enough, there was.

“Yeah.” She replied.

Genma shook Soun. “I need you to give me a boost.”

Soun shook his head. “You’re almost 300 pounds. Nuts to that.”

Genma rolls his eyes. “Fine, I’ll give you a boost. Stick this through the air duct.”

Soun gets up and allows Genma to boost him up. He sticks the communicator into the duct. Unfortunately, the airflow sucks it up into the ductwork.

A slight clang is heard. Then another. Then a third. Finally, the communicator comes flopping out of an air duct on the other side of the cell.

Akane just shrugged and picked it up. “Got it.”

“You make your daddy proud, Akane.” Soun bawled.

“I will dad.”

BACK TO THE TIME, WE LEFT OFF, PLUS THE TIME IT TOOK YOU TO READ THE LAST BIT, PLUS THE TIME IT TOOK YOU TO READ THIS HEADER.

Akane had managed to pull most of the wires out of the wall that she needed. She now more than ever enjoyed the simplicity of Klingon engineering. They didn’t care how it worked, or about millions upon millions of wires. Everything ran through a central pipe through the center of the ship.

Neat how the brig was right against the pipe. Klingons never have had good judgment when it came to things like that.

Akane used a hair clip from Shampoo’s hair to act as a jumper. The communicator chirped to life.

“Admiral, I can’t send a voice message. This transmission is too likely to be picked up anyway. What’s something that Ranma should be able to recognize?” Akane asked.

“Send your phone number.”

Akane shook her head. “After they added the last new area code my number is 71 digits long. That’s too much.”

Akane went to scratch her neck. Then she realized it.

The dark-haired girl pulls her dog tags out of her shirt. She smiles. Then frowns. “He’d better be looking.”

Akane began to tap out the message in Federation Morse code. She knew Ranma probably didn’t remember it, but the Sisko’s computer will convert it to text.

On the bridge, an officer was sitting at a panel half asleep. He didn’t notice the slight power increase in the communications array.

Be'Yach was sitting in the captain's chair. She also was half asleep. She decided to let Brian and Lita get the information from the blonde girl. Her crying was making the quarter Klingon's ears hurt.

Be'Yach let out one of those damned 'almost asleep' snorts. You know, the kind that gets you in trouble in English class. It startled the communications officer. He sat straight up and glared at his console.

"What the hell?" He mumbled to himself.

This awoke Be'Yach. "What?"

"Someone's transmitting."

Be'Yach just grumbled. "Probably just Brian. What's the transmission?"

"I don't know. It's in Morse code."

Be'Yach awoke completely now. "He doesn't know Morse code! Get someone who can decode that!"

"Yes ma'am." The officer yelled as he ran from the room.

Back in the interrogation room, Lita had sat Serena in the chair. She didn't restrain her or strip her as she did to Shampoo. Lita frowned at her old friend.

"Serena – I, we need information from you."

Serena just shook her head. "Raye was right. I'm a lame brain. I won't be able to help you."

Lita exhaled deeply. "You are not a lame brain. You're smart and you can accomplish a lot. Now, just tell us what we need to know so we can let you and the others go."

Serena closed her eyes. "I won't betray my oath. Besides, I know you won't kill us."

Brian walked up to Serena and put his gun in her face. "This is getting annoying. I don't know you people, and I won't hesitate to kill you. Now give me the shield frequencies to the multi-phasic shield around the Federation's Lunar Latinum deposits!"

Lita started to protest but Brian pointed his finger at her.

"We can stop all this with this one haul. I'm tired of nearly being killed. I just want my money and my beer and to relax!" Brian said to Lita, without turning.

He stared wide-eyed at Serena. "Please. The frequencies."

Serena begins to sob. She could tell that he didn't want to kill her, but he would.

"Please," Lita said, trying her best to hold back tears.

Serena opened her eyes to look right up the barrel of the Glock Phaser.

"4 – 2 – 9 –" Serena's cut off by the intercom.

“BRIAN!” Be’Yach’s voice screamed. “KUNO SHIP ON INTERCEPT! GOSNELL CLASS ON INTERCEPT! PRISONERS TRANSMITTING DISTRESS CALL!”

Brian holsters his sidearm. “Fuck.” He storms off leaving Lita alone with Serena.

“Why?” Serena asks.

Lita can no longer hold back her tears. “You know how I never fit in. Once the Federation banned crime-fighting groups, there was nothing for me to do.

“I tried to get in with Starfleet Intelligence, but they said I didn’t pass my background check! I spent ten goddamned days filling out that 78-page form! What else could I do? The captain gave me a place to live, a job where I am good at what I do. A place where I finally felt I belonged.”

“YOU’RE A PIRATE!”

Lita shook her head. “It’s not always like this. What’s the rest of the frequency?”

Serena shook her head. “Go to hell.”

Lita exhaled deeply again. She turned and walked out, locking the door behind her.

Brian comes storming into the cell area and notices the wall panel pulled off. “Lower the force field.” He orders.

Brian walks in and points his weapon at Akane. “There’s no stun setting on this, for your information.” He shoots the communicator.

Suddenly Shampoo who is still lying on the floor sweeps out Brian’s legs. He falls and Akane pounces on him, getting his weapon. The lackey that was with Brian moves in but is taken out by Raye who was also playing possum on the floor.

Akane and Raye step out, weapons in hand. Shampoo just continues to stand in the cell.

“What’s wrong?” Raye yells.

“Shampoo no fighting naked.” Shampoo replies, reminding them that she is still in her underwear.

Akane removes her jacket and tosses it to Shampoo. She also pulls the pants off of Brian.

“Better than nothing.” Shampoo acknowledges.

Raye tosses Shampoo a rifle that she finds on the table. Shampoo walks out and raises the force shield to the cell. Akane walks over to her father’s cell.

“Dad, Admiral Saotome. Wait about 2 minutes and then head for the nearest escape pod.”

They acknowledge her and step to the edge of the cell.

Genma looks worried. Shampoo and Raye have that ‘need revenge, kill, kill, kill’ look on their faces. “What are you three going to do?” Soun asks.

“Pay bitch back.” Shampoo grumbles.

Raye and Akane look at Shampoo, who is glowing a very bright purple aura.

The three women step up to the door of the detention area. It opens and the two guards outside, assuming it's their boss, stand at attention.

"At Ease." Raye snickers shooting both of them.

"Nice." Akane smiles.

"With a cool dry wit like that, I could be an action hero." Raye grins back. "We need to find Serena."

Akane nods. Shampoo looks at the two for the first time. "You two go to bridge. Shampoo retrieve friend."

"I don't think we should split—" Raye is cut off.

"Shampoo in charge. Go. Shampoo take care of klutz girl."

Raye didn't like it, but Shampoo was the commanding officer. She nodded and she and Akane went off towards the bridge.

-----

"WARP ONLINE!" Mina screams from across the bridge. "We can get 7.5."

Ranma shook his head. The three Mina's were very pretty. "Gud nuff. Go P-Chan!"

