My Captain, My Mistress, My Love: Thirty Days

by romansilence

Summary

The relationship between Kathryn and B'Elanna is as loving and strict as ever and yet something seems to be missing. A punishment opens their eyes and B'Elanna gives her wife and Mistress her diary to express her feelings. (Sorry, I'm really bad with summaries.)

Notes

Disclaimer: You all know it, the characters and background story don’t belong to me but to Paramount, unfortunately. No copyright infringement is intended, no profit will be made. I also like to give credit to Novad and her “Secret Logs of Mistress Janeway”-series who inspired me to start these stories. I’m deeply indebted to her.

Language Disclaimer: English is not my first language. So, please be lenient.

This is an alternate universe story. It contains strong elements of kink and BDSM (consensual, of course). If this is not your cup of tea please go and read one of my other Star Trek stories “It’s a Good Day… to Get Married” (DS9), “There’s None So Blind…” (Voyager) or “The Brig” (Voyager) at the Athenaeum or FanFiction.Net.

Oh, and this is story takes same-sex relationship for granted and contains graphic descriptions of consensual sex. So, if you’re not of legal age, please come back later, and if it’s illegal where you live, rent an U-haul and move somewhere else.

This is the sequel to “My Captain, My Mistress, My Love: The Beginning”. It might help to
read that first. “Thirty Days” takes place in season four. And just to refresh your memories: Chakotay betrayed Voyager to go with Seska and they both were killed while trying to take over the ship. So, he is out of the picture and Tuvok is First Officer as well as Chief of Security. Voyager is also plagued with a number of substandard parts that make cruising the Delta Quadrant that much more dangerous. Captain Janeway and her Chief of Engineering took the Oath but they are more than just partners to each other. They are best friends, they are captain and crewmember – and they are Mistress and slave…. 
The Punishment

Prologue

My name is Lieutenant B’Elanna Torres, daughter of Miral of the House of Katal, chief engineer on board of the Federation Starship USS Voyager, intrepid class, stranded in the Delta Quadrant under the command of Captain Kathryn Janeway. This is my story.

My name is B’El. I am a slave and Kathryn Janeway is my Mistress. Mistress Kathryn is kind and firm, stern and loving. She knows how to keep me in line and how to give me untold pleasure. She owns me, body, heart and soul. This is her story.

My name is B’Elanna and Kathryn is my lover and my wife. She is the love of my life and should there be a life after death I will love her in all eternity. This is our story.

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Chapter ONE: The Punishment

B’Elanna Torres, Chief Engineer of the Federation Starship USS Voyager, entered her quarters after a long day of another near disaster averted by a hair’s breadth. As soon as she had stepped over the threshold she found herself held by the strong arms of her wife. She was dirty and grimy from crawling through one Jeffries tube too many but being held just felt too good to worry about such things. Kathryn saw the pain of almost having lost two of her people to a senseless accident in B’Elanna’s eyes and kissed her. The kiss was meant to be reassuring but her beloved wife started to cry.

“Nothing happened, my love, you found the problem in time. No one died, no one was injured and Voyager is in better shape than she was before.”

“Thanks to Seven of Nine. She found the reason for the phase variance,” B’Elanna answered.

“Her report is full of praise about your ingenuity to repair it without having to deactivate the engines and the main energy grid. It kept us from turning into sitting ducks – of course she didn’t use the same words.”

B’Elanna’s tears fell harder. Kathryn led her to their bathroom, undressed them both and guided her under the shower. B’Elanna automatically reached for the soap and loofah to attend to her Mistress, but Kathryn stopped her.

“No, my B’El. It’s my turn to take care of you. You just came home from a harrowing shift, I already had a couple of hours of rest.”

B’Elanna didn’t even try to protest which spoke more clearly of her mental state than anything else would have. She allowed herself to be bathed and dried. Kathryn recycled the wet towels and when she turned back she found her wife on her knees in a perfect supplication position, something she had not seen for quite some time. Whatever B’Elanna had on her mind it must be serious.

So, instead of ordering her to get up, she said, “I’m listening, B’El.”

“Mistress, could you please ask Seven of Nine to witness my punishment for losing my temper and
insulting her earlier that day?”

“Are you sure, my B’El?” Kathryn asked.

“Yes, Mistress, I’m sure.”

“Sit up and explain,”

B’Elanna elegantly flowed to ‘kneeling rest’, one of the most common slave positions with her knees spread wide, her back straight, her hands, palms up, on her thighs and her eyes on the floor. It was meant to remind the slave of her position, her vulnerability and was comfortable enough to be held for hours.

“Look at me, love.”

B’Elanna looked up, and for the first time in months Kathryn saw a real need to be punished in her beloved’s eyes.

“The phase variance had been driving me nuts; it caused malfunctions and false alarms and I knew it wouldn’t stop ‘til I had found its origin. I thought I had narrowed it down to two junction points in Jeffries tube seventeen and sent Vorik and Morgan to check it out manually… well, you know the details, they were in my report.

Bottom line is the… Seven waltzed in my engine room. She walked over to a console and started to input data without so much as a by-your-leave. I lost it and shouted at her. I called her a stupid drone, a moron, an icicle, a bitch, a soulless machine. I grabbed her by the arm and tried to throw her out. She resisted. Today she didn’t tell me how inferior Starfleet technology is, instead she pulled me in front of the console. She had found the origin of the phase variance, just in time for me to stop Vorik and Morgan. They would have been killed by an overload had they even tried to open the panels of the junction points, and it would have been my fault.

It was another substandard part. I swear, if I ever get my hands on the supply officers who purchased all of that junk and the engineers who used it without sufficient testing I’ll twist their necks.”

“I’ll help you hide the bodies, but that still does not explain why you want Seven present for your punishment, and since it’s the second time this week the number of strokes will have to be doubled. Do you really want her to see that?” Kathryn asked.

“Yes, Mistress, I do, not because she saved two lives today, but because I acted dishonourably towards her. Having her witness my punishment is the first step of making it up to her,” B’Elanna said.

Kathryn’s eyes widened at the sudden change of attitude. Over the last months B’Elanna had been unable to speak about Seven of Nine without shouting or cursing, though it had been her who had initially encouraged the captain to see behind Seven’s Borg exterior.

“What made you change your mind?”

“Seven helped me to fix the problem. I thanked her, I think for the first time ever, and she smiled. It was just a tiny smile but it was enough to get me thinking. I replayed our fights and remembered having seen flashes of pain in her eyes when I once again had called her an emotionless drone. And then I remembered Kessik IV and the insults the other children hurled at me because I was different. And I understood that I had acted without honour, like an honourless p’taq. I need to make amends, Mistress.”
“I’m glad that you changed your mind, my love.” Kathryn bent down and kissed B’Elanna’s forehead, “Go to the playroom, prepare the spanking horse, select a cane and a riding crop. I’ll contact Seven.”

“Thank you, Mistress.”

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Ten minutes later Seven of Nine entered their quarters, “You wanted to see me, Captain?”

“Yes, Seven, thank you for coming. To be exact, it’s B’Elanna who wants you to see something. What you’re about to witness may seem strange to you but I still want you to hold back the questions you undoubtedly will have until later. I promise I will answer them to the best of my abilities.”

“I will comply, Captain.”

Kathryn let the door to the play room slide open and motioned for Seven to enter first. The tall blonde stopped in mid-step when she saw B’Elanna Torres kneeling in the far corner of the room with her back to the entrance and completely naked. She took in the room and its ‘furniture’ her eidetic memory had trouble identifying.

“What is going on, Captain?” Seven asked.

“Please hold your questions, Seven. You will soon see, and you have my word that nothing in this room happens without B’Elanna’s consent.”

“B’El come here.”

B’Elanna rose elegantly, turned around and sank back on her knees in front of the other two women, “Please, Mistress, punish me for losing my temper and insulting Seven of Nine. Seven of Nine, please, accept my apology for the way I treated you. I would be grateful if you would witness my punishment.”

Seven’s eyes widened but she slowly nodded her consent.

“How many words did you speak in anger?” Kathryn asked.

“Twenty-nine, nine of which were directly insulting,” B’Elanna answered.

“The riding crop, please, Mistress.”

Kathryn nodded. B’Elanna came fluidly to her feet, walked over to the dresser where she had put both instruments of discipline. She went back on her knees and presented the riding crop on her outstretched hands.

“Take your position, my B’El.”

B’Elanna reached back and grabbed her ankles, pushing out her chest. Kathryn gently removed the nipple ring.
“I want you to count, my B’El, and don’t forget: this is a repeat offence, so, the number of strokes will be doubled. Oh, and look at Seven while you count.”

The first stroke hit B’Elanna’s sensitive right nipple but she didn’t flinch and her voice sounded calm. Seventeen strokes later there were only four red lines visible on every breast; the rest of the strokes had been centred on the nipples. B’Elanna’s voice never wavered but with the last stroke a single tear rolled down her cheek. She kissed the riding crop and thanked Kathryn for the punishment.

The crop was put back on the dresser and she brought the cane and presented it the way she had the crop. Her Mistress’ attention, however, was on Seven. They were speaking quietly.

Kathryn turned back to her and said, “Seven just asked me to end your punishment. She thinks that a few words spoken in the heat of the moment are not worth to suffer for. I’m willing to make an exception, just this once. So, what do you say, B’El?”

“Please, don’t Mistress. I thank you for your consideration, Seven, but I deserve to be punished. My actions were not worthy of the uniform I wear and I have to bear the consequences. My actions dishonoured my Klingon and my Human heritage. To even begin to restore my honour I have to pay the prize. Please, finish my punishment, Mistress.”

“I leave the decision to Seven.” Kathryn said.

“Are you sure that this is what you want, Lieutenant Torres?” Seven asked.

“Yes, Seven. I’m sure. This is what I want and what I need.”

Seven nodded and took a step back, but she didn’t leave the room.

Kathryn took the cane from B’Elanna and ordered her to bend over the spanking horse, “Do you want to be restrained, B’El?”

“No, Mistress, but it might be better to at least bind my legs. Fifty-eight strokes with the cane are more than I had in a long time.”

“It will be done, B’El.”

Kathryn handed the cane to Seven. It was very thin, made of fibreglass and though she didn’t try it Seven was sure that it would cause a lot of pain. She decided to speak up again, “Captain, could you not use the other stick, please? It looks dangerous.”

“That’s why B’Elanna chose it, Seven. This cane can draw blood with the first stroke. By choosing this one instead of a more harmless one B’Elanna shows her trust in me. She trusts me not to break the skin. B’El, I want you to count every second stroke.”

“Yes, Mistress, every second stroke. May I also thank you, Mistress?”

“No, keep your thanks for the end.”

The first two strokes came in rapid succession and were hard enough to let B’Elanna groan. Three and four made her glad that her Mistress had not only restrained her legs but also her hands. Number six hit her right at the junction of her legs and grazed her clitoris. She gasped and began to focus on her breathing; it would help her to stand the pain.

“Twelve.”
Kathryn put her hand on the small of B’Elanna’s back, just above the highest cane mark, “Don’t hide from the pain, my love. Let go; give me your pain.”

Kathryn felt the slight tremor running through B’Elanna’s body. She knew that she was asking a lot of her wife, especially with a witness present, but she also knew that B’Elanna would do her best to follow that order. She would fight to not let the pain make her slip into her sub-space. And Kathryn had no doubt that she would succeed as testament to her training, her devotion to her Mistress and the level of her regret of her actions.

“Twenty-two.”

Seven could see tears running down B’Elanna’s face but listening only to her voice one would not have known. Seven checked the information in her cortical node, but everything she knew about Klingons was completely incompatible with what she was seeing now. Klingons were proud; they never would allow themselves to be beaten this way and they certainly would never have asked for it. Why did B’Elanna Torres? Was it a part of her Human heritage? But somehow that didn’t seem to fit either.

“Twenty-eight.”

B’Elanna’s voice still sounded normal, as if she were counting off a supply list and not cane strokes leaving red marks on her buttocks and upper thighs.

“Thirty-two.”

Seven knew that Klingons and even-half Klingons had a rather high pain threshold but she still had a hard time to understand why Lieutenant Torres basically was doing this to herself.

“Thirty-eight.”

Seven stared at the red stripes and welts that already had formed on the tortured buttocks and upper thighs. Her ocular implant informed her that they did not vary in strength which in her opinion was a considerable feat for a simple Human.

She found herself unable to look away and found no reference as for the ‘why’ in her memory engrams. If she had been in the habit of verbally expressing her feelings she would in all probability have identified them as a slight unease combined with utter fascination.

“Forty-eight.”

Seven surprised herself with the question if her nanoprobes would suppress the pain early enough or remove the marks before they had a chance to really show and with the further question how being treated that way would feel in the unlikely event that the nanoprobes would not interfere. Would she even be able to submit to another person as completely as B’Elanna Torres seemed to be able to do?

“Fifty-six.”

Did she even want that? Didn’t it mean to give up that cherished individuality the captain kept talking to her about?

Seven was so busy with her musings that she had not registered that the beating had stopped and the captain had already freed B’Elanna from her restraints. She wasn’t even completely aware that Kathryn had led her back into their living space. She never before had lost track of her surroundings like this. Seven decided to program her alcove to check her cortical node for malfunctions during her next regeneration cycle.
“Take a seat, Seven.”