Ryouga turned around. "DON'T CALL ME THAT!"

"Sorry Charlotte!" Ranma giggled.

Ryouga can only growl as he engages the engines.

Mina walks up and sits in the XO seat next to Ranma. She leans over to him.

"Begging the captain's pardon, but you're drunk sir."

Ranma turns to her. "Yeah. Gosnell. Drink. Denny's."

Mina only sighed. Gosnell was very sexy, but he had horrible timing. "Computer, activate bridge E-M-H."

The balding EMH appeared on the bridge.

"Please state the nature of the medical emergency."

"The Captain's drunk." She pointed to Ranma who was starting to melt out of his chair.

"I'm a doctor, not his mother." The EMH smugly replied.

"You not my mudder?" Ranma mumbles.

"Can't you give him something?" Mina queried.

The EMH scratches his head. He pulls out his medkit from under a table, loads a medical hypospray, and injects Ranma. "This will work."

Ranma looks at the EMH. He smiles. Then frowns. Ranma grabs his mouth and bolts for the bathroom. The EMH can only smile.

"When he returns make him drink about 4 liters of water. He'll be fine momentarily then."

"Thanks," Mina says, still looking off in the direction the captain ran. "Computer, end E-M-H."

The holographic doctor vanishes. Mina walks over to the replicator and gets the water ready for Ranma. He returns shortly.

"How do you feel?" Mina asks.

"Better than the crewman who was taking a piss back there," Ranma replies as he slams back into his chair. Mina hands him his water.

Ranma looks at it suspiciously. "What's this?"

"Water," Mina promises.

Ranma sips it. Sure enough. He chugs it and starts on his second one.

"Shit." Ryouga mumbles.

"What?" Ranma whimpers. "You didn't get us lost again, did you?"

Ryouga scowls. "No, I didn't get us lost again. The transmission ended."

"E-T-A to their last known position?" Ranma asked.

"Seven minutes," Mina replied.

"Mousse. Do you think you can pull yourself together for a little bit?" Ranma asked the young man sobbing behind him.

"Yes."

"Good. When we are in position I want you to ignite a tachyon charge." Ranma smiled. Mousse smiled too. He knew what Ranma was up to.

"There for causing their plasma trail to ignite!" Mousse understood.

Ranma nodded. Ryouga spun around.

"YOU CAD! You could kill Akane like that!"

Ranma shook his head. "The bird of prey isn't going to explode because of a little exhaust fire. Trust me."

Ryouga didn't like it, but he decided to go along with it for the time being. The only way he could rescue Akane is if he found her first, and Ranma's seemed to be the only plan they had for the time being.

-----

“ALAS! THE BEAUTIFUL AND BUSTFUL AKANE TENDO WANTS ME! SHE LEFT ME SUCH A WONDERFUL LOVE MESSAGE!” Kuno yelled as he bounded from one side of the cube to the next. Kodachi could do nothing but glower.

“Brother dear, Akane Tendo told me that she would like you better WITHOUT YOUR HEAD!” Kodachi snapped her ribbon at Kuno.

“Ouch,” George said as the ribbon wrapped around his wrist. He yanked the other end of the ribbon out of Kodachi’s hand and put it in his pocket. “Father says the keikei shouldn’t fight, so I will make sure the keikei don’t fight.”

Kodachi cocked her head at George. “You’re awfully smug for someone who was adopted.”

George gasps. “Adopted? Not I!”

Kuno walked over to George. “You didn’t know?”

George just shakes his head. “It can’t be true.”

“You can’t tell? You don’t look anything like us!” Kodachi pointed out.

“What do you mean?” George asks.

“You’re black for one,” Kuno replies.

George turns to Kuno. “Oh, so now the black man isn’t good enough to be your brother?”

Kuno shakes his head. “That’s not what I meant.”

George shakes the tears out of his eyes. “I HATE YOU BOTH!” He runs from the room as the principal runs in.

“WHAT ARE YOU TWO DOING?” He screams.

Kodachi laughs. “We made George cry!”

Kuno laughs as well. “Obviously not a true Kuno.”

“Oh no. Oh no. Oh no.” The principal mumbles to himself as he watches the self-destructive thoughts of George Kuno go through his mind.

The principal looks at his two children. “You bozos on ya own! I’m getting back to de islands while da getting’s good!”

The principal runs off to his escape pod and ejects.

Kuno looks to his sister. “You know how to fly this thing?”

Kodachi responds with a negative headshake.

“Guess we’ll have to apologize to George.”

Kodachi responds with a positive headshake.

“No need,” George grumbles as he walks back in.

Kodachi moves behind her original brother. “You’re not mad at us?” She asks.

George shakes his head. “We have an objective to complete. We won’t let – father down.”

The elder two Kunos nod and they get to work chasing down the signal from Akane.

Outside, in a small sphere-shaped escape pod –

“And dey wonder why I’m so crazy.” Principal Kuno says, rocking back and forth.

-----

Akane sent a quick hand signal to Raye letting her know that there are three crewmen standing by the door to the bridge of the Klingon ship. Raye nods and slinks around a corner as Akane creeps forward.

“So, have you seen the latest episode of Survivor: East St. Louis?” The tallest crewman asked the other two.

“I have,” Akane called. The crewmen turn to her.

“Who got voted off this week?” Another crewman asked.

Akane scratches her head. “I think it was V’Talk.”

The crewmen all groan. “They always pick on the Vulcan.”

Akane nods in agreement before remembering that she needs to shoot these people. She draws her phaser and takes two of them out. The other dodges the blast and begins to go for his phaser, but is quickly taken down by Raye, who was just around the corner.

The two girls walk to the bridge. The doors don’t open. Akane hits the release button. Nothing.

“What’s the deal?” Akane whispers.

“You need an access code.” Be’Yach grins. Standing next to her are 10 crewmen, all with phaser rifles. “Lower your weapons.”

Akane and Raye comply. The crewmen take Akane and Raye back into custody.

“Bragh!” Genma-panda yells from farther down the corridor.

Be’Yach takes a step back, but smiles. “The captain may be afraid of you, but I’m not.”

Genma whips out a sign. ‘Look who I have.’

Soun appears, dragging Brian.

‘If you want him back, release us.’

Brian is about to go nuts. The panda is scaring the hell out of him.

Be’Yach groans. “I don’t have time for this. Shoot them all.”

The lackeys comply and quickly incapacitate Genma, Soun, Akane, and Raye.

Brian gets up and runs behind Be'Yach. "Put the panda in an escape pod. The ambassador too. They are too much of a liability. Where's the one who can't talk right?"

Be'Yach shrugs. All the lackeys look at each other.

"MORONS!" Brian screams. "FIND THEM!"

The lackeys start to take off. Brian shoots one of them. "FORGETTING SOMETHING?" He points to Akane and company. The remaining lackeys grab them and head off.

Brian just turns to Be'Yach. "Who hired these yay-hoos?"

Be'Yach meekly looks away. "You said no more than 10 dollars an hour. You get what you pay for."

Brian curses his own cheapness. "No worries. Once we get the Latium we can retire."

Be'Yach grins. "Did you get the frequency?"

Brian shakes his head. "Part of it. But I know the Federation. There are only six possible combinations of the rest frequency. We don't have to de-cloak to lower their shields. What's the ETA of the Starfleet ship and the Kuno ship?"

Be'Yach opens the bridge door and walks in. She checks a panel. "30 minutes."

Brian takes his seat on the bridge. "Excellent. Once the Latium is on board we can offload the prisoners and get the hell out of federation space."

Be'Yach hops on Brian's lap. "What about the crew and Lita?"

Brian sighs. "Send the crew down with the prisoners. Lita wants to stay with us."

Be'Yach doesn't really care for that. She knows how the captain flirts with her.

"I know what you're thinking." Brian smiled as he dug something out of his pocket. "No worries, however. You are the only one I love."

Shampoo's unfamiliarity with the layout of Klingon Bird-Of-Preys was becoming obvious to her when she noticed she passed the same plasma conduit. She was getting pretty pissed. She cursed to herself as the turbolift door opened. She hides in a crevice. Lita walks out of the turbolift.

As she walked down the corridor she stops. Lita can tell when she is being watched. She starts to go for her phaser when she feels cold metal on the back of her head.

"Where is Serena?" Shampoo asked. "Bitch no want to try nothing. Throw your gun across the room."

Lita complied. "She's in the brig."

Shampoo shoves the phaser harder into the back of Lita's head. "No lie to Shampoo. Where is she?"

Lita remains silent.

“Is it worth dying for? Especially since Federation move deposits from the lunar lock up?”

“What?” Lita groaned.

“Take me to girl. NOW!” Shampoo yelled.

Lita turns back toward the turbo lift with Shampoo inches behind her. They get into it.

“Deck three,” Lita commands. The lift goes in motion. “What do you mean the moved the deposits?”

Shampoo chuckled. “You stupid? They move deposits. New place much safer.”

The turbolift doors open. Lita and Shampoo walk out and down the hall. They get near the interrogation room. There is a guard posted outside.

“Tell him to leave.” Shampoo ordered.

Lita inhaled deeply. “Crewman – you’re dismissed.”

The crewman can’t see where Lita is, but since he recognized her voice, he walks off in the opposite direction.

Shampoo forces Lita over to the door. “Open it.”

Lita punches in her access code into the door. It slides open. Serena is just sitting in the chair crying.

“Commander!” Shampoo yelled. “Get over here.”

Serena looks up and sees Shampoo with Lita. She hops off the chair and runs to the door, taking a good, hard look at Lita before exiting.

“You okay?” Shampoo asked.

Serena only nods. Shampoo pulls Lita back out and faces her toward the turbo lift.

Lita decides that she has to try and get away from Shampoo and tell Brian of what she has learned. Going to Earth with six Starfleet prisoners would not be good, especially if they weren’t able to get anything out of it.

As they are walking down the hall, Lita fakes tripping. As she moves forward she causes Shampoo to start to lose her balance. As she does, Lita turns around and punches her. The impact causes Shampoo’s grip on the phaser to loosen. It bounces to the floor. Before Lita can get to it, Shampoo grabs Lita’s ankles and trips her completely. She falls, but in the opposite direction of the phaser.

Shampoo turns and goes for the phaser but Lita manages to get a grip on Shampoo’s legs. The phaser had bounced just outside Shampoo’s reach.

“Serena!” Shampoo calls.

Serena runs over and grabs the phaser. She points it at Lita, who has grabbed Shampoo by the neck and pulls her to her feet. With her other hand, Lita pulls a knife from one of the cargo pockets on her pants and holds it to Shampoo's neck.

"Even though I know you won't shoot me, Serena, be advised I will slit this whore's neck as I fall." Lita grins. "Put the phaser down, and neither of you will be hurt."

Serena is shaking. She joined Starfleet engineering so that she wouldn't be put in any positions like this anymore. What was she to do? She didn't want Shampoo to die, but she didn't want to kill Lita either. Where's one of those goddamned roses when I need one? She thought.

Unfortunately for her, the decision was made for her.

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The Sisko shook madly. Warp 9.97 was not an approved speed. However, the fact the Kuno ship found and forced the pirate ship to de-cloak added extra emergency to the situation.

The Kuno's were pummeling the ship. Her shields would be compromised in minutes and the ship could be destroyed shortly thereafter. Ranma didn't figure that Kuno would destroy the ship till after he got Akane on board, but there was still his father and the others.

"Ranma?" Mousse called out.

"What?"

"There is an escape pod about 9,000 kilometers aft of the bird of prey. It's got one panda and one human on board."

"WHAT?" Ranma ran up there and verified Mousse's readings. "Is it safe?"

Mina checked her console. "For now."

Ranma shook his head. "We will have to come back for it."

Seconds later the Sisko dropped out of warp. "MOUSSE! Order the Kuno's to cease fire."

Mousse shook his head. "They aren't responding."

"THEY'RE COMING ABOUT!" Mina yelled.

"ALL WEAPONS FIRE!" Ranma shouted.

The following barrage of fire seems to last forever. In reality, it only lasted a few seconds.

The Kuno ship let loose everything it had in the way of firepower. Its cutting beam. Its torpedoes. Its phasers.

The Sisko's shields glowed a bright blue as they were stressed to their maximum.

Blue and red orbs projected themselves from the Sisko. Volley after volley of photon torpedoes slammed into the Kuno ship. Not nearly as effective this time as they were the last time. Before his departure, the principal had made the necessary corrections to the shield emitters.

“SHIELDS FAILING!” Mousse screamed.

Ranma stared blankly at the viewscreen as 15 Kuno torpedoes headed towards the Sisko, and 30 headed towards the Kuno ship.

And then it was over. Elapsed time - 24 seconds.

# CHAPTER 7 – RESOLUTION

Ranma blinked.

We're alive. He grinned as he saw the fireball on the view screen that used to be the Kuno cube.

"Status," Ranma stated.

No answer.

Ranma stands up and looks around. The rear wall of the bridge was on fire. Mousse was unconscious on the floor. Mina was unconscious, laying across her console, and Ryouga was nowhere to be seen.

Ranma ran over and checked Mina's vitals. She's alive. He continued to the tactical station. He checked Mousse. He's alive.

Mousse let out a groan. "We won?"

Ranma nodded. "I need to know how the pirate ship is."

Mousse nods. He stands up and begins to check out his console.

Across the bridge, Mina lets out a groan. "Owch."

"You okay, Commander?" Ranma called out.

"Yeah," Mina says as she tries to get her panel to work.

Mousse shakes his head. "They are in bad shape. Multiple hull breaches – there are a few bodies floating out there – " Mousse pauses. "I don't think any of them are our crew."

Ranma taps his communicator. "Transporter room – Are transporters online?"

"Aye, sir." The transporter chief replies.