Seven unconsciously obeyed, to her own surprise as well as Kathryn’s.

“I guess you have some questions.”

Seven nodded and for a moment she contemplated asking all the questions she just had asked herself. She quickly discarded the idea and settled for something more obvious, “Where is Lieutenant Torres?”

“She will be with us in a few minutes, Seven. After intense punishments she often needs a few minutes to herself to regain her equilibrium,” Kathryn answered.

She didn’t tell Seven that B’Elanna had returned to her corner to let her intense arousal abate on its own, but the former Borg was more astute that she had expected.

“B’Elanna Torres was sexually stimulated, as are you, Captain. Why?”

“Pain can be something very stimulating, the giving and the receiving of it, at least for some people and under special circumstances.”

“My separation from the Collective still hurts. I do not find it stimulating,” Seven answered and surprised herself with her honesty.

Kathryn covered her surprise at the flash of pain in Seven’s eyes, “Your separation from the Borg was not something you chose, Seven. It was not your decision, not your free will. I’m sorry that there was no other choice and that it harmed you. But it’s a different kind of pain. You are talking about emotional pain. I’m talking about a certain kind of physical pain. Under the right circumstances it can be very liberating.”

“I do not understand.”

“Today B’Elanna experienced pain as a punishment, and the pain will help her to forgive herself for what she did wrong. Pain also can be an instrument of pleasure, sexual pleasure. Had tonight not been about discipline and punishment she would have had at least one orgasm from being caned.”

Seven’s eyes widened, “I do not understand,” she repeated.

“You smelled B’Elanna’s arousal.”

It wasn’t exactly a question but Seven still nodded.

“And when she joins us, she will still be aroused… Ah, here you are, love.”

B’Elanna had donned a white tank-top and black slacks.

“You took your punishment well, my B’El. I’m proud of you.”

“Thank you, Mistress.”

B’Elanna kissed Kathryn’s cheek and asked if one of them wanted something to drink. Seven predictably refused but Kathryn nodded and told B’Elanna to surprise her. Moments later the aroma of hot chocolate wafted through the room, and B’Elanna returned with three steaming mugs.

“Thank you, bang’wI. Try it, Seven, you may find out that taste is not irrelevant.”
B’Elanna took a seat on the floor and leaned half against the couch and half against her wife’s legs. She blew on the hot liquid to cover up her forced exhale when her tortured behind came in contact with the carpeted floor. She still grimaced a bit but that quickly turned into a genuine smile when she looked at Seven of Nine.

The former drone cautiously raised the mug to her lips but didn’t drink immediately. She smelled it and that tiny smile B’Elanna had seen earlier that day made a reappearance. In her mind B’Elanna saw a blonde girl sitting on the lap of a woman who told her to be careful because it was still hot. And her imagination was points on.

Seven exhaled slowly, just like her aunt had done all those years ago to cool the chocolate down. She took a sip and the tiny smile blossomed to a real smile; a smile so genuine and bright that B’Elanna and Kathryn turned their attention to their own beverage to give her some privacy. A flood of beautiful childhood memories rushed through Seven of a time when she had still been on Earth and had stayed with her aunt in Stockholm while her parents were negotiating with Starfleet about their Borg research project.

Another part of her mind was busy thinking about the captain’s words, and suddenly she understood, “If Lieutenant Torres had allowed herself sexual release it no longer would have been a punishment, but how… I have to go and do some research.”

“Please, stay, Seven,” B’Elanna said. “I guess you want to know how to control an orgasm, right?”

“Yes Lieutenant. My research told me that sexual release is a natural phenomenon and impossible to control, a need of the humanoid body to rid itself of hormones, a biological function like eating and sleeping.”

“Please, call me B’Elanna. It’s true that hormones are set free during a climax, an orgasm, and it’s also true that it’s hard to control, but it’s not impossible. It’s a question of will power, self discipline and training.”

“Explain. Does that have to do with why you called Captain Janeway ‘Mistress’ numerous times this evening?” Seven asked.

“Yes, it does, but Kathryn is much better at explaining it than I am.”

B’Elanna looked up at her Mistress with love and devotion in her eyes and got the same expression in return. Seven didn’t have a name for what she read in their eyes but she knew that she would willingly have taken B’Elanna’s place on the floor if it meant that Captain Janeway, that anyone would look at her that way.

For the next couple of hours they spoke about dominance and submission as psychological needs in general, about the different forms those needs can take, and also, mostly to illustrate a point, about their own multi-faceted relationship as bonded partners, as lovers and friends, as Mistress and slave, captain and crewmember.

Seven’s blunt questions showed that despite her icy demeanour she had a better grasp on social dynamics and humanoid mating habits than she had previously let on. She left shortly before the end of Beta shift.

Kathryn and B’Elanna retired to their bedroom where the young woman was ordered to strip. The marks on her breasts were still visible but there was no swelling. So, Kathryn gently put the nipple ring back in.
“Face first on the bed, my B’El. Let’s have a look at those cane marks.”

Numerous welts competed for prominence on her buttocks. The firm globes were extremely swollen, to a point where wearing the snugly fitting uniform trousers the next day would be still extremely painful. It must hurt like Grethor but B’Elanna had not complained. She even had insisted on staying on the floor during their long talk with Seven.

“Stay still, B’El, this needs some healing balm. You should have said something; this should have been taken care of hours ago.”

“I’m fine, Mistress. Please, leave it alone. It’s what I deserve for not seeing the obvious. No one with such a smile can be without emotions even when they profess that emotions are irrelevant. I should have known.”

“You know now, my love. I’ll put some aloe on your behind and thighs. No, don’t fret; it will just help with the swelling not with the overall pain.”

“Thank you, Kathryn.”

“You’re welcome, benal, and just for the record, you were the one who made me see that she was more frightened then anything else and that she had just lost her whole world. You just lost sight of that for a while, and all those late night talks I had with Seven while you were still locked up and in the months since have not made it easier for you. I’m sorry for that. We should have cleared the air months ago.”

B’Elanna turned her head to the side and looked at her wife with an expression as if she had just been given the decisive clue to unravel a great mystery.

“There’s nothing to apologise for, my Kathryn.”

For a moment Kathryn thought that her benal would now verbalise what had been on her mind all evening, instead she asked, “May I hold you tonight?”

Kathryn just stripped, slid into bed and snuggled in B’Elanna’s arms, but Kathryn couldn’t sleep. So, she let her mind wander.

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After they had taken the Oath almost eighteen months ago Kathryn Janeway had gained an unique awareness of her mate. The counsellors and Starfleet medical probably would have a field day with them and then spend months to argue on how to describe their special connection. It wasn’t telepathy and it wasn’t empathy. They didn’t know what the other thought or felt at a given moment but both had a general awareness about the other’s mental state. Well, they didn’t know what the other thought or felt except during certain extreme situations.

When Vorik had initiated the partial mind meld with B’Elanna during his Pon Farr Kathryn had known. She instinctively also had known what she should have done. She should have dragged B’Elanna off to their quarters and made love to her until the bed broke. Instead she had trusted the Doctor that his medication had worked, but soon had had to deal with B’Elanna and Tom Paris missing in an unstable mining system.
Kathryn revelled in the feeling of B’Elanna’s strong arms holding her tight. The deep, even breaths told her that her beloved was deep asleep, but her mind refused to let go and once again wandered back to the moment B’Elanna and Tom had finally made it back to the surface.

Tom had been draped all over her mate, Kathryn remembered, and there had been a mark on B’Elanna’s cheek that looked like a very faint bite mark. It had made her growl as much as a Human’s throat is able to produce such a sound. Tuvok had heard her and commented it with his trademark raised eyebrow. Then everything had happened too fast to interfere. Vorik and B’Elanna had fought each other; B’Elanna had knocked the irrational Vulcan out, but that by far had not been the end of their troubles.

In the past the kal-if-fee, the ritual Vulcan challenge had always ended with the death of one of the contestants. Recently there had been reported incidents of both fighters leaving the fighting ring alive. The Vulcans tended to see it as a sign of their still growing mental maturity, and Tuvok had been surprised that it had not worked with Vorik or B’Elanna.

Susan Nicoletti, with the help of the doctor had offered a logical solution to Vorik’s problem. Since being stranded in the Delta Quadrant Susan and Vorik had developed a strong friendship, based on mutual respect and more. When he had recognised his loss of control as a symptom of Pon Farr, Susan had actually been his first choice, but he had been afraid that she would not be strong enough to withstand the fierceness of his physical needs; so, B’Elanna had been his somewhat logical choice. Susan, however, had come up with a solution as soon as she had heard about the Pon Farr, and the Doctor had found a way to temporarily boost her physical strength without serious side effects.

B’Elanna had been a whole other problem. The Doctor’s analysis of the hormones and chemical levels in her body let him deduce that B’Elanna had not suffered from Pon Farr but that the mind meld instead had put her in an advanced state of Klingon Blood Fever. It’s rumoured that it drives the afflicted to try to impress their mates or prospective mates with courageous, death defying feats to prove their worthiness.

And B’Elanna’s blood had been screaming for her wife, her mate. The energy crystals in her eyes, she later had told Kathryn, would have been the perfect present. The drive to find what they needed and then to return home to her beloved and make love to her until the world’s end had been overwhelming. Even through the physical distance Kathryn had felt her senses sharpening and her need for B’Elanna increasing. The blood fever had been so strong that it had even affected Tom, thus the bite mark on B’Elanna’s cheek. She had rejected his advances because her blood had already been boiling with need for Kathryn.

B’Elanna’s body chemistry had continued to be completely off the charts. The fight with Vorik had done nothing to calm her down and Tuvok had had to stun her twice since she had been confined to sickbay. The Doctor had finally resorted to confine B’Elanna behind a level ten force field because he had been convinced that in time the Blood Fever would abate on its own.

Now, more than seven months later Kathryn could no longer explain to herself why she had listened to the Doctor instead of the cry of her own blood. If not for B’Elanna having broken out of her confinement after less than an hour the Blood Fever would have killed her or at least made her insane.

Kathryn had been in the mess hall when B’Elanna had found her. She had just put her tray on the table when B’Elanna had stormed in. Her eyes had scanned the lunch crowd as if to assert their worthiness as opponents and then had settled on her. She had rushed towards Kathryn, her expression a feral mix of aggression and lust.

She had half expected to be thrown over B’Elanna’s shoulder and carried off, instead B’Elanna had
stopped as if suddenly frozen in place. Kathryn had made eye contact and instantly her mind had been filled with B’Elanna’s conflicted emotions, with the overwhelmingly strong biological need to mate and the learned imperative to keep her feelings firmly under control, with the need to sink to her knees and worship her Mistress and the equally strong impulse to take her and dominate her right here in the mess hall.

Kathryn instinctively had known that it would be up to her to tip the scales in either direction. So, she had taken her wife by the hand and pulled her out of the room. A site-to-site transport had deposited them in their bedroom. B’Elanna had still been warring with herself, still seemingly frozen in place. With her back to the bed Kathryn had been standing in front of her wife. She had looked into B’Elanna’s eyes, silently, until she had been sure that she had her mate’s full attention.

“You are mine, B’Elanna, daughter of Miral. You are my heart and my soul. You belong to me and now I will claim what is mine. Will you also claim what is yours? Will you claim my heart and my soul and my entire being? Will you take what is yours, what belongs to you?”

B’Elanna’s only verbal answer had been a guttural growl coming from the back of her throat, and before Kathryn had had even the slightest chance to react B’Elanna had shredded her uniform jacket, sending her pips flying, immediately followed by the turtleneck and the bra. Her uniform trousers and panties had also not survived much longer. B’Elanna had pushed her down on the bed. She had entered her already slick centre with three fingers and started to thrust deep and hard.

When Kathryn had tried to undress her beloved in search for skin contact B’Elanna had grabbed both of her wrists and pushed them over her head. Suddenly she had found herself restrained by the cuffs that usually chained B’Elanna to the bed. B’Elanna’s thrusts had become gradually more forceful but by then Kathryn’s arousal had been strong enough to allow her to not only take a forth finger but her wife’s whole hand.

Kathryn’s orgasm had been as intense as never before. She bit down on B’Elanna’s neck, hard enough to draw blood even through the thick fabric of the sweatshirt the doctor had replicated for her earlier. Simultaneously B’Elanna had also bitten her and they had renewed the Oath, just like the first time without words. They had made love for the rest of the day and most of the following night and only a red alert had forced them to leave their quarters the next day.

Thinking about this time now Kathryn had a sudden epiphany to why she lately had such trouble to sense B’Elanna’s emotions. Ever since the Pon Farr or the Blood Fever they only had been captain and crewmember, Mistress and slave, but they rarely had been just friends and mates; they had not been equals. Partly that had been due to circumstances, to B’Elanna’s time in the brig after the incident with the Meckirian Ambassador, the trouble with the Borg and Species 8472, the loss of Kes and Seven of Nine’s integration into the crew. But to an equal degree it had been her fault. She simply had been too preoccupied with everything else to see that she was about to lose her wife and lover to the slave.