"Beam all the bodies that are outside of the pirate ship to sickbay." Ranma turns to Mina. "You have the bridge. Mousse, get some security officers and come with me."

Mousse hits his comm. badge and initiates the order to meet them in transporter room two. Then he and Ranma get into the turbolift and leave the bridge as replacement officers come onto the bridge.

## MOMENTS EARLIER ON THE PIRATE SHIP

Lita looks around as several explosions rock the ship. Shampoo uses this distraction to apply a pressure point to Lita's hand, causing her to drop the knife. Shampoo then does a really impressive spinning jump kick, sending Lita backward towards the turbolift.

Suddenly another explosion causes the ship to lurch violently. Shampoo falls forward and Serena drops the phaser she had. Lita also falls over.

Another explosion. This one takes out the wall behind Lita. Lita is blown out into open space. Shampoo and Serena also go flying towards the breach when the emergency force shield kicks in. The momentum carries Shampoo into the force shield. The electrical charge in the force shield causes her to get knocked back forward about 10 feet.

Serena runs over to Shampoo who acknowledges that she will be okay. Serena looks around for Lita.

“Lita?” Serena cries. “LITA!”

Shampoo shakes her head. She points to the breach. “She’s gone.”

Serena drops to her knees and cries.

Shampoo just stays on the floor, still reeling from what just about happened to her.

Be’Yach screams. It was an engagement ring that Brian just handed her.

“I love you too!” She squeaked, kissing him passionately. “This is the best day ever!”

Be’Yach’s attitude was immediately changed when she went flying off the chair after the first explosion hit.

Brian’s ship comes to a stop and the cloak disengages. Brian, who was also thrown to the floor attempts to stand up, but is sent back to the floor by another explosion.

“30 MINUTES MY ASS! SHIELDS!” He screamed to the crewman operating the console.

“THEY ARE UP, BUT NOT HOLDING!” He screamed back. “77%!” Another explosion. “54%!”

“RETURN FIRE!” Be’Yach yelled, crawling over to a handrail.

“Weapons offline.” The crewman replied.

Another one perked up. “Engines offline – Warp core overloading – breach in 45 seconds!”

“Shit!” Brian cried. “Eject the core.”

The engineering officer nods. “Ejected.”

Another explosion rocks the ship.

“Sheilds down.” The first crewman dryly states.

“We’re dead in the water.” Be’Yach whimpered, tightly holding onto the handrail with one hand and her ring with the other.

Two more explosions hit.

“HULL BREACH! DECK 3 SECTION A AND DECK 9 SECTION B!” A crew person screams.

Brian grabs Be’Yach and starts to pull her towards a door on the port side of the bridge.  
“ABANDON SHIP!”

The crew people on the bridge hit some buttons and take off. They didn’t need to be told twice.

“WAIT, SIR! A Starfleet ship has engaged the Kuno cube!” A crew person who, for some reason that isn’t really relevant, was still at his station noted.

Brian looks to Be’Yach. She nods to him. They return to their seats. “Start repairs.”

“Sir – there are bodies outside the breeches.”

Be’Yach pulls out her communicator. “Be’Yach to Lita – Status.”

Silence.

“Be’Yach to Lita. Respond please.”

Silence.

Brian bows his head.

“The Kuno ship has been destroyed!” A very happy crewman states.

Moments later, another one who isn’t nearly as happy pipes up. “Shit – We’re being boarded. Federation security team. 16 people.”

“SECURE THE BRIDGE!” Brian screams. He grabs a security guard running by. “Don’t let ANYONE through that door, do you understand me?”

The frightened officer nods.

“What do we do?” Be’Yach whispers.

Brian sighs. “Wait it out. Hope that they cut their losses, get their people, and leave.”

“What if some of the bodies outside the breaches are their crew?”

Brian puts his head in his hands. “Then we’re in a shit load of trouble. We need to get impulse back online.”

Be’Yach starts to walk off but Brian keeps his grip on her hand. “You stay. Someone else can do it.”

Be’Yach nods.

Ranma and seven security officers materialize on Deck 5 the deck where the brig is. It’s dark. The Kuno onslaught knocked out most of the power to the deck.

“Okay people. Be careful who you are shooting at. Our people may not still be in uniform.” Ranma orders. The officers acknowledge the order and follow Ranma.

“The brig is 50 meters down this corridor.” The lead security officer notes.

The group walks down the corridor. Two officers get in front of Ranma and hit the door release. It slides open and the team storms in.

The resistance they encounter is minimal. As a matter of fact, there wasn’t any. Both the officers who were guarding the brig were killed in the Kuno assault.

“AKANE!” Ranma called out.

“RANMA!” Akane replied. The group goes over to the cell where her voice is heard. The force shield is still active. Inside the cell are Akane and Raye.

“Where’s Shampoo and Serena?” Ranma asks.

“They took Serena to interrogate her and Shampoo went to rescue her,” Akane informs Ranma as one of the officers gets the force shield to drop.

Ranma grabs three of the 5 communicators he brought. He tosses them to each person. He then hits his own. “Saotome to Sisko – Three to beam directly to sickbay.”

“Aye, sir.” The transporter chief replied. “Also, sir, we’re got your father and the ambassador. They’re fine.”

“Thank you, Chief,” Ranma replied. “I’ll be back there in a few Akane.”

Akane smiled as the transporter beam grabs them. “I knew you’d come.”

Ranma smiles and mouths something to Akane as she disappears. He then turns to the rest of his team. “Time to find the others. Saotome to Mousse – Akane, and Raye have been rescued. Any luck?”

Between phaser shots, Mousse manages to get off a reply. “No sir. They have about twenty people guarding the door to the bridge. Transporting in can’t happen due to those damned Klingon transport inhibitors.”

“Do what you can,” Ranma replied. “We’re going to search for the others. Saotome out.”

“You heard him!” Mousse yells to his guards.

The guards continue their phaser assault of the pirates guarding the bridge, but fail to obtain any ground.

A federation security officer screams as he is hit with a phaser blast. The pirates have begun to get the upper hand, and are advancing on the security forces.

Mousse grumbles to himself. He hates to say what he is about to say. He turns to one of the officers.

“We need a better position. Fall back.”

The guard nods in agreement and motions for two of the officers to fire rapid-fire shots, enough to hold off the pirates while the others start to move back into the corridor.

Another officer screams as he is dropped. Mousse turns to him, and then Mousse gets hit in the arm. The second in command officers slaps his comm badge.

“Valdez to Saotome. Lt. Mousse has been hit, we’ve lost two of our team, request instructions.”

“Get out of there. Return to the Sisko.” Ranma’s voice orders.

“Aye, sir – Valdez to Sisko – Lock on to our coordinates and transport us directly to sickbay!”

An acknowledgment is heard and the security team vanishes. One of the pirates pulls out his communicator. “Captain – the assault on the bridge has been neutralized. They’ve left the ship.”

Brian looks to a lackey manning a station. “There are still seven Starfleet bastards on the ship.” The lackey informs him. “Plus two of the prisoners.”

“Is the cloak working yet?” Brian asked.

Be’Yach, who had scurried over to another station, answers. “Yeah.”

Brian shakes his head. “Transport ALL of the Starfleet personnel to their ship, engage the cloak and get us out of here, best possible speed in any freakin’ direction. Just get us out of here.”

Be’Yach nods to him. Brian walks over to a closet in the aft of the bridge and grabs a bottle. “Guess I picked the wrong day to stop drinking!”

Be’Yach calls out to Brian. “They’re gone, and we’re cloaked.”

Brian took a swig of his swill. “Roll call. Find out who’s missing and not responding.”

Be’Yach and a lackey work at their station for a couple of minutes.

“Brian – we’ve lost-“ Be’Yach shakes her head. “37 crewmen.”

Brian can only stare at Be’Yach. 37 are a lot on a ship like the Sisko with almost 500 crew, but it’s a tremendous loss on this ship. Brian only had 61 people, including him.

“It appears that 14 of them were blown out of hull breaches.” The lackey adds.

Brian just shakes his head. In the last major confrontation he was in, he lost one crewman. And even that was too much.

“Find out whose bodies are still on board. They deserve a funeral. We also should have a memorial for those blown out the breeches.”

Be’Yach nods and issues the order to the lackey. She then looks in her hand. She had been holding onto the ring so hard that the diamond cut her hand. She walks over to Brian and takes his hand.

“We’ll be alright.” She says.

Brian nods. He takes the ring from her hand. He gets out of his chair, gets on one knee, and slides the ring on her finger.

“Something needs to go right today.”

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“Commander.” A bridge officer calls to Mina. “The away team and two others have been beamed back to the ship.”

Mina stands and looks to the screen as the bird of prey cloaks.

“Aino to Saotome. What’s your status?”

Ranma’s voice replies. “We’re fine. Who all was beamed aboard.”

Mina looks to the officer. “Commander Tsukino and Commander Shampoo were beamed into sickbay. Then I show you and the six members of the assault team were transported to a cargo bay.”

“Glad the other two are on board,” Ranma called out. “I’ll be in sickbay.”

“Aye, sir. The bird of prey cloaked. What do you want to be done.” Mina asked.

“We’re in no condition to chase them or get caught in another confrontation. Let them go.”  
Ranma replied.

“Aye, sir. Aino out.” Mina sat back down. She was still worried about Serena. Raye, though, was able to take care of herself.

#### IN SICKBAY

Ranma walked in. Sickbay was very busy. There were massive injuries in the battles, but surprisingly only one Sisko crewmember lost their life.

Ranma was happy about that. He always felt overly bad for those who lost their lives in battle, even though he knew that sometimes that was part of the job.

What really got to him were the 14 bodies lying in the far end of sickbay. The bodies retrieved from the bird of prey’s hull breaches. Most of them were in plain clothes, but one was wearing a uniform. He almost thought it was one of his officers, but then he realized the uniform was a little different than Starfleet ones.

Ranma walked over to where Akane was examining Shampoo. Raye was standing next to Serena who was also being examined by a different medical tech.

“How is she?” Ranma asked Akane who seemed a little startled to hear his voice.

“Well, she’s been beaten and there are traces of electrical damage to her muscles. She is going to need to stay in here for a while, but I think she will be fine in the long run.”

Ranma nodded and smiled at her. “I’m glad you’re okay.”

Akane only smiled back and returned to her work.

“How are you, counselor?”

Raye shook her head. “Physically I am fine.”

Ranma didn’t know exactly what that meant.

“Her —” Raye pointed to Lita’s body on an exam table being prepped to go into stasis. “We knew here. She was —” Raye paused, choking back what seemed to be a tear. “a friend.”

Ranma put his hand on her shoulder. She gave him a forced smile.

Ranma walked over to where Serena was. She was very shaken up. Ranma looked down at her and smiled. She also was required to force a smile.

“How are you?” He asked her.

Serena shook her head. “Been better.”

Ranma nodded in understanding. “You knew her too?”

Serena nodded. “I don’t understand.”

Ranma tapped his comm. badge. “Saotome to Bridge – Commander Aino, can you come to sickbay?”

“Acknowledged.” Mina’s voice replied.

Ranma looked at Serena again and turned to Raye. “I’m sorry for your loss. As your captain I don’t expect you to return to duty for a couple of days. As your friend, I just want to say if you need anything, let me know.”

Raye and Serena both nod a thank you to Ranma. He then turns to Akane. “I’ll be on the bridge. Don’t be a stranger.”

Akane chuckled and nodded.

Ranma walked out of sickbay. He noticed Mina in the hallway. “They need a friend.” He informed her. She nodded and went in.

Mina smiled when she saw Raye. She jogged over to her and gave her a hug. She then gave Serena an even bigger one. Serena was crying. She looked to Raye who also almost looked like she was about to cry.

“What’s wrong?” Mina asked.

Raye simply pointed. Mina turned to the far side of sickbay.

“Oh my God.”

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Tatewaki was not one for confined spaces. The cube was fine because it was enormous. The escape pod – not so good.

“I, Tatewaki Kuno, demand we get a bigger ship.” He grumbled.

“I, Kodachi – the black rose, concur.” Kodachi concurred.

George just rolled his eyes. “And where the hell do you suggest we get one?”

Tatewaki pointed to a sensor blip. “How about that one?”

George smacks Tatewaki. “THAT’S THE SHIP THAT JUST NEARLY KILLED US!”

Kodachi squeezed her way up to the main console. “How about that one?” She pointed.

George nearly blew a gasket. "THAT'S THE SAME SHIP! Don't you idiots know anything about space travel?"

The elder Kuno's looked at each other for a few seconds. "Daddy did all the steering." Kodachi finally answered.

"You know that you could read his thoughts. All you had to do was pull his piloting memories up." George explained.

Tatewaki looked at his sister who felt equally as stupid. Tacchi, in no hurry to admit he was a moron, looked back to George. "Yeah well if you are so good then why was our ship destroyed?"

George turned around and pounced on the Blue Thunder. "MORON BECAUSE YOU LOWERED THE SHIELDS TO BEAM AKANE TENDO AND THAT BLASTED PIG TAILED GIRL ON BOARD!"

"Don't forget about my darling Ranma!" Kodachi helpfully added.

George looked up at his non-biological sister. "Idiots! Both of you! Idiots! You do know that the pig-tailed girl and Ranma Saotome are the same person, right?"

Kodachi looks to her brother who is becoming very blue from George choking him. "Nonsense." She replies.

"YEAH-GAK!" Kuno gasps. George releases his grip on Tacchi's neck. "It's sorcery from the evil Ranma Saotome!"

George rolls his eyes. "Even I know this and I'm a new character!"

"SORCERY!" Kuno bellows.

"SILENCE BROTHER!" Kodachi yells, whipping out her rhythmic gymnastic tools.

Tacchi draws his bokken. "ON GUARD DEAR SISTER!"