Yes, it had been the beginning of their relationship, and it was too much a part of who they were to disappear completely, but Kathryn had no intention to turn back the hands of time. So, she resolved to show B’Elanna that she still wanted and needed all of her, the fierce, dominant warrior, the lover, the wife, the slave and the friend.
The Diary

The next morning Kathryn opened her eyes to the sound of the computer telling her the time. She was disappointed that B’Elanna was nowhere to be found, but it wasn’t the first time that her beloved had started her shift early, especially lately, she admitted ruefully to herself. Kathryn sighed, went to the bathroom and got dressed for the day. On the table next to the replicator breakfast was waiting for her under a stasis lid, scrambled eggs and toast, one of her favourites. B’Elanna’s thoughtfulness brought a smile on her face and she began to eat. Only when she was about to put the empty plate and coffee mug back to be recycled she became aware of the stack of papers lying next to her meal. She scanned the first page and found it to be a letter addressed to her.

“My beloved Kathryn,” it said, “Lieutenant Nicoletti called me in early. There’s a problem with some of the gel packs. I hope to have a report for you by the time your shift starts.

The pages under this note are for you to read at your leisure. I wrote them while I was in the brig. Tuvok gave them to me. He said that this old fashioned kind of personal log, he called it a ‘diary’, would help me to order my thoughts. He said that with a padd one can always add and delete things but on ‘black and white’ one would have to rewrite the whole page or more, and believe me I did that more than once.

My penmanship is not the best, but these pages reflect all the old fears and insecurities that resurfaced during my time in the brig; fears that have made me everything but easy to live with those last few months. When I pulled them out of their hiding place last night I wanted to give them to you personally, I want you to read them but I’m not sure if I have the strength to talk about what’s going on in my head. So, leaving them for you to find is the coward’s way out but it also might be the better way.

I don’t know what to say but I promise that I will try to answer any questions you’ll have to the best of my abilities.

Lately I can’t shake the feeling that we’re somehow drifting apart though I can’t name a distinct event. I don’t want to lose you. I love you, bang’wI, more than life. I’ll always love you. Please give me a chance to make up for the last few months, for everything that has been going on or rather not going on since you had to put me in the brig because of my own stupidity. B’Elanna.”

Kathryn was stunned. She turned the page over and started to read.

-x-x-x-

[B’Elanna’s Diary]

Thirty days solitary confinement. I guess I got off rather easy considering all the rule violations I accumulated. The captain could have given me a much higher prison sentence and busted me down to crewman but when I get out of here in a month I’ll still be the chief engineer.

Tuvok said that writing down what happened will give me another perspective on why I acted like I did. I’m not sure if that will really be the case, but at least writing will help me to pass the time. It has only been two days and I’m already bored out of my mind. There are only so many push-ups and sit-ups one can do in a day.
So, how did it all begin?

Our energy reserves were in dire need of replenishing when we found a promising star system. The inhabitants of the fifth planet, the Meckirians had just developed warp technology and thus were eligible for first contact. They were curious and eager to trade with us. So, Captain Janeway invited a delegation to Voyager after she had made it clear our regulations don’t allow us to share our technology. Their Prime Minister then had pointed out that sometimes observation can be the beginning of innovation and the captain agreed with a sly smile.

The Meckirians look a bit like an enormous hedgehog walking on its hind legs with a slightly red, snub nose and a wide grin, shining black eyes and front paws that have only four instead of five fingers. They seem friendly and open and give the impression that they would not be out of place in one of Naomi’s holoprograms. I quickly found out that they also can be obnoxious, obtuse and nerve wrecking, at least the one I had been assigned to show around Engineering. Even one of Tom’s holodeck bimbos has more technical aptitude than that man, male, whatever.

He drove me to distraction with his completely asinine questions within the first hour, but I knew how desperately we needed the raw material they had in abundance; so, I did my best to keep my temper. I didn’t throw anything. I didn’t blow up at him and escaped to the holodeck as soon as I had handed him over to Neelix at the end of my shift.

I barely had started to beat up the Kazon warriors in Tuvok’s training’s scenario when the order came to attend a formal dinner in the mess hall to celebrate the trade agreements, dress uniforms mandatory.

I hate dress uniforms and have from the first moment on. They make me look like a yellow penguin and are uncomfortable as hell. But still I returned to our quarters to get ready and prepare Kathryn’s uniform.

On the way there I ran into my Meckirian nemesis. He informed me that he had requested to be seated next to me during dinner. I thought that he wanted to ask me more stupid questions but instead he made it clear that he wanted to spend the time to get to know me on a more personal level.

I took a cold shower to calm down, but it didn’t work and I just knew that I would ruin everything if I went to that dinner. I would lose it. I was sure that I would lose it and kick him into next week.

In retrospect I’m not proud of the solution with which I came up. I went to the doctor and faked a headache, or rather I exaggerated the headache I did have. I lied about my health and worried Kathryn. I intended to confess my lie after dinner, I would have been punished by my Mistress and everything would have been fine, not immediately because my behaviour still would have disappointed my Mistress and my Captain and my wife, but in time she would have forgiven me.

What really happened was much worse, much, much worse. What happened was that I got bored pretending to be ill and decided that it would be a good idea to go to Engineering and use the relative quiet of Beta shift to run a few long overdue diagnostics.

I was too focused on my work to hear the door opening and jumped in surprise when I heard the high-pitched, lisping voice that had haunted me all day. I still tried to be polite and send him back to the mess hall but he insisted on keeping me company. His questions soon became personal, even intimate. He asked about my sex life with Kathryn. I told him that it was none of his business, but he insisted and offered himself as a substitute. He waggled his bushy eyebrows and told me that I wouldn’t want my wife anymore after one night of passion with a Meckirian male. He tried to grab my ass but I was still thinking of our supplies and tried to retreat. He insisted. I refused, rather forcefully, I admit, and with a few insults thrown in. I clenched my fists and was only a breath away
from losing what little control I had.

I tried to leave.

He raised his hands to touch me. I pushed him back but those hedgehogs are tougher than they look. He quickly regained his equilibrium and told me that he would show me right now, in the Engine room what he was talking about. I told him to stop and when he didn’t I hit him hard. He crumbled to the floor and curled into a ball, his spines raised in defence. I called the doctor and Tuvok who had me escorted to the brig.

I should have called security the moment he entered Engineering. I should have restrained him without harming him. I should have stayed in our quarters. I should have gone to that damned dinner party.

Should haves, what-ifs…won’t do me any good now. And it won’t change the fact that I screwed up, even if not as much as I initially thought.

Two hours after I had been brought to the brig Captain Janeway and the Meckirian I had slugged came in. I sprang to attention as soon as I saw the captain. Kathryn was angry, and she had, no, she has every right to be.

“Lieutenant Torres, Ambassador Valku wants to talk to you.”

And what then came surprised me and it made me angry.

“Lieutenant Torres, I apologise for having provoked you deliberately. I explained everything to your captain and asked her to drop the charges against you but she refused. I’m sorry.”

I asked him what he meant by ‘deliberately provoking me’. He explained that Meckirians are emphatic but only to other Meckirians, “We never have been able to sense the emotions of aliens. From the first moment on, however, we could sense your emotions. They were stronger and closer to the surface than anything we had ever felt before. We could feel your passion and your temper and the strong bond you have with Captain Janeway. We felt the tight control you have over acting on them. So, we got curious and wanted to find out how it would feel if you lost control and decided to try to provoke you.”

He congratulated me that I had kept my temper the whole day and then apologised for having gone too far earlier that night. He said, “I should have known that you would defend yourself. In the eyes of my government that’s what you did and we will of course fulfil the trade agreement with your captain. Your Lieutenant Carey is already preparing to start the mining. Please accept my heartfelt apologies for causing you all that trouble.”

I wanted to throw his apology in his face. Strictly speaking the Ambassador had tried to rape me, but the expression on Kathryn’s face let me change my mind. I was in deep enough shit with my Captain and my Mistress as it was. Still it was hard to speak without growling.

“Apology accepted, Ambassador Valku.” I took a deep breath and added, “Please do also accept my apology for losing my temper. I’m sorry that I hurt you.”

He then asked the captain to reconsider my stay in the brig for defending myself and I took his words as a chance to let my Mistress know that I would accept the consequences of my actions. So, I said, “Ambassador Valku, please do not concern yourself with my situation. I brought it upon myself, and not only by losing my temper. I disobeyed an order and I lied. I pretended to be ill to get out of that dinner. Captain Janeway has to uphold the law and I broke it. I will accept whatever punishment she
He answered that he understood and took his leave.

Captain Janeway stayed for a moment longer but didn’t say anything. Her deep grey eyes, however, were eloquent enough. She was more than angry. She was disappointed and hurt by my actions.

[End of B’Elanna’s Diary]

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Kathryn’s comm. badge chirped, “Torres to Janeway. Could you please come to the Engineering lab?”

“I’m on my way, Lieutenant. Janeway out.”

She asked the computer for the time and was surprised to find that she already was late for her shift. So, she hurried to deck eleven.

B’Elanna had once again enlisted the help of the doctor to identify an infection in the gel packs. He found a virus that proved rather resilient. They would have to pull every single gel pack and run it through a complex purification process involving Seven’s nanopores. B’Elanna estimated that it would take them at least a whole day to go through all of the packs and for some of them they would have to take the warp drive off-line.

Janeway was not a happy captain but there was very little she could do if she wanted her ship in working order again. She authorised the overtime and retired to her Ready Room. She tried not to be too disappointed that the romantic evening with her wife she had had in mind would have to be postponed. The purification process was too complex for anyone else but B’Elanna and Seven doing it; and that meant that there would be no time to cuddle and talk.

Kathryn tried to focus on her seemingly never ending paperwork. Without much success. Her mind kept wandering back to what she had read earlier in B’Elanna’s diary and she decided to be selfish for once. She called Tuvok and took the rest of the day off.

Back in their quarters Kathryn fortified herself with an extra big cup of coffee and resumed her reading. Her coffee, however, was quickly forgotten.

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[B’Elanna’s Diary]

She was more than angry. She was disappointed and hurt with my actions, and she has every right to be. I wouldn’t be surprised if she lost the access code to my cell and I really wouldn’t blame her. I don’t deserve any better.

I start to understand what Tom said about his time in the brig. He said that writing this letter to his father was what kept him sane. I still have twenty-eight days to go and I’m ready to climb the walls.

As much as I like to find excuses for my actions, I can’t. I disobeyed the captain’s orders. I lied to her
and I attacked an alien dignitary, a guest on our ship even though I acted in self-defence. I deserve every single one of the thirty days of solitary confinement, technically I should have been sentenced to more. I should have lost my job and been reduced in rank.

I knew I should not have reacted the way I did. I knew from the moment I did it but what I really regret is what my actions mean, what they tell about me. My actions say that I don’t trust Kathryn, they say that I don’t trust my Mistress, that I don’t trust my wife and my lover, and that I don’t trust my captain.

I didn’t trust her. I should have trusted her. I should have told her about my problems with Ambassador Valku. She would have found a way. I should have shown more confidence in her judgement. Even if she were not my benal, my beloved, Captain Janeway has earned that trust, but I did not trust her.

Why didn’t I trust her? She is my life. She owns my heart. Why didn’t I trust her?

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Nightmares are something I’m familiar with, intimately familiar though they have become few and far between since I found my Mistress and mate. If those dreams were not so terrifying I would laugh about myself, about how really pathetic I am. Or what else should I call the fact that I can’t sleep without feeling Kathryn next to me, without hearing her heartbeat, without smelling her.

Kathryn keeps the nightmares at bay, mostly, at least. Now I wake up in a sweat trembling, my hearts beating as hard as if I had just run a mile in under a minute. I feel panic, fear, unadulterated fear like I never felt before. However, I don’t remember of what I’m so afraid. I only know that the first moment after waking up I can’t move as if paralysed. And it seems to get stronger every night, every time I close my eyes and really do fall asleep.

I think the worst thing is that I have no one to talk to in this cell. I’m by far not the most talkative person on board, despite my reputation as a gossip queen, but when Neelix comes with my food it’s really hard to not to speak with him beyond a friendly greeting. I would be against the spirit of my punishment.

I usually like his cooking. His skills have improved much ever since Kathryn’s and my joining party. At the moment, however, I have a really hard time to keep it down. Under different circumstances I would think that I have some sort of stomach bug, but the doctor gave me a complete physical at the start of my sentence. And according to him I’m in perfect health. So, I can only surmise that whatever it is, it’s more in my head than in my stomach and hope that it’ll go away on it’s own.

[End of B’Elanna’s Diary]

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Kathryn stopped reading, her mind suddenly awash with memories of that time. B’Elanna had started to throw up at the end of the third day and in the night she had lashed out at the security officer who had tried to wake her from a nightmare. The next day B’Elanna had not been able to keep anything
down and the day after that even the smell of food had caused her to dry heave and to pass out.

The doctor had performed a myriad of tests and had kept her sedated. The next morning he had called Kathryn down to sickbay.

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[Flashback]

“Captain, are you familiar with physio-psychology?” He asked.

After Kathryn’s restless night and after once again waking up without the presence of the one woman she needed close to her even the three cups of coffee she already had were not enough to put her in the mood to indulge her CMO’s ego.

“Just get to the point, Doctor. What’s wrong with Lieutenant Torres?”

“I’m reasonably sure that Lieutenant Torres suffers from IS, incarceration syndrome. It’s the only explanation for her symptoms.”

“Elaborate Doctor.”

“Different species react differently to incarceration. Federation law strives to take those differences into consideration when sentencing non-Humans – and Starfleet complies with that policy.

“Klingons are especially sensitive to long term incarceration. There even is a Klingon proverb equalling solitary confinement to an eternal stay in Gre’thor.

“My medical database indicates that it can lead to organ failure, hallucinations and any other kind of unpleasant symptoms. Lieutenant Torres’ symptoms are consistent with the middle stages of incarceration syndrome. The problem is that according to the Klingon medical database it should not have come this far this fast. The texts indicate a solid month to six weeks of solitary confinement. Lieutenant Torres, however, has only been locked up for less than a week. Furthermore she is only half-Klingon which should make her more resistant to incarceration syndrome than the average Klingon. It does not make any medical sense,” the EMH explained.

Kathryn unconsciously massaged her right temple to get rid of the massive headache she had developed over the last few days.

“Are you alright, Captain?” The Doctor asked and turned his medical tricorder towards her.

“I’m fine, Doctor. I just have trouble sleeping through the night.”

He stared at the readings, adjusted some parameters and once again stared at the readings.

“Captain, would you please stretch out on a biobed.”

“What’s going on, Doctor?”

“Please indulge me for a moment. It will not take long.”

A couple of minutes later the Doctor allowed Janeway get up and asked her to follow him to his
office where he went directly to the replicator and put a cup of coffee in front of her.

“It must be serious if you think that I’ll need coffee to digest it. So, tell me!”

“When I checked Lieutenant Torres a week ago I detected a slight chemical imbalance I erroneously put down to stress. Now I know that it were the first signs of incarceration syndrome. The check I ran on you just now shows exactly the same kind of imbalance.”

“Are you telling me that I’m suffering from incarceration syndrome?”

“I doubt that your symptoms will become nearly as severe as with your mate, Captain, but basically, yes, your body chemistry shows early signs of incarcerations syndrome.”

“But I’m not the one who is confined to the brig.”

“No, you’re not, Captain, but Lieutenant Torres and you share a bond, a very specific bond. I read up about that when you announced that you had taken the Oath. Subsequent observation taught me what kind of Oath you took and also about the bond you share.”

The Doctor saw his captain’s jaw tightening, and hurried on, “I didn’t want to invade your privacy, Captain, but after the incident with Ensign Vorik and the fact that I completely misjudged Lieutenant Torres’ reactions I did some research. I know now that you have a special kind of awareness for the other and I should have taken that into consideration then.

“Anyway, after analysing your readings I’m afraid that now your connection threatens to turn against you. Your insomnia and the headaches will get worse if we don’t do anything. I’m guessing here but I think that Lieutenant Torres’ symptoms are as bad as they are because of your bond. To be more specific they are as advanced because at the moment she feels as if she’s losing her bond with you. It’s the separation, I think. What I know is that if the symptoms continue to progress at the rate they did over last couple of days Lieutenant Torres will not survive the next two weeks, not to speak of the twenty-three days left of her sentence.”

Kathryn’s captain’s mask faltered at those words. She visibly blanched but managed to somehow keep her trepidation out of her voice, “Treatment options?”

“Make love to your wife and release Lieutenant Torres from the brig for medical reasons,” the Doctor answered, and to the captain’s surprise he even was able to keep the smirk out of his voice.

“Any other options?” Kathryn asked.

“I tried to counter the chemical imbalance in her body with medication. It was the first thing I tried when she was brought in but it does not work. I keep her sedated to allow her body to recover. I’m sorry, but I don’t see an alternative to removing her from the brig.”

“I understand. I’ll need a detailed report on your findings as soon as possible. Send it to the Ready Room, and thank you for your good work.”

Kathryn retired to her Ready Room and took a seat on the upper level. She stared at the star field streaking past them. The doctor’s words kept echoing in her head: ‘Make love to your wife and release Lieutenant Torres from the brig’.

As if it were that easy. Yes, she had stretched the Prime Directive to its limits more than once, but there still were some regulations she just couldn’t bring herself to break – especially not for personal reasons.
She wanted nothing more than to simply let her wife go free, cancel her punishment for medical reasons. She wanted her wife back in her bed. She wanted to make love to her and to be held in her strong arms and to hold her. She wanted to pull her slave over her lap and spank her hard for lying to her, for making her think that she was ill and kiss the bruises and make love to her. She wanted her chief engineer back at her post on deck eleven, and not only because then she would not have to deal with in her eyes unreasonable requests for overtime. Only the day before Lieutenant Carey had asked for a few hours to do a simple maintenance procedure B’Elanna would have easily incorporated in her normal schedule.

It was selfish and pathetic and not worthy of a Starfleet captain.

Kathryn sighed and returned to her desk. The doctor’s report had arrived a few minutes ago and it became clear to her that she really did not have any other option but to implement his treatment plan.

As a wife and mistress she was thrilled. It meant that her wishes would be fulfilled and that she would get B’Elanna back before the end of the day. As a captain, however, she was pissed. It meant that she would have to implement an alternate punishment to satisfy Federation law. And the only option she had would be to demote Lieutenant Torres to Ensign and assign her to waste reclamation or something like that for at least three months before she would get the chance to return to Engineering and start to regain her former rank.

That would not only deprive her of her Chief Engineer for an indeterminate length of time; it also would be a heavy blow to B’Elanna’s pride. That’s why Kathryn had decided against it in the first place. Now, however, it seemed as if she didn’t have the luxury of choice any longer. So, Kathryn sighed again and sent the doctor’s report to Tuvok with the order to prepare the paperwork necessary to change Lieutenant Torres’ sentence.

About an hour later the door chimed and Tuvok entered, carrying a padd. He handed it over and her eyes widened in surprise.

“What made you come up with that, Tuvok? It sounds barely this side of legal.”

“I concede that it’s an old practice, dating back to the first Enterprise under the command of Captain Archer. His science officer disobeyed his direct order to safe the life of her lover. The Vulcan High Command insisted on a punishment but Enterprise was in a region of space where Captain Archer didn’t want to miss out on the expertise of his science officer. So, together they came up with this modified punishment, and if they had not Enterprise would have been destroyed. Since then it has often been used in times of war or during deep space missions. We qualify for both. As far as I know Lieutenant Torres she would prefer this solution to being demoted. May I suggest that you offer her the choice.”

“Now, that would be a definite first in the history of Starfleet: a convict deciding on their punishment,” Kathryn said with a mixture of exasperation and humour.

“It’s not as rare as you might think, Captain. And I see no logical reason why Kathryn Janeway could not speak with her mate about her preference before Captain Janeway makes her decision. Everyone of the crew knows that you don’t give Lieutenant Torres preferential treatment just because she is your mate. I doubt that anyone would question you should you decide to simply let it go and declare her sentence served,” Tuvok explained.

“No one? Not even you, Tuvok?” Kathryn asked.

“No one, Captain. I checked the security logs and spoke with Ensign Vorik about the time Ambassador Valku spent in Engineering and in my opinion Lieutenant Torres showed remarkable
self-restraint.”
“For a Klingon.”
“For a Human,” Tuvok said.
Kathryn felt a wave of pride at Tuvok’s words; coming from him they were high praise.
“Unfortunately, my friend, that’s not what her punishment is about…”
Before the captain had a chance to say what Tuvok already knew, namely that Lieutenant Torres had been found guilty of insubordination and conduct unbecoming, her comm. badge chirped.
“Sickbay to Janeway.”
“Yes Doctor.”
“I need you in sickbay, Captain, ASAP. Lieutenant Torres has a nightmare though the sedatives I gave her should prevent dreaming. I believe she would benefit from your presence.”

[End of Flashback]

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Kathryn yanked herself out of her own memories and resumed her reading after she had replaced her stale cup of coffee with a fresh one.

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[B’Elanna’s Diary]
I’m back in the brig and much has happened.

I don’t remember anything after having apparently passed out in my cell. But I remember my nightmare. I remember waking up on the Barge of the Dead, on my way to Grethor. I remember being accused of having dishonoured my House by becoming a slave, that I had brought my fate upon myself and should accept it with dignity. I remember telling Kotar, the captain of the Barge, that there was nothing dishonourable in serving the one you love, just as Kahless on occasion served Lukara – and then I felt Kathryn’s presence.

The feeling was so strong, it woke me up and I was so glad to see her that I threw myself right in her arms and started to cry. Tuvok and the Doctor were present but I didn’t care about my dignity. The relief I felt was too strong. It was the first time since my sentencing that I could see and feel and smell my wife. I held on for dear life and it took some time before I became aware of Kathryn’s whispered words, soothing me, caressing me.

The seven days I had spent without her seemed like an eternity to me; and the feeling of her hand rubbing circles just over the ridges at the small of my back was bliss to my starved senses. I wanted
to breathe her in, all of her and never let go. I wanted to make love to her and prostrate myself at her feet and beg for forgiveness and ask to be punished hard for lying and disobeying and for not trusting her but all I could do was cry.

Kathryn held me and whispered to me to let it all out. She told me that everything would be alright soon and that she wouldn’t leave me alone and that she loved me. I heard the love and concern in her voice and it made me cry harder. It took an eternity ‘til the last of my tears were spilled and I was coherent enough to listen to what she had to say, what the captain was proposing.

She told me that I suffered from a severe case of incarceration syndrome, that being locked up in a cell makes me physically ill, to an extent that I would not survive should I have to serve the rest of my sentence. And then she offered me a choice.

I could either be sentenced to maintenance duty for three months and be demoted to crewman or I could serve my time in a modified way. I would keep my rank and my job as chief engineer but would have to spend my time off and my nights in the brig and thus whittle away at my remaining twenty-three days hours at a time. I also would be allowed to spend at least one night every week in our quarters with my mate, more if the Doctor should deem it necessary.

I, of course, accepted the second option.

If I spend fourteen hours every day in the brig, minus one night a week it will take me a bit over six weeks to complete my sentence, but anything is better than being demoted or suffer through the loneliness of the cell without any reprieve.

Captain Janeway called the doctor back and Tuvok put his thumbprint next to the captain’s on a padd to make the change in my punishment official. The doctor checked my vitals and declared me fit enough to work. He also ordered me to spend the night with my wife to get my and the captain’s body chemistry back in line. I jumped right into work and Carey even seemed a bit relieved to have me back.

I quickly lost track of time and was surprised when Kathryn came by at the end of Alpha shift to escort me home. She had a platter with finger food waiting and the bedroom was lit by dozens of candles. She stripped me off my uniform and made me sit on the bed with my back against the headboard while she slowly took off her own clothes.

My hearts began to beat faster at the sight of her beautiful body piece by piece revealed to my hungry gaze. Her eyes were focused on mine the whole time and she could read my growing desire. I wanted to touch her but when I began to move she ordered me to stay put and spread my legs for her. I knew she could see my juices coating my thighs.

Her hands began to roam over her body, caressing her thighs and buttocks, squeezing them. She turned around and bent slightly at the waist, just enough to give me a glimpse of her own wetness. She playfully pulled her ass cheeks apart and I longed to jump up and worship her firm globes and to caress her sphincter with the tip of my tongue and beg to be allowed to enter it.

I moaned and Kathryn turned around again to face me with a smile that told me that she was very aware of what that sight was doing to me. Her hands slid over her belly and up to her breasts. Her fingertips fluttered over her aureoles and my own nipples hardened to a point that made them slightly painful, as if wearing a set of baby alligator clamps. Her right hand slowly travelled upwards. Her index finger retraced her lips and then was sucked in and suckled.

My need for her was almost overwhelming my obedience. I could smell her arousal and knew that it would not take more than a simple word from her to make me come. And then she made it even
worse when she crawled up the bed with the fierce expression of a predator hunting its prey. It was so hot, so beautiful, so perfect that for a moment I forgot to breathe.

Kathryn pushed my legs further apart and bent down as if she wanted to feast on my wetness, but she only put a soft kiss on my labia. I groaned in disappointment when she sat up again and the mischievous twinkle in her eyes told me that she intended to tease me within an inch of my life and I knew that I would enjoy every aggravating minute.

She ordered me to stretch my arms to the side and press my palms flat against the headboard. It made me push out my chest and she bent down again and sucked my stone hard nipple in her mouth. Her front teeth scraped the sensitive nub and I almost went over the edge at the simple contact. I arched my back to put my chest out even more. Kathryn bit down, hard. She sat up again and ordered me not to move.

“Tonight is a leisurely journey, my B’El, not a race. We have the whole night.”

I groaned. I knew how maddeningly patient my Mistress could be. She returned her attention to my nipple. She suckled it and began to play with the ring in my other breast. I couldn’t help but moan.

I needed more contact. For a moment I lost control. My back arched again and offered my chest for more contact. Less than a heartbeat later her lips and her hand were gone.

“Bad girl!” She said, “You’ll have to do better than that if you want to come any time soon or at all tonight.”

I apologised and she gave me a chaste kiss on the lips as a sign of her forgiveness. Then she refocused on my nipples. She was building a torturously slow rhythm, alternating between soft bites, gentle licks and hard flicks. Her right hand twisted the duranium ring, just a tiny bit, just enough to stretch the nipple and let it bounce back. Since I was not allowed to move I had only one way to express my need: I begged, but Kathryn ignored me.