George gets shoved to the deck as the two attack each other in this one-man escape pod. George begins to dig around for a phaser. He's either going to kill them or himself. He's not quite sure which yet.

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Ranma steps out of the turbolift. He looks around the bridge. It's in bad shape. There are wires hanging from the walls, steam shooting from some pointless steam duct, and a couple of exploded panels. Ralph Nader would have kittens if he knew how easily things exploded on a starship.

He looks to his chair.

Not a scratch.

"How nice." Ranma grins as he sits down. "Ensign Hibiki – Set course for space dock. Warp 4."

An ensign at the helm turns around. It's not Ryouga though. She is wearing a bandana like Ryouga's. Hopefully, she's not a long-lost cousin.

Ranma laughs at his own joke when he realizes a missing crewman is not a laughing matter.

"I don't know where Ensign Hibiki is sir. But warp is not working right now." She replies.

Stupid warp. And damn that damn Ryouga. He's probably down in sickbay drooling over Akane, Ranma thinks. "Computer – Where is Ensign Ryouga Hibiki?"

The computer replies. "Ensign Hibiki is not aboard the Sisko."

"WHAT?" Ranma fumes. "Where the hell is he?"

"He transported off the Sisko at 23:19." The computer replies.

20 minutes ago. "Where did he go?" Ranma asks.

"Ensign Hibiki transported to the Klingon vessel." Says the computer.

"Wonderful," Ranma growls. He turns around. At least Mousse was at his station. He notices that Mousse is blankly staring at the viewscreen though. Ranma understood. Even though he'd never admit it, he'd probably be just as distraught if Akane was the one who was nearly killed.

"Are you okay, Lt.?" Ranma asks.

Mousse just nods.

"Akane says she's going to be okay."

Mousse finds some comfort in that. Not much though.

"Can you figure out where the bird of prey went?" Ranma asks.

Mousse shakes his head. That's a negative. "All sensors are down. Communications down, shields, weapons, you name it, it's broke."

"That moron. Hope he can fend for himself for a while." Ranma angrily said, adjusting himself in his chair. It was going to be a long night.

MEANWHILE ON THE CRIPPLED BIRD OF PREY

"WHERE THE HELL AM I NOW?" Ryouga screamed.

The Klingon computer barked a reply. Again. "You are STILL on deck 8, section C."

"WHERE'S AKANE?!" Ryouga yelled at it.

"There is STILL no Akane on board." The computer dryly replied. It would seem this computer wasn't anywhere as near as friendly as the Starfleet ones. And this one was getting really sick and tired of Ryouga. It seems only Ryouga could make an inanimate object like a computer become annoyed.

Ryouga was starting to realize that maybe this wasn't one of the best ideas he had ever had. He had to be the one to rescue Akane though. If Ranma found her first it would be just one more battle against his archenemy that he had lost.

Ryouga came to the conclusion that another loss wouldn't be acceptable. So while no one was looking, Ryouga set the ship on autopilot and snuck to the transporter room.

He then rigged it not to alert the crew of the bird of prey by transporting himself to the laundry room. It was weird because for whatever reason that was the only room on the ship without security sensors. It was certainly convenient for boarding discreetly though.

Unfortunately for Ryouga that just gave him farther to go from where he appeared to the brig. He knew that the brig was on deck 5, but he had no idea how to get there. He was pretty sure he'd seen this plasma conduit before.

Somehow he convinced himself that getting lost on this ship wasn't his fault. He had concluded that every section of the ship looked alike. To top off his troubles the Klingon computers wouldn't give him directions to sensitive locations, like the brig.

He also realized that the Sisko was LONG gone now. The shooting had stopped. The ship had re-cloaked and he couldn't hear any more phaser fire. Could it be that the bastard just gave up and left without Akane?

"All I have to do is find a turbolift," Ryouga told himself. He knew he had a problem though when he found out that none of the doors were labeled.

"Damned Klingons!" He cursed.

Suddenly he heard footsteps. Ryouga slinked into a shadow and waited. He would force this guy to tell him where Akane was.

The man walked past Ryouga. Ryouga pounced.

The man hit the ground with Ryouga on top of him. Ryouga pulled his phaser and held it to the back of the guy's head.

"WHERE'S AKANE?!" Ryouga screamed.

The man slightly turned his head. It was Brian.

"Who?"

"AKANE! ONE OF THE PEOPLE YOU KIDNAPPED! THE LOVE OF MY LIFE! THAT'S WHO!" Ryouga screamed.

Brian got a look at him a little better. "STARFLEET! I thought we sent all of you yahoo's back."

Ryouga shifted a little. "WHAT?"

"I transported everyone back to your ship."

"AKANE TOO?"

"Yes, Akane too," Brian replied.

"Oh." Ryouga chuckled. "Can you take me back then?"

“Not with you sitting on top of me,” Brian replied.

Ryouga got off of him but kept his phaser trained on him. Brian shook his head.

“That’s not necessary. I just want out of this mess. I’m going to take you to a shuttle-bay. You can have a shuttlecraft. I can’t take you back there. They’ll blow me out of the sky!”

Ryouga nodded. “Take me to a shuttlecraft then. I’ll keep this out though.” He said, motioning towards the phaser.

“Whatever,” Brian replied, starting to walk towards a turbolift. “I’m wasted I could give a shit.”

The two stepped into the turbolift. Ryouga was even more pissed now that he realized he walked past that turbolift at least four times.

“How do I know that you really released her?” Ryouga growled.

Brian sighed. “Computer. How many Starfleet officers are on board now?”

The computer obliged. “One.”

Ryouga shoved the phaser back in Brian’s face. “I knew it! You do still have her.”

Brian rolled his eyes. “Were you born stupid or did you just grow that way? The one Starfleet officer is you.”

Ryouga had to acknowledge that the logic behind that was sound. Well, the part about him being the one Starfleet officer, not the part about him being stupid. He still wasn’t convinced though.

“No – I want you to take me up to the brig so I can see for myself.” Ryouga smiled at his own idea. He was so smart.

“Oh come on, man!” Brian complained. “I’m tired and I suspect I am going to begin puking at any moment.”

Ryouga poked Brian with the phaser. “No! Do as I say! Diddy MOW! DIDDY MOW I SAY!”

“Diddy mow?” Brian asked.

“I saw it in a movie.”

“Whatever.” Brian groaned. “Computer, change – Brig.”

The lift shifted in directions. After a short while, it stopped. The doors opened and three guards saw Ryouga and started to draw their weapons.

“No, no,” Brian called to them. “He just wants to see something then he’s leaving. Finish your fixing.”

The guards nodded and resumed their work. Brian took Ryouga into the cell area. “See. Empty.”

Ryouga took a look around. He walks back over to Brian.

“How do I know you don’t have her somewhere else?”

Brian let out an exasperated sigh. "Shit dude. Here, go wander the ship and let me know when you are ready to leave. I'm going to sleep."

Ryouga knew that if he started wandering again it could be years before he got off this blasted rattrap. Ryouga calls to Brian as he starts to walk out of the brig.