My Mistress didn’t change her rhythm but after what seemed like an eternity she added to my torment. She stroked my sex with her left hand. Her touch was light, fleeting but it sent shivers through my body. I hoped that she would not see it as disobedience and cut me off from her ministrations.

“Do you know what I did those long, lonely nights in this big, empty bed? Do you know that I fucked myself with the handle of my clit whip and imagined that I would use the whip on you and make you come without touching you but with the strands of the whip? Do you know that I fantasised about fucking you in the ass with the biggest dildo after I put six evenly spaced cane marks on your behind?”

My Mistress’ voice was soft and seductive. I could feel my juices pooling between my legs and my hearts beat too fast to differentiate between them. I pressed my palms as hard against the headboard as I could to keep myself grounded.

I begged my Mistress to fuck me, to make all her fantasies come true. I begged her to be allowed to touch her. I begged her to be put over the spanking horse to receive the thrashing I deserve. I begged her to be allowed to worship her feet. She kissed me, to shut me up, I guess.

“All in good time, my B’El. It’s too early to let you have your release. We’ll have to make this night count for seven.”

She asked me if I had masturbated alone in my cell, if I had stroked my clits and made myself come.
“I wanted to,” I told her, “if only to relieve the boredom, but I didn’t. I don’t deserve it, not without your permission, Mistress.”

My Mistress kissed me on the forehead. She said that she was proud of me and that it had been the right decision.

“I think that deserves a reward, my love. Tell me, what would it take to make you come?”

“Just your permission, Mistress,” I answered. I told her that I had been ready to come since her incredible striptease show.

She smiled, put her thumb on my soft clit and entered my vagina with three fingers. Her little finger was pressed against my perineum and the others fluttered against my love spot. I cried out for Kahless and wanted to beg her but words deserted me and all I could manage was a whimper. It felt as if I would burst any moment.

“Come for me, my love.”

And I did; and it was so overwhelmingly strong that I broke my position. I pulled her closer. I needed to feel her skin on mine. I needed to touch her. I needed to inhale the scent of her arousal intermingled with my own as if it were pure oxygen. I needed her so much and Kathryn felt it and allowed the touch. She allowed me to sneak my hand between her legs and kiss the scar on her chest, my mark, the visible proof of our mating bond.

“Do it, bang’wI, bite me, make me yours,” she said and her voice was dripping with need.

I licked the mark. It’s familiar texture alone gave me another orgasm and I bit down the moment I entered her centre with three fingers. I mimicked the movement of her fingers inside of me. I felt her mouth at my neck.

My nostrils were suddenly flooded with the smell of my own blood, and I bit down again, breaking the skin. My Klingon side roared in triumph, celebrating my ownership. I tried to reign it in. I tried but then my Mistress ordered me to let it go.

“Give me all of you, love,” she said, “don’t hold back. I want all of you.”

And with this blessing I did let go and very soon I no longer was able to stop myself. I took what was mine, what will always be mine, my benal, my wife, my mate. I made her cry out my name in ecstasy over and over again and invoke every god known to man. It was primeval and ferocious, too strong to be tamed – and Kathryn matched every single move, just as wild and untamed as I was.

We came and came.

None of us wanted it to end, but eventually our bodies gave out on us, having depleted our energy reserves. We collapsed in each others arms and quickly fell asleep, but not for long. Soon, our stomachs protested their emptiness rather loudly and woke us up.

We fed each other from the platter Kathryn had prepared. It quickly turned into a sensual game that brought us both to the brink of pleasure again but this time it would not be me who set the pace. It was my Mistress. She ordered me to lie flat on my back and knelt between my spread legs. Again I was dripping wet. I expected to be teased, instead my Mistress reminded me of my earlier disobedience and told me that I would have to be punished. She forbid me to come.

My Mistress started to tickle me, and she knows every single one of my ticklish spots. I soon was helpless with laughter. Tears were running down my face and still I became even more turned on. I
laughed and I was so aroused it hurt, but I knew my Mistress expected me to show enough self-control to stave off my orgasm.

It was an apt and at the same time devious punishment. It forced me to show more control than I would have needed to hold my first position. It really was a punishment fitting the crime.

I was fast coming to the end of my rope and had squeezed my eyes shut. Suddenly I was entered by something long and hard. My eyes flew open and my hips jerked forward. My Mistress’ thrusts were fast and hard; too hard and too fast to be entirely comfortable but I was beyond caring. She didn’t show me any mercy. Her order to come reached my ears literally at the last second before I would have lost control.

After everything we had done earlier I had not expected to come this hard again so soon. My orgasm came in waves. Kathryn only changed her rhythm to a more gentle thrusting when it began to abate. She removed the hand-held phallus, crawled up next to me and pulled me in her arms. She told me that she was proud of me and that I had done well. I smiled at her and snuggled closer.

My Mistress bent her head and licked the fresh bite mark at my neck. A slight tingling spread through my body. It warmed me from the inside out and I sighed contentedly. She kissed my lips and both of my eyes. Kathryn pulled the comforter over our bodies. The candles had long burned out and she ordered the computer to go to night illumination.

I was the first to wake up, as I usually am. For the first time in over a week everything was right in my world. I knew I should get up to prepare breakfast, but we had changed position over the night and I was now pinned down by Kathryn’s head resting on my shoulder. Her right leg immobilised mine and her right hand was lying on my breast. There was no way for me to get up without waking her, and that was something I didn’t want to do just yet. Instead, I looked at her.

Observing her in sleep is one of my favourite pass-times. I remember the first time I had the chance to do that, three months into our journey home, the morning after I had served her for the first time. I had been attracted to her from the first moment I laid eyes on her on the bridge. Her outward façade was very much the prim and proper Starfleet captain, but one with the calm and confident command presence of a Jean-Luc Picard, and more. There was something about her, something I couldn’t put my fingers on but I felt it. I was pulled to her, though at the time the only way to articulate that pull was to yell at her.

It took me a few days to find an explanation, to make the connection between Captain Kathryn Janeway and the famous Mistress Kathryn. To the slaves at the Club she was the epitome of the perfect Mistress, everything most of the other Masters and Mistresses were not. I started to observe her as unobtrusively as I could, and when Chakotay dangled the Chief Engineer position in front of my nose I wanted it because as a member of the senior staff I would have more contact with her than as a mere engineer. Juvenile, I know, and I almost ruined everything with my temper.

Spilled milk.

That first morning, before I had roused her for breakfast I had studied her face and her beautiful body, firm in all the right places, her face devoid of any sign of her captain’s mask. She had seemed to be comfortable in her skin, at peace. And that’s still how she usually looks when asleep, this morning was no exception. Not that I have not seen her in the grip of a nightmare more than once, but they are comparatively few and I have always been able to calm her down or wake her up.

I considered cancelling the 0600 wake-up call. I selfishly wanted to soak up as much skin contact as possible to sustain me ’til the next week, but I didn’t know if she had had anything planned for the morning, especially since I still had to be punished by the Mistress for lying and for disobedience.
So, I decided to wait.

Only a few minutes later my patience was rewarded by soft lips kissing the side of my breast and the expert flipping of my nipple ring which quickly turned both of my nipples stone hard. I bent down and kissed her on the top of her head, the only part of her I could reach without changing position.

“Good morning, my Mistress.”

Uh, uh, my security guards just changed from Beta to Gamma Shift. I really have to get some sleep.

[End of B’Elanna’s Diary]

-x-x-x-x-x-
Kathryn let the sheets fall into her lap and stared out of her windows. She had very vivid memories about that night and the next morning. She had felt B’Elanna’s eyes on her when she had woken up, and for a moment Kathryn had toyed with the idea of staying in bed for as long as possible and indulge in a round of gentle lovemaking. The soft skin of B’Elanna’s breast right in front of her had been too tempting, but B’Elanna’s greeting had reminded her that there had still been a few things to address with her wayward slave. As a lover and wife she would have been willing to let it go but they had instituted the rules for a reason.

Kathryn had long ago accepted that the punishments were less to get B’Elanna to think twice before acting the next time, but they served to allow B’Elanna to forgive herself for being wilful or losing her temper or whatever. So, Kathryn had ordered her slave to attend to her in the shower and had then sent her to clean up the bedroom and recycle their uniforms while she prepared breakfast. She had opted for banana pancakes to give B’Elanna a treat but had only put out one place setting to make a point.

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[Flashback]

As usual when naked and ready to serve her Mistress B’Elanna moved with a fluid elegance that would make most other slaves envious. She held Kathryn’s chair before kneeling at her side at kneeling rest. Kathryn fed her every other forkful. They ate in silence, B’Elanna naked and Kathryn only dressed in a diaphanous robe. When the plate was empty and the last of Kathryn’s coffee and B’Elanna’s milk gone, Kathryn turned the chair around and ordered her slave at kneeling attention.

“Do you have anything to say to me, Slave B’El?” Kathryn asked.

“Yes Mistress!”

“Speak!”

“I’m sorry for losing my temper with the Ambassador, Mistress. I’m sorry for lying to you. I’m sorry for disobeying your orders. I’m sorry for not acting like a senior officer on board should. Please, Mistress, punish me for my transgressions. Let me feel your discipline, please.”

Kathryn was not surprised at B’Elanna’s request, but she was a bit astonished about the fervour behind her words. Especially since she was not finished.

“But there’s more I have to atone for, Mistress. I’ll gratefully accept my punishment for those obvious infractions, but they are not what’s really weighing on my mind. Nothing would have happened if I only had trusted you, if I had told you about my problems with the Ambassador. You would have found a way. But I didn’t tell you. I didn’t trust you, and no however heartfelt apology and no punishment, no matter how hard can ever make up for that lack of trust.”

B’Elanna’s position was still picture perfect, but to Kathryn it looked as if she had been broken by her unexpected admission.
“Look at me, my B’El.”

B’Elanna’s head stayed down. Kathryn scooted forward on her chair and stretched her hand out to cup B’Elanna’s chin gently, “Look at me, love.”

They made eye contact. Kathryn only spoke when she was sure that she had all of B’Elanna’s attention, “Trust can be a very fragile thing, my love, but I know without a doubt that it has very strong roots in your heart. You trust me with your life and your heart and your soul. I don’t think that you did what you did because you don’t trust me. You did it because you didn’t want to disappoint me. Also, I’m not completely without fault in that whole situation.

“I was so focused on getting the best out of our trading agreement with the Meckirians that everything else slipped into the background. In retrospect I’m not sure that I would really have listened to your complaints.”

B’Elanna opened her mouth to protest but Kathryn silenced her by putting a finger on her lips.

“No, my love, you know how focused I can get at times. For the other things, however, you are right. You need to be punished, if only to help you to forgive yourself. I didn’t expect you to feel as guilty as you apparently do. In that regard, it’s fortunate that we had to modify your sentence. I would only have found out about it weeks from now, and you would have spent all that time berating yourself and beating up on the woman I love. I can’t have that.

“I want you to go to the play room, select a cane and put it on the spanking horse, select a leather paddle and put it on the chair. Wait for me in the corner.”

“Yes Mistress. Thank you for your kindness.”

“You don’t know yet how kind I’ll be on your behind, my B’El, but you’ll find out soon. Now go, I’ll clean up in here.”

[End of Flashback]

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Kathryn smiled at the memory of B’Elanna’s buttocks turning a deep red under her ministrations. She had been almost relaxed, draped over her lap and though she had cried big tears after the fifteenth hard stoke with the cane she had been much more relaxed than before.

Kathryn turned her attention back to B’Elanna’s diary to find out if and what her beloved had written about that morning.

-x-x-x-

[B’Elanna’s Diary]

I know I should sleep. Replicator maintenance is scheduled for tomorrow and I have decided to deal with the sometimes temperamental mainframe myself. Carey joked that I just needed to work on
something that matches my own temper to feel challenged. It was part of our usual banter, so, I told him that he risked to be recruited as my assistant in the endeavour. We both laughed heartily.

I’m dead tired but I still can’t sleep. It’s not due to physical exhaustion but more due to emotional overload. I got to spend the night with my Kathryn, my Mistress, my mate. Today I must have touched the refreshed bite mark at my neck at least a dozen times, and every time a shiver of arousal coursed through my body.

I love her so much, for her willingness to command me and to allow me to dominate her, to follow the call of my blood. I don’t know why I have been so blessed as to find her.

She always knows what I need, though this time, I think, my Mistress has been very lenient with me: twenty-five strokes with a leather paddle and twenty-five strokes with a cane. We had playing sessions during which I willingly have taken more than that without shedding a tear. This, however, was not a game.

Early on in my training I learned that it’s the intent that counts and the frame of mind of the recipient of any kind of discipline – and this morning I felt that I really deserved to be punished, three times over.

It’s been more than fourteen hours since my Mistress made me bend over to receive my punishment. My behind is still burning a bit and if I’d really focus my attention I could still describe the placement of some of the cane marks my Mistress put on me by relying on feelings alone.

In a way it felt good. It made me feel lighter. Actually, I feel less guilty now but I don’t feel redeemed yet; and Kathryn knew that. That’s why there’s a second part to my punishment.

Every second day I am to activate the privacy shield of my cell, something I’m allowed to use for two hours every day. I then have to strip and masturbate until I’m at the brink of an orgasm. It will put all my senses in high gear, to make me ready to exercise the main slave positions. I’ll have to go through them twice. The first time I have to hold the positions for two minutes each and the second time I have to transform them into one fluid, graceful motion.

The main slave positions are an essential part of the basic slave training and though I have not had any real practice since I left my first Mistresses. I’m pretty confident that I won’t have a problem with that, and it will take my mind off the fact that I’m locked up.

[End of B’Elanna’s Diary]

-x-x-x-

The entry ended here and Kathryn turned the piece of paper over to the next entry. Her coffee sat once again only half drunk and forgotten on the couch table.

-x-x-x-

[B’Elanna’s Diary]
509 hours left.

This is the fourth night of my modified sentence and I’m ashamed of myself.

What good does it do to be part of a tough, proud warrior race if one inherits only their negative traits in spade? I learned how to control that Klingon temper of mine, well, most of the time. There must be a way for me to control that stupid incarceration syndrome.

I’m only half-Klingon. I shouldn’t be this affected by the incarceration syndrome. In fact I should be less affected than the average full-blooded Klingon, but no, I have to react much stronger. The doctor estimated that I’ll have to spend every sixth or seventh night with Kathryn to keep it under control, but I fear that was a miscalculation on his part.

Since yesterday evening the symptoms are back. I felt sick to my stomach and had trouble to keep dinner down. Today, I skipped breakfast and worked through lunch. Vorik brought me a sandwich from the mess hall and I had to recycle it before even taking the first bite. The smell alone made me nauseous. Even the thought of food makes my skin crawl, but I’m hungry enough to eat gagh.

I really hope that exercising the slave positions later will help. It kept the nightmares at bay, maybe it will also stave off the symptoms of the incarceration syndrome. I’m really grateful for that particular punishment, though my performance left a lot to be desired. To be honest, it was pathetic.

A slave apprentice in the third week of training would have done better, much better. It’s not that I have forgotten how to do it. My muscle memory works just fine, but it didn’t feel right, and the cell does not have enough reflective surfaces to help me check on myself. There was something missing, grace, purpose, especially during the second part when I moved from one position to the next. That’s all I did. I just changed from one position to the next. The positions didn’t flow into each other as they should have. It didn’t turn into one graceful movement.

It was humbling to say the least.

Mistress Tasha would be disappointed if she knew. I never was as good as she is but I have earned her praise for my performance. It should be so ingrained but it obviously no longer is. But tonight I will do better.

-x-x-x-

506 hours left.

When I’m wrong, then I’m really wrong. I couldn’t even finish the first part of my exercises when my body gave out on me. My muscles cramped and it took me a few minutes to get out of position fifteen and if I had had anything to eat I would have thrown up. I got dressed and called the doctor who immediately ushered me to our quarters and summoned Kathryn from her Ready Room, of course not without ranting about pig-headed, irresponsible officers with no sense at all. He decided that from now on I would have daily physicals to make sure that I didn’t let it go this far again.

I was already waiting on my knees when Kathryn came home. She pulled me on my feet and kissed me, passionately; and I decided that I no longer cared if it would take the rest of our journey to the Alpha Quadrant to complete my sentence. Feeling her arms around me, smelling her hair. That’s what really counts.
It made me whole again, especially when Kathryn pulled me towards the bedroom and told me that this night she needed her wife and lover and not the slave. We made love, slowly, gently, without inhibitions, long into the night.

I held her in my arms when she fell asleep and in the morning I woke her with fresh coffee and soft kisses. If it had been up to us, I think, we would have taken the day off, but Kathryn’s sense of duty would never allow that, and so I didn’t bring it up.

For once there was no need for me to work overtime and I was back in my cell early. It gives more time to think about the things I could have done differently and daydream about those I’d rather do at the moment, like holding my beautiful mate in my arms or sitting at the feet of my Mistress. And it will bring down my remaining sentence to 491 hours.

-x-x-x-

490 hours to go.

This morning I was stuck in my cell for an additional hour because the force field refused to go down. It turned out to be an electrical malfunction because someone of my department had gotten their wires crossed doing a routine repair.

I don’t know if I should be relieved that for once a problem was not due to substandard material or angry that it came about because of the incompetence of one of my people. I’m, of course, leaning towards the later though I know that it won’t change a thing. This particular problem is repaired but it leaves me with the fear of the unknown. How many more so-called repairs have been done incorrectly? How many other sub-systems will be affected? How many more times do I have to tell myself to calm down, if not for the sake of the work ethics in Engineering than not to incure my Mistress’ wrath?

Of course it didn’t really work. I lost my temper and shouted at the bumbling fool and sent him to scrub plasma relays for two weeks. Today would have been so much easier if I just could have gone home after my shift and ask to be punished, but I can’t. I’m stuck in the brig, and rightfully so, but I’m determined to bring it up the next time the doctor lets me spend a night with Kathryn.

-x-x-x-

422 hours left.

We just found the Borg and judging from the number of cubes on our long range sensors we’re moving closer to their home territory. I know Chakotay would have turned tail and forced us to settle on one M-class planet or the other, but my Kathryn is not that easily scared. She will find a way. Wolf 359 was before I came on board of the Enterprise, but Mistress Tasha made me read all the reports before I started my slave training. She wanted me to understand that a slave with the wrong attitude and the wrong master could end up just like the Borg, without any free will. At the time that was too subtle for my needs, and it took Mistress Deanna’s more explicit explanation to make me understand. The only saving grace of being subjected to the Borg Queen’s will is that the Drones don’t know any better. It makes one pity the single drone and fear the Borg as an entity, but the
captain will find a way. She always does.

- - -

399 hours left.

An alliance with the Borg is a bold plan, and I don’t like it. It requires Kathryn to go into the lion’s den, and she won’t allow me to go with her. I need to protect her but she insists that I’m needed on board to work on the weapon against Species 8472. I don’t want to let her go alone. At the very least I have to be at her side when we get assimilated.

We won’t be in sensor range of the Borg until tomorrow morning, and I’ll have the whole night to hold her, but I promised that I wouldn’t badger Kathryn to change the captain’s mind when she comes in an hour to take me home.

My sentence has been suspended until this crisis is over.

- - -

397 hours left to go.

It’s now five days later and we’re ten thousand light years out of Borg space, thanks to Kes. It was her gift when she left us because her mental capabilities were getting out of control and she was evolving into a higher being. And we have a new crewmember, so to speak: Seven of Nine, Tertiary Adjunct to Unimatrix Zero One; well all of this can be read about in the official logs. I really don’t have to rehash it here.

I don’t know yet what to think of the newest addition to our crew. She already tried to betray us to the Borg once and the captain had her thrown in the cell facing mine. It’s a bit disconcerting to see her stand there, facing the force field without looking at anyone or anything.

I know that Kathryn is angry with her, that she wants to trust her but now no longer can. I also know that she’s starting to doubt her decision of severing Seven of Nine from the Borg, but we also can’t jettison her out of the next air lock, though Carey certainly tried his best to make that happen. He currently sits in the cell next to mine.

When Tuvok changed the course to comply with the demands of the Borg after the cube protecting us had been destroyed and the Captain injured, Carey had decided that it was wrong to trust them to stick to our bargain and set out to do something about it. He had decided that getting rid of them would solve all of our problems. I saw too late that he had initialised a sudden depressurisation of the Cargo Bay where the Borg were busy making themselves at home. I pushed him aside to stop it but by then only one drone was still inside, Seven of Nine. I know why he did it: his mother was killed at Wolf 359 and he hates the Borg with a passion, as much as most of the Maquis, myself included, hate the Cardassians. I hope the captain will accept that as extenuating circumstances.

Carey’s court-marshal is scheduled for tomorrow. His actions were not only insubordination, they also endangered our ship and the crew, and he coldly ended the life of eight living beings who might
have been severed from the Collective and saved from the Borg, just like Seven of Nine, though looking at her still standing motionlessly in the cell, she’s anything but thankful for that.

I find myself fascinated by her stoic resolve, but looking closer I see that she’s trembling slightly and her Human hand has balled into a fist. And that look in her one Human eye. I know that look, haunted and lonely and afraid and angry.

[End of B’Elanna’s Diary]

-x-x-x-

Kathryn once again let the pages sink on her lap. The morning after that entry had been written, Tuvok had contacted her shortly after her wake-up call to tell her that there was some security footage she needed to see as soon as possible. She had answered to meet her in her Ready Room in half an hour. There he showed her what the cameras in the brig had recorded.

B’Elanna had ordered Ensign Lewins to lower her force field and he had obeyed without a question. She had walked over to the cell of the Borg drone and ordered him to let her in. To his credit he had refused to follow that order.

“Seven of Nine, Tertiary Adjunct to Unimatrix Zero-One, do you promise not to try to escape if he lowers the force field for a moment?” B’Elanna had asked.

“Where would I go? I’m trapped on this ship,” Seven had answered.

“That’s close enough for me.” B’Elanna had overridden the door commands and told Lewins to ‘close the door’ behind her.

The sometimes rather stinted conversation between the two women had been nothing short of a revelation.

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[Flashback]

B’Elanna stood facing the other woman, with less than two feet distance between them.

“I once was as afraid and angry as you are now,” B’Elanna said and took Seven’s Human hand between her own.

“Emotions are irrelevant,” Seven answered but she didn’t try to pull her hand free.

“You wanted to throw yourself against the force field just now, but not to escape… Why?”

Seven tried to pull her hand away but B’Elanna held on.

“The voices are gone. This drone can not function without the voices of the Collective.”
“There is one voice left, Seven of Nine, yours, the most important voice of all,” B’Elanna replied and held eye contact with Seven.

“One voice is not enough. I need the voices of the Collective. You selfishly made me less than I was.”

“As a drone you would have done everything you were told to protect the Borg Collective, right?” B’Elanna asked.

“Affirmative.”

“Captain Janeway protected her own Collective. Severing your connection with the hive mind was the only way to protect our ship. Captain Janeway protects her own, and you’re a part of that now.”

“Your collective is inefficient. It would be better to assimilate all of you, and I will start with you.”

B’Elanna didn’t even flinch when Seven’s assimilation tubules shot out but instead of embedding them in her neck they hovered like snakes ready to attack. She even smiled.

“And then there would be two voices stuck in the cell. Are you volunteering to become the Queen of that new Collective? Or would we do some mental arm wrestling to find out who is stronger?”

“You would lose, Lieutenant Torres.”

“Maybe. I’m willing to risk it, are you?” B’Elanna answered.

The assimilation tubules disappeared.

“Now, back to my question, Seven of Nine. You wanted to throw yourself against the force field because you miss the voices. You are afraid to be alone, and fear is an emotion. So, how can emotions be irrelevant when they get you to act on them?”

B’Elanna probably had intended it as a rhetorical question but Seven still answered it, “They can not. I also feel anger at being kept from the Borg. Anger is an emotion. You have given me a lot to think about, Lieutenant Torres. You may leave now,” Seven said.

“You are welcome, Seven of Nine.”

[End of Flashback]

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Kathryn remembered how her breath had stuck in her throat when she had seen the assimilation tubules. She remembered how much she had wanted to storm down to Engineering to read her wife the riot act but then her fascination with B’Elanna’s recklessly Klingon way of logical arguments had won out. She had played the security tape again.

The second viewing had shown her that B’Elanna seemed to know more about the Borg than any Starfleet officer below the rank of captain should, and that had brought her down to Engineering where B’Elanna had been working in her office, for once with her door closed.
[Flashback]

B’Elanna looked up from the padd she had been perusing, “Captain, what can I do for you?”

The twinkle in her eyes told Kathryn that B’Elanna knew exactly why she had warranted a visit from the captain. Kathryn gave her one of her most stern force ten glares, and B’Elanna walked around her desk and took her in her arms, for once breaking their comfortable roles.

“I’m sorry that I frightened you, my love. I never was in any danger. You can punish me if it makes you feel better.”

Kathryn pushed her back a bit; not enough to break B’Elanna’s hold around her waist but enough to make eye contact, “Not in danger? And if she had used those things on you?”

“I knew she wouldn’t use them, Kathryn. She’s just a child who is acting out because she is alone and afraid.”

“According to the Doctor, Seven of Nine is twenty-four years old. That’s only three years younger than you are. In my book that doesn’t qualify as a child,” Kathryn protested.

“Here, take a look at this,” B’Elanna handed Kathryn the padd. “Her name is Annika Hanson. Her parents were exo-biologists. Starfleet sponsored their research mission into the Borg but they went beyond the agreed upon parameters of the mission and vanished from Starfleet’s radar. The Hansons left Earth when Annika was four. Starfleet lost contact shortly after her fifth birthday. She was a child when she was assimilated, too young to remember much of her life before then. I found one picture of her.

“The Borg are the only family Seven of Nine has ever known. We have to give her a chance to grow up. You have to give her a chance to grow up, to become Human again. From her perspective you are the Queen of the Voyager Collective. She will listen to you,” B’Elanna said.

“I’ll take that into consideration,” Kathryn answered. “For now I want to know why you know so much about the hive mind and the Borg Queen. Some of the things you hinted at are considered classified information. I needed my captain’s command clearance to access them.”

B’Elanna looked down, then she slowly raised her eyes and answered, “When I was on the Enterprise I was curious about the Borg but it was obvious that the public reports had been carefully edited. I wanted to know more and was not very discriminate in finding the information I wanted.”