"No, wait. I believe you. Take me to the shuttle bay."

Brian motions for him to catch up. The two get back into the lift.

"Shuttle bay One." Brian orders.

The lift complies.

Ryouga decides that he has another question for the pirate captain. "Why did you kidnap them?"

Brian groans. Talking made his head hurt. "I needed the frequencies for the metaphasic shielding at the lunar Latium depository." Brian didn't even realize that he just signed his own arrest warrant if this guy told on him.

Ryouga, not thinking replies. "492.225 gigahertz. But they moved the deposits to a Vulcan moon."

Brian stands perfectly still. Screw the arrest warrant, this guy's a dumbass! However, now Brian is very pissed off at himself. Could it have been that easy? All of this, the death, the torture, the damage, THE PANDA, and the answer came to him that easily? "Umm – is - is the frequency the same?"

"Yeah – metaphasic shields only work in the 492 gigahertz band," Ryouga replies, not realizing how helpful he's being. The fact that he is going to have to come up with something good to save his job is distracting him.

The lift doors open. They walk into the shuttle bay.

"You shouldn't have any problem departing. Our warp core is gone so we are only moving at impulse. Your ship is that way somewhere." Brian points to his left.

"Thanks." Ryouga shoots the captain, boards the shuttle, and departs. Brian starts to stagger to his feet.

"Fuck. Three bottles of Jack and a phaser blast don't mix well." He notes to himself as he sprints to the bridge.

As he enters the lift he mumbles to himself. "I never take the right prisoners. See this is why I don't take prisoners. It's settled. No more prisoners, especially Starfleet prisoners. Talk about a pain in the ass!"

He whips out his communicator. "Brian to Be'Yach! You will never believe what just happened!"

ON THE SISCO A FEW HOURS LATER

"Captain!" Mousse called out.

Ranma turned to Mousse. Ranma hoped it was good news. He was already pissed that his dad had decided to play rank and take his chair. The XO seat wasn't anywhere near as comfortable.

"Yes?"

"Long-range sensors online. There is a Klingon shuttlecraft 2 light-years bearing 209 mark 002. It's got one person on board with a Starfleet communicator. It's just flying in circles." Mousse replied.

"Hail the idiot," Ranma ordered.

Mousse complied. Ryouga appeared on the screen. "Uh – Hi Ranma."

Ranma shook his head. "What the hell are you doing?"

Ryouga looked at his panel and then back at Ranma. "Oh, just hanging around. You know how it goes."

Mousse laughed. Ranma was about to scold him when he realized Genma was laughing too.

"Christ. Ryouga, go to a full stop. We'll be there in a little bit to pick you up. Sisko out."

The screen went back to the starfield. "Go to him," Ranma ordered the helmsman. She obliged and the ship took off at low warp towards Ryouga.

# EPILOGUE

*Captain's log: Stardate 60004.8. It's been a little over three days since the battle with the Kuno's and the retrieval of our captured comrades. I've given Raye, Serena, and Mina the last couple of days off to come to terms with the loss of their friends. They have all returned to duty now. We are going to hold a memorial service for her and the 13 other crewmen of the pirate vessel. Enemies or not they deserve a proper funeral.*

*My XO says she will be ready for duty tomorrow. I hope she is. Maybe the lack of chairs will get my dad off the bridge. I keep telling him there are lots of places he can play games with Ambassador Tendo, but he says he likes being on the bridge.*

*As for repairs, we have done about as much as we can do here in space. We're en route to Earth and to the San Francisco shipyards for more major repairs. I have my wayward helmsman in a spacesuit swabbing the decks. Don't know what he's swabbing off, but that will keep him out of my hair for a few days.*

Ranma looked up from his computer. He was pretty tired. He hasn't slept much in the last few days.

Tired or not, he always loved hearing about himself on the news. He was a glory hound. He'd never admit that to anyone, but hey. Who doesn't like to be mentioned on the news? Except when it was bad news. He decided to see what information was on the Federation News Service.

He hit some buttons and a man appeared on the screen.

"-the space dock repair team said the damage would have been much worse if they would have accidentally fired a quantum torpedo. Current estimates put repairs to be completed in about six weeks. The captain of the ship in question, Captain Ranma Saotome, has refused to be interviewed."

Ranma slapped his head. "D'oh!"

"In economic news, the Latium deposits on the Vulcan moon F'Knox was robbed about 6 hours ago. Sources say that a cloaked ship lowered the shields from orbit, transported the Latium to their ship, and beamed down their entire crew.

"Interrogators have 2 suspects. Brian Treeman and Be'Yach, both from Earth."

The screen showed pictures of both Be'Yach and Brian. Ranma, having never seen either of them, thought nothing of it.

"They are piloting a 34-year-old surplus Klingon Bird of Prey. They are cloaked but are only traveling at impulse. Investigators say that they have several starships searching for them, but without a warp trail they may be impossible to find.

"For the Federation News Service, this is Jim Grimes."

The transmission ended. Thanks to the description of the ship he knew who the thieves were.

“Saotome to Mousse.” Ranma called.

“Yes sir?” Mousse replied.

“Send the Starfleet team investigating the Latium heist the reports from the captured officers. Let them know that we’re sorry we can’t be of any more help.”

“Aye, sir.” Mousse replied, closing the connection.

Ranma checked the time. 17:50. The memorial service was planned for 18:00. He knew he had to be there to support the three who lost their friend.

Ranma didn’t understand how someone who could do what she did to Shampoo could be a friend to people as nice as Serena, Mina, and Raye. Ranma did know that people are not always as they seem. He’s also learned that situations aren’t always as they appear.

Ranma stood and walked out onto the bridge. He noticed Shampoo was there, sitting in her chair. He smiled at her. “Nice to see you back on the bridge, Shampoo.”

Shampoo sent back an attempt to smile, but she was still sore and tired. Ranma understood that she had pride so he wasn’t going to point out an obvious weakness.

He took a look at the view screen expecting to see stars. Instead, he saw a ship start to de-cloak.

“MOUSSE! SHEILDS!” Ranma screamed.

Shampoo stood. They expected to see the pirate ship.

They did not expect to see what they saw.

Right in front of them sat a Defiant-class ship. Ranma turned to Mousse, but he stopped him before Ranma could even start.

“They’re hailing us.” Mousse told him.

“On screen,” Ranma said.

The man who appeared on the screen wasn’t someone Ranma was familiar with. He did notice that he bore the rank of admiral.

“Sorry to startle you, Captain.” The admiral said.

“Not at all.” Ranma lied. “What can we do for you?”

“I’m Admiral Ed LeBlanc with Starfleet Intelligence. I understand you have the bodies of some of those killed in the clash with the pirates. Is this correct?”

Ranma nodded. Why would Starfleet Intelligence be investigating a theft? Sure it was a lot of money, but the Federation has A LOT more where that came from. They are in possession of the 10 biggest Latium nebulas in the quadrant.

“Is one of them a female named Lita Kino?” The admiral asked.