“What did you, my B’El?”

“I couldn’t get past the Starfleet encryption without triggering an alarm but I was able to access the personal logs of most of the senior staff, including Captain Picard.”

“And you were caught red-handed,” Kathryn said matter-of-factly.

“Not exactly. Mistress Tasha got suspicious when I stopped asking questions about the Borg. She asked me directly and I couldn’t lie to her. I confessed to them.”

“What happened then?”
“Mistress Tasha escorted me to the Brig and left me to stew. I stayed there for two nights and a day without anyone coming for me, but worse than not knowing what would happen to me was the memory of the look on my Mistresses’ faces, the sadness and disappointment I read there.

“The second morning two security guards escorted me to the senior staff conference room where Commander Riker was waiting. He gave me the option to either be sent back to my mother at the first opportunity or to accept the punishments of the people whose privacy I had invaded,” B’Elanna said.

“And you chose the later. Was it hard?” Kathryn asked.

“Some punishments were more creative than others. Some were even fun. Counsellor Troi made me work in daycare with the kindergarten kids. Doctor Crusher had me organise her medical supplies but she also taught me how to use some of them. Commander Riker sent me to waste reclamation. Commander LaForge had me clean plasma conduits but when I prevented an accident he offered me a job as a part-time junior member of Engineering. I learned a lot from him.

“Commander Data challenged me to find a better way to protect the personal logs without using more space on encryption protocols. That was a real challenge and it turned out that Da… Commander Data is a very patient teacher. The punishment part was that I didn’t get credit for the improvements I made.

“Commander Yar made me take the Klingon Rite of Ascension,” B’Elanna fell silent.

“And Captain Picard?”

“He asked for a detailed report on why I had done it, hand written. I had to deliver it to him personally. It was probably the hardest assignment of all. It forced me to think about what I had done. It forced me to think about myself, to look at my actions from an outside perspective. It took me almost a month to get it done. I have never been more afraid than when I reported to Captain Picard’s Ready Room to hand it over.

“He put the folder on his desk without opening it and ordered me to repeat the report’s content in my own words. I stuttered, and I have never before stuttered nor ever since. He listened. His face gave no indication of what he might have thought, more non-committal than any Vulcan.

“I know my logic was a bit more jumbled than in my written report, but when I had finally muddled through what I thought I wanted to say Captain Picard ordered me to stand at ease. I had not even been aware that I had taken a military stance. I tried to relax, but I couldn’t. I was practically frozen in place, and to my own surprise I was close to tears. Even then I was not someone to cry easily.

“He looked at me and I felt as if the air was thickening all around me. It had only been a few seconds, I’m sure, but it seemed like a few hours to me. Then he asked me if I would do something like that ever again, and at first I wanted to tell him that I had learned my lesson and would never snoop around in someone else’s personal logs or other files, but I couldn’t. It would have been a lie. So, I told him that I would never do it again just to satisfy my curiosity. He laughed and said that my debt had been paid,” B’Elanna explained.

“I only met Captain Picard a couple of times. I can well imagine that he can be very intimidating, my B’El.”

“Captain Picard has nothing on your force-ten-glare, my Kathryn,” B’Elanna said with a smile.

“Flattery will get you nowhere, be’nal, because, unfortunately the Doctor has deemed you fit for the
brig."

[End of Flashback]

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“Tuvok to Captain Janeway.”

Tuvok’s call jostled her out of her memories. He told her that the long range sensors had detected neutrino emissions consistent with a wormhole.

“Change course. I’m on my way. Janeway out.”

Kathryn told herself not to be too excited about possibly finding a wormhole after having been disappointed more than once in the past. And this time had been no exception.

When they had reached the point of origin of the neutrino emissions they had been gone without a trace. So, they had resumed course and Kathryn had returned to her quarters. She had changed into civvies and resumed her reading.

-x-x-x-x-x-
A Perfect Night

Except for some shop talk about repairs and the efficiency of some of the Borg modifications, every word spoke of their love, their relationship, their commitment. B’Elanna had written about their play sessions, about them cuddling on the couch, about the magic of her mate’s touch, be it to caress or to punish. She read about play scenarios B’Elanna dreamed up that would take them days to act out. Kathryn’s main focus, however, was on B’Elanna’s comments about Seven which slowly changed from supportive to acerbic.

-x-x-x-

[B’Elanna’s Diary]

380 hours left.

The Doctor has recruited my help to remove as much of the Borg components from Seven of Nine’s body as he possibly can. At first I was sceptical, but now I have to admit that from beneath the Borg armour a very beautiful woman has emerged.

And as callous as that may sound: it will make it easier for her to become a real part of the crew. She’s as close to physical perfection as almost anyone could be.

-x-x-x-

320 hours to go.

I admit Seven of Nine is brilliant and her modifications work most of the time; but when she’s wrong it always forces everyone else to work overtime to fix her snafus, to fix the major damage one of her minor adjustments caused to the rest of the ship. If she only would just follow Starfleet protocol and come to me with her ideas most of the extra work could be avoided – and I’m well aware of the irony that suddenly a Maquis is preaching the Starfleet mantra. Kathryn must really have tamed me.

Today, when we had lunch together she told me about a long talk she had had with Seven yesterday evening. I think if there’s one person who can get that stubborn Drone to follow orders it’s my Kathryn.

It’s been three days since I last was alone with her, two long nights, and it probably will be two more ‘til the first symptoms will show themselves and I’ll get my get-out-of-jail card from the doctor.

-x-x-x-

284 hours left.
I’m close to the halfway point, more than that I will pass it early tomorrow morning and my original estimate of it taking about six weeks to see my sentence through by now is completely obsolete. It’s already been five weeks but with all the emergencies and at least two nights a week spend with my Kathryn it’s hard to calculate. At the height of the Borg/Species 8472 crisis I spent no time at all in the brig, and despite the danger we were in I would gladly turn back the hands of time to be able to hold Kathryn in my arms every night, to wake up with her scent in the air, to serve her…

Oh, get a grip, Torres. You know it doesn’t do you any good to dream of things you can’t have. It’ll only give you nightmares. Speaking of nightmares, I still dream about the Barge of the Dead.

-x-x-x-

270 hours left ‘til the end of my sentence.

I wish I could speed up time, or simply pass the endless hours in the brig with sleeping, but I never was one to sleep much and there are only so many sit-ups and push-ups one can make. At least the exercise of the slave positions helps to keep me calm and centred, at night.

During the day it becomes more difficult by the minute to keep my calm. Seven of Nine seems to be completely unable to follow the most simple of protocols or to exercise even the smallest bit of common curtsey. It’s driving me nuts, and if not for the damned good work she does most of the time I would have thrown her out of my engine room a long time ago.

We have to find something else for her to do, something where she can also make use of that Borg knowledge of hers but at the moment I don’t have the faintest idea what that could be. The data she has put in our database so far is likely to keep the exo-biologists on board busy for years to come, but I don’t think that biology or medicine are where her interests and talents lie.

-x-x-x-

228 hours left to go.

I hate her, I hate that arrogant Borg. She spends half the night with my wife, talking, and I’m stuck in the brig. The rumours say that they’re having an affair and that Seven will move in with her, leaving me out. I know that’s not true. I would have smelled my Kathryn on Seven, regardless of how long she spent in a sonic shower.

Kathryn would never cheat on me, though some people might say that one cannot cheat on a slave. Slaves are nothing but property, but I’m more than a slave and Kathryn is more than my Mistress. We are mates and I know better, but still I can’t help to feel insecure.

Seven is brilliant and beautiful and not as flawed as I am. I couldn’t blame my Mistress if she wanted her, if she took her.

Get a grip, B’El. That’s only the incarceration syndrome speaking.

I have become pretty good at hiding the first symptoms and I reprogrammed the Doctor’s tricorders
to ignore the first signs of the chemical imbalance. That way I’m able to stretch the intervals between nights with Kathryn to five days. She would be angry with me if she knew what I’m doing, after all it’s not much better than what brought me in the brig in the first place, but I have to get out of here as fast as possible.

-x-x-x-

189 hours.

Another Borg induced near disaster kept me for a double shift. I don’t know if I resent her more for breaking protocol every time she sets foot in Engineering or for the near disasters her modifications sometimes create.

So far I have been able to hold my tongue and my temper. I try to remind myself that the momentary satisfaction that would give me is not worth to incur the wrath of my Mistress.

The rumours about their affair are still going strong, and though I know there’s no truth about them, they still are torturing me, those rumours about Captain Janeway and Seven of Nine, about them shagging it up in our quarters while I’m stuck in the brig. Rationally I know I can trust Kathryn and part of me wants to trust Seven but…

-x-x-x-

156 hours left.

Last night with Kathryn was perfect. She allowed me to serve her and worship her feet. Oh, how I missed licking and kissing her toes. I could have spent the whole night happily doing nothing else, but my Mistress had other ideas.

She ordered me to close my eyes and led me into the play room. She put cuffs on my wrists and ankles and a spreader bar between my feet that held them a bit more than shoulder-wide apart. She linked the wrist cuffs in front of me and my arms were pulled up until I was hanging from a chain in the middle of the room.

Kathryn removed the nipple ring; so, I knew that at one point she would whip my breasts and I moaned in anticipation. She flicked my already hard nipples and I pushed my chest out to get more out of the touch – and moments later her hands were gone.

I settled down and opened my mouth to apologise but she put a finger on my lips. I could hear that she was smiling when she told me that she would make me come with her whip and that I was allowed as many orgasms as I wanted. She also told me that she would be very proud of me if I could hold back for at least the first thirty strokes.

She kissed my nipples and then I felt her lips on my mons and had I not wanted my Mistress to be proud of me I would have come from the simple touch alone. I heard her footsteps walking over to the wall compartment where we keep the whips.
The first stroke hit me between the shoulder blades but it was not the fiery pain I had anticipated and was used to feel from the single tail whip. It was more like a whisper of leather on skin, a caress and promise of things to come. I wanted to arch my back into the touch of the whip but I knew my Mistress wouldn’t appreciate the gesture. The second stroke hit the back of my left thigh but it was just as soft and light as the first.

I quickly learned that those soft, unpredictable strokes were as hard to take as if my Mistress had drawn blood with every single stroke. They made my skin tingle but I still yelped when the tip of the leather braid sneaked around my body and hit my nipple. I wanted to open my eyes to get a better idea where the next lash would land but I knew that my Mistress would be disappointed.

I tried to discern a pattern but there didn’t seem to be one. It was almost like a warm-up. The force of her strokes never changed and soon my whole body was tingling. I suddenly became aware that I had lost count. I didn’t know if it was the twentieth, thirtieth or forty-fifth stroke, and I’m usually very good at that. I tried to focus on counting, but the warmth building inside of me didn’t let me get far, and finally I let go.

I no longer tried to predict the placement of the next stroke or control anything. I just focused on the sound of the whip hitting my skin, the sound of the leather whistling softly through the air before it landed. It was almost like music.

After a while I no longer was aware where the whip hit me: my whole body was burning, but not with pain, with need. I felt how it built inside of me, getting stronger, and I let it built ‘til it overflowed. It was as if a dam had broken and I was swept away in the waves, the music of the whip still echoing in my ears.

The next thing I felt were Kathryn’s arms holding my tight. She ordered me to open my eyes and I looked into her deep blue green orbs which were burning with desire. I wanted to thank her and beg her to be allowed to make her come but I couldn’t speak. She smiled, that special smile that told me that I had done well and that she was proud of me.

Kathryn lowered me to the floor on the nest of cushions we keep in one corner of the play room. I put my head on her shoulder and she held me close. She began to tell me how beautiful I was and how perfect I had looked writhing under the whip and beyond perfect when you climaxed again and again. Rest now, you deserve it.

I gave in and closed my eyes. I fell asleep and only woke up from my stomach protesting its emptiness. Kathryn smiled at me and let me to the living room where dinner was waiting under a stasis lid on the couch table. We didn’t bother with clothing and snuggled on the couch. I was still floating in a strange feeling of freedom and belonging, an inner peace.

Kathryn’s arms around me, her scent, the rhythm of her heartbeat, it all grounded me and I enjoyed the feeling. She held something in front of my lips and I took the offering. It was my favourite finger food, small squares of dark bread with cream cheese and chilli. When the plate was empty I found my Kathryn’s eyes and thanked her for the exceptional experience and told her that I loved her.
She kissed me, gently. I kissed her back and asked for her permission to make love to her. She pulled me to my feet and we went into the bedroom. Our love making was slow and gentle. We took our time building our arousal and dragged it out as best as we could. We came together, not one but three times without one dominating the other, without a ritual bite. We didn’t need all that. Our bond might never have been stronger than last night.

The feeling of peace and belonging is still with me. It carried me through the day, I didn’t even yell at Seven, and I hope that it will stay with me for a long time to come.

[End of B’Elanna’s Diary]

-x-x-x-

Kathryn wiped a single tear from her eye and smiled at the memories B’Elanna’s journal entry brought back. She had spent hours training in the holodeck to gain enough mastery with the single tail whip to create the desired effect, to make B’Elanna give herself over to the whip but not the pain. She had wanted to create a head space for her beloved that was different from what she was used to and it seemed as if she had been successful, no, now she knew that she had been successful.