Ranma looked to Mina who looked back at him just as confused.

“Yes sir,” Ranma replied.

“Good. We will be transporting her body to our ship.”

“May I ask why, Admiral?” Ranma pondered already knowing the answer.

“You may ask.” The admiral mused. “However I have been ordered not to say anything. You know how it goes. Need to know and no one needs to know. To be honest I don’t even know. Lately, I have just been S-I’s transport bitch.”

Ranma laughed with the Admiral. “Mousse, lower the shields and order the transporter chief to transport.”

“No need Captain. We have her now. Thank you. And as you may know, when doing dealing with S-I, this never happened.”

“What never happened?” Ranma grinned.

“Thank you, Captain. See you around.” The Admiral grinned.

The screen went back to the exterior shot as the ship re-cloaked.

“I hope not,” Ranma mumbled. Seeing S-I around too often wasn’t a good thing. It’s kind of like too many police in your vicinity. Sure, you aren’t doing anything wrong, but still.

The aft turbolift opened and Serena and Raye walked onto the bridge.

“Why was Lita transported off the ship?” Raye fumed.

Mina stood up. “S-I wanted her.”

“What? Why?” Serena bellowed.

Mina just shrugged. Ranma walked to the back of the bridge. “Who knows why S-I does anything they do. I am sure they have their reasons. Ours is not to question why ours is but to do and die.”

Ranma turned to Shampoo. “I’m willing to assume that you have no interest in being apart of the memorial service?”

Shampoo just crossed her arms. “No interest is an understatement.”

Ranma understood. “Very well. You have the bridge.”

Shampoo nodded her acknowledgment as she moved to the captain’s chair.

Ranma walked past the two female officers and into the lift. The doors closed.

The service was scheduled to happen on deck 17, where the torpedo launchers were. The caskets were to be launched into space.

The lift stopped on deck 10. The doors opened and Gosnell stepped in.

“Going to the service?” Ranma asked.

Gosnell nodded. “I knew her. She and I were – close.”

Ranma put his hand on his old friend's shoulder. "I'm sorry. She's not there anymore though?"

"What?" Gosnell asked.

"Starfleet sent someone to take her body."

Gosnell shook his head. "Why?"

"I don't know," Ranma replied. "They just said they needed her body."

The doors opened deck 17 and the two walked out.

"I don't believe she did what they say she did. I don't believe she could possibly have been involved in criminal activity." Gosnell paused. "Well, maybe a little bit, but she would never hurt anyone."

Ranma shook his head. "Shampoo was almost killed. Akane said that if she hadn't gotten treatment when she did she would have been dead."

Gosnell sighed. "It's just not her."

Ranma stayed silent. It was obvious that his friend was hurting and he didn't want to make it any worse.

"So," Gosnell spoke up. "Did you tell her?"

"Tell who what?"

"You know." Gosnell grinned.

"WHAT?! NO!! I—" Ranma cut himself off. He's hardly spoken two words to Akane since she got back. Well, outside of official business that is.

"Tsk, Tsk Captain. I would think that this last mission would have made you realize that you may not always have a chance. Don't blunder like me and not say anything."

Ranma realized why Gosnell was so adamant about him telling Akane his feelings. Could it be that Lita was the one that Gosnell didn't tell his feeling to?

Gosnell answered that question for him.

"Maybe that's what happened. Maybe she just thought that no one loved her?" Gosnell didn't really want that question answered.

"Gozz—" Ranma said, stopping Gosnell. "If a person has a good heart, they have a good heart. That can't change."

Gosnell started walking again without Ranma. "Something sure as hell did."

10 DAYS LATER – LOCATION UNKNOWN

The room is very brightly lit. Not what you'd expect from a Starfleet Intelligence room at all. It was a sickbay.

Admiral LeBlanc had just arrived. He just had Lita's body transported down. The door slid open.

"Don't turn around." A prissy female voice said.

"Yes ma'am." The admiral replied.

"Where was she?" A raspy male voice asked.

"She was serving as the XO of the pirate ship that raided the Latium deposits."

A third voice spoke up. "I need to examine her. If she's been in stasis we can save her. When she was blown out the breech she was flash frozen."

"What about the implant?" The male voice asked.

"It's obviously dysfunctional. She wasn't supposed to try and kill Starfleet Officers." The third voice replied. The man walked into the room. He was in a biohazard suit.

The two others were still in the doorway. They could tell the admiral was becoming uneasy.

"I think I should leave before I hear more than I want to."

"Fine." The female said. "You did a good job. I want you to keep an eye on the Sisko though. Her friends are on board and I don't want them to do anything to compromise the mission."

"Any more than it has already been." The male finished. "Last time we get anything from the Dominion."

The admiral moved his position a little. "What if they start investigating on their own?"

"It won't happen." The male said. "Their captain is very by the book. He will keep them in line."

The admiral nods. "LeBlanc to Roseville. Beam me up."

The admiral vanished in the usual pretty transporter effect.

The male and the female hop onto the exam table.

"Don't worry, Lita." The female said. "You'll be fine."

Lita's body let out a breath. She then started to breathe again. Her eyes opened.

"What happened?" She whimpered.

"I'll explain it all later." The male replied.

"Is the implant out?" The female asked.

The medical tech nodded. "Yes ma'am."

"Her memories?" The male asked.

"Intact."

“Damn.” The female said. “Poor child is going to have to deal with the guilt of what she did to her friends.”

The male nodded. “It will be a while before she’ll be ready for another mission.”

The female agreed. “I’m going to stay with her. Get a hold of that useless Vorta and get our money back.”

“Gotcha.” The male replied as he hopped down and left the room.

The tech turned to the table. “I managed to repair most of the damaged parts of her brain. She still may have some aggressive tendencies. More than before the implant at least.

“What – what did I do?” Lita asked the female.

The female shook her head. “It wasn’t you. You remember the photographic memory implant we gave you?”

Lita tried to nod, but she was still pretty weak.

“For whatever reason, it fused with the part of your brain that controls your ethics and anger. It killed those parts. We then lost contact with you. The rest is, well history.”

“My friends-“ Lita began to cry.

“They’re fine, Lita. CB is with the Roseville and is going to keep an eye on them and may make contact with them if necessary.”

“I tried to kill Raye!” Lita remembers, crying even more heavily.

The female sighed. “I know it will take you a while to understand this, but it wasn’t you. It was the implant.”

Lita just closed her eyes and continued to cry. The female turned to the tech.

“Make sure she gets some food. And when she’s okay to return to her quarters let me and A know.”

“Yes ma’am.” The tech replied.

The female hopped off the table and walked out the door. Before the door closed she turned, took one last look at Lita, and shook her head.

“For the Federation.” She told herself. “All for the protection of the Federation.”

She walked off. She only wished that she could honestly believe that it was worth all that they were doing.

Things were changing. Maybe the term ‘all costs’ needed to be removed from section 31 of the Federation Charter. It’d be a shame if the people dedicated to its protection actually destroyed what they were protecting.