Her stomach reminded Kathryn that she had not eaten since breakfast, and Alpha shift was long over. She was not in the mood to abandon her reading, so, she just replicated a BLT sandwich and returned to the couch after she had checked on the status of the gel pack repairs. They would take at least another three hours, and that in turn meant that B’Elanna would not be home before the end of Beta shift.

-x-x-x-

[B’Elanna’s Diary]

143 hours left.

For once my paperwork is done, the warp core is at peak efficiency and there was nothing for me to do in Engineering. So, I left Vorik in charge and took the rest of the day off. That means that I’ll have eighteen hours brig time ‘til tomorrow morning and the start of my next shift. Alright, it will be eighteen hours with nothing to do but I don’t mind. I’m still on a high from the night before last.

How can one at the same time feel free and be filled with a sense of belonging? I don’t know and I don’t care. I don’t want to question that feeling. What we did, the whipping, my Mistress feeding me, us making love; it was all so incredible, so perfect.

The marks of the whip on my skin are completely gone; they were already gone yesterday, but the memory will stay with me for a long time, forever.

When I left the service of Mistress Tasha and Mistress Deanna I never thought that I would find what I now have, my perfect Mistress, the one who knows me better than I know myself, the one who can give me peace, the one who loves me, all of me, the one Mistress who is so much more than just a Mistress, who has become my world.
I hope I’ll never forget that, and that one day I’ll find the courage to tell her.

The Doctor just paid me a visit. He had heard that I have taken half a day off and was worried; at least I think that there was worry behind his accusations that I was trying to hide the symptoms of the incarceration syndrome by hiding in the brig. For once the contrary is true; for once I’m truly happy.

I told him but he shook his head and checked me out. He didn’t find any tell-tale symptoms, what he found were elevated endorphin levels. He tried to get me to tell him why I was so happy but I only smiled and told him that it was none of his business.

I put a quick kiss on his cheek when he left and wished him a great day. I’m sure that he would have blushed if he were not a hologram. He muttered something about unpredictable humanoids and that this ship needs a counsellor. I laughed and he huffed. In his indignation he even forgot to reactivate the force field closing off my cell. During Alpha shift there is no security guard assigned to the brig; so, I called Ayala to send someone to lock me in, not that I would have left the cell had the force field stayed down, but it would not be much of a punishment if I could simply come and go as I like, right?

-x-x-x-

111 hours to go, another eight or nine days and it will be over, emergencies not withstanding.

It’s been four days since that perfect night, and there still are no symptoms. Actually I still feel great though I’m insofar back to normal as I yelled at Susan for letting Seven do an unauthorised upgrade, just in case it would go wrong. Their luck that it didn’t.

I miss Kathryn, very much. So much that earlier that evening I even contemplated of faking the symptoms to be allowed to go home, but I can’t do that. She would be disappointed. So, I’ll have to ground myself with the exercise of the slave positions. It never fails to calm me down and gives me a good night’s sleep.

-x-x-x-

89 hours.

There are days when it would have been better to have stayed in bed, and usually they start out with things going wrong right from the beginning. In this case it was a malfunction in the sonic shower. It somehow magnetised my hair and I had to pass by our quarters to take a real shower. I couldn’t go to work with my hair standing on end like a modern day Medusa.

The warp core showed unstable readings due to a cracked dilithium crystal. Changing it for a new one forced us to drop out of warp for an hour.

When I checked the storage rooms I found that most of the ore we mined on the Meckirian moon has yet to be refined, though Carey should have done that during my first week in the brig when he was in command of Engineering.
And talking about that stubborn fool Carey: the waste reclamation unit failed due to sloppy maintenance. I admit that it’s not the most glorious of jobs but he did this to himself when he depressurised the cargo bay and killed eight Borg. He chose it over confinement to quarters for the rest of journey.

It took hours to get everything back in working order and even the sonic shower at the highest setting had trouble to get rid of all the dirt and grime.

I wanted nothing more than to crawl into bed and be held in Kathryn’s arms; instead I tried to talk some sense into Carey, I tried to make him see reason, tried to make him understand that Seven of Nine is as much a victim of the Borg as his mother was and that if he wanted to blame someone he should blame the Borg Queen.

He didn’t listen, of course he didn’t listen. I could just as well have talked to a bulkhead. I ended up telling him that he should at least do his work properly as menial as it may be and asked him if he no longer cared for the crew as a whole. He didn’t answer.

If I had followed Starfleet regulations I would have had to press charges for dereliction of duty but that only would have made him more bitter. So, I blamed the malfunction on another faulty part. I told him that next time I could and would not cover for him but he just shrugged his shoulders.

It is as if the man I’ve known for three years is gone and has left nothing but a shell of his former self in place. I told him that I would listen should he ever want to talk, but I doubt that he will take me up on it.

So, when I finally was locked in my cell I was ready to fall in bed and sleep ‘til morning, but no such luck for me. My body and mind are restless. I did a few dozen sit-ups and push-ups to tire me out, but it seems that I’ve gotten too used to that kind of exercise over the last couple of months for it to have the desired effect. Yes, it got my muscles burning, at least a bit, but my mind’s still fluttering around, hopping from one topic to the next without any reason or logic. I tried to still my mind with meditation but it didn’t work. I activated the privacy screen and did my slave positions but it didn’t have the usual effect.

I really hope that sitting down and writing about my crappy day helped and I’ll finally get to close my eyes and sleep.

-x-x-x-

86 hours to go.

Sleep is overrated. I give up on it, at least for tonight. I had that dream again, the one about the Barge of the Dead. It’s always the same; the voices accuse me of being an honourless p’taq for choosing to sit at the feet of my Mistress. They just don’t understand and nothing I say can convince them that it’s not true, that there is honour in following the call of one’s hearts. Kotar, the captain of the Barge comes at me with a red hot poker, to give me the brand of shame – and invariably that’s the moment I wake up, drenched in sweat, with my hearts beating as if one wanted to race the other down a dusty road.

The meaning of the dream seems obvious. It means that deep down I’m not happy being my Mistress’ slave; it means that there is a part of me who is not comfortable being Kathryn’s slave, but
Mistress Deanna has taught me not to trust the obvious when it comes to dreams. They sometimes can mean the exact opposite. Mistress Tasha would probably say to let my body do the thinking and send me to the holodeck for battle simulations or to the gym. What would my Kathryn do?

A part of me wishes that she would tie me up and beat the doubts out of me, but to her that kind of violence is a last resort. In the past she only used extreme measures when I really needed it. No, I guess she would strip us both and cuddle me in her arms and get me to talk.

I miss her so much.

The gentle smile she reserves only for me during senior staff meetings is not enough. Our lunch breaks in the mess hall are not enough, and the one time we had lunch in the privacy of her Ready Room we almost ended up having sex on her desk, and if we had gone that far Kathryn would have berated herself for having been unprofessional, and I don’t want her to be angry at herself for any reason.

Her Ready Room, however, still features prominently in my fantasies, I admit: being escorted to the Ready Room by two burly security guards, hands cuffed behind my back. They push me in and I stumble forward, only to be stopped by the hard edge of my Mistress’ desk. The guards leave and the door closes behind them. My Mistress orders me to stand at attention. I look straight ahead but I don’t see her, not even in my peripheral vision.

The cuffs are removed but I hold my position. She asks me if know why I was brought before her. I answer that no one told me of the charges but that I apologise should I have done something wrong.

“Apologising is not enough, B’Elanna Torres. This morning you have neglected your duty as my wife and lover by leaving without a proper kiss.”

Of course there are different versions of what I have supposedly done wrong: not showing proper respect, losing my temper, mouthing off during a senior staff meeting. The scenario stays the same.

I tell her that I’m sorry and ask to be allowed to rectify that horrible oversight, and she says, “It’s not as easy as that, young lady. You made your mate and your Mistress suffer. A simple kiss will not be enough to atone.”

I sink to my knees and look down on the floor. I ask for forgiveness and I ask to be punished. Then I feel her right behind me. Her legs are pressed against my back. One of her hands grabs my hair and forces me to look up to her. Her other hand rests on her hip and I shudder at the intense expression on her face, the feral glint in her eyes.

I’m always wet when I’m close to her but by then my juices would be dripping on the floor were I naked.

I want to beg her to punish me but I can’t speak. All I can do is look up and wish to be allowed to serve her. She asks what I would consider a proper punishment for my neglect, but all I can do is swallow.

The pull in my hair gets stronger and she bends down and whispers in my ear, “Tell me, my B’El.”

She lets go of my hair and takes a step back and I immediately miss the contact. I long to turn around and crawl to her but she would be disappointed by such a lack of discipline. I don’t know how but I finally find my voice.

I say, “This morning I left you wanting; so, my punishment should be something that satisfies you, Mistress, but leaves me wanting and unsatisfied for however long you want.”
“And how would you do that, satisfy me?”

“By serving you orally,” the words are meant to sound confident but in the end there’s a question mark in my voice.

She replies, “And you think that could lead me to fulfilment?”

I stutter when I answer that I’ll try my very best.

She laughs, that light hearted laugh reserved for the privacy of our rooms, and once again I feel her right behind me. This time she only strokes my hair and I’m tempted to lean back against her, but I hold my position with a bit of effort.

“That, my B’El, would be a possibility. We both know that your best is pretty damned good, and that eating me out is one of your favourite things to do. Unfortunately for you, that’s not what I’m in the mood for. Stand up and strip for me, slowly, but keep your eyes straight ahead.”

I rise and start with the uniform jacket. I can’t help but shiver in anticipation of what might be in store for me. My panties are soaked through and of course she sees it. She laughs again and tells me that they’ll need recycling before I can go back to work.

She steps close, still behind me, still out of my line of sight, but this time she does not touch me. I feel her breath on my cheek when she orders me to bend over the desk and put my weight on my elbows. I spread my legs without being told. She orders me to close my eyes.

Her voice comes from the other end of the room now, from the upper level, and everything in me wants to turn my head and look over to her, to my Mistress, my love, but I don’t. I want her to be proud of me.

I hear her soft boots on the deck and I tense because I’m sure that I will at least get a spanking, maybe even the cane, one kind of suffering paid with another, but then her hands are one my hips and I can’t help but cry out at the thick phallus entering me, filling me.

She pushes it all the way in, the whole considerable length, and stops. She allows me to become used to its girth and length.

I can feel her thighs pressed against the back of mine, skin on skin, but when she bends over to whisper her orders in my ear I can feel the rough texture of her uniform jacket. For a moment I imagine what we would look like should anyone come in unannounced, and suddenly I remember that I didn’t hear her seal the door after the guards left. My muscles clench at the thought and I moan.

She says, “Remember, my B’El, this is supposed to be a punishment. Do you know what that means?”

I once again have trouble speaking with her low, sexy voice so close to my ear but I somehow manage to tell her that it means that I’m not allowed to come.

“That’s right, my beautiful. You are not allowed to come. I want you to focus on my pleasure and my pleasure alone. I want you to squeeze the tool inside of you as if it were real. If you can make me come in less than ten minutes I’ll think about letting you come as well. Your time starts now.”

She stays absolutely still inside of me; her hands holding my hips to make sure that I won’t try to resort to outside stimuli.

I imagine her thrusting in and out of me, as she usually does when she takes me with a phallus. This
one is big enough to hurt a bit from just being inside. The slight pain turns me on even more and she
knows it.

Her hands are still on my hips. I feel my elbows and upper arms on the cold, smooth surface of her
desk. I long to push back against her but I’m too well trained for that and slowly the awareness of the
Ready Room around me fades to the background.

I can feel my hearts beating and I hear the rhythm of her breathing. That’s what I focus on. I feel her
inside of me, I feel the tool she chose to test me; and suddenly that’s all there is, no Ready Room, no
ship, no Delta Quadrant, only my hearts and hers, only her deep inside of me, filling me.

Our heartbeats begin to match and my inner muscles don’t need any prompting to clench in the same
rhythm. Deep down I know that it’s dangerous to do it this way. It practically sets me up for failure
because it makes it extremely difficult to control my own reaction, my own release.

In this fantasy I get swept away with my Mistress’ orgasm more than once and since she believes that
the punishment should always fit the crime I will not be allowed any release for at least a couple of
days. Sometimes I don’t bring her to climax in time and get sent back to work horny and on edge,
but most of the times my Mistress is generous and makes me come.

Her hands slide from my hips to my breasts. She squeezes them and plays with my nipples, pulls the
nipple ring and makes me wish that I had two of them, so she could torture me more efficiently. Then
one hand glides down to my centre. Her index finger presses down on my clitoris. Her hips buck
against my buttocks and she moves inside of me with short, hard thrusts, never leaving me
completely.

My inner walls are so sensitive that I could come with every single thrust, every inch of the hard tool
pressing against my taught inner muscles. I know I shouldn’t move but I press back against her and I
start to beg.

She has not forbidden me to speak but it still feels like a sacrilege.

She flicks my clits and my pleas get desperate. She knows so well how to play me, and then she says
the magic words. She breathes them in my ear, “Come for me, my B’El.”

I cry out, I shout her name, not caring if the sound-proofing of the room is up to it. She wrings a
second climax from me. My arms give out but I still have enough discipline left to keep my eyes
closed and my head to the wall. I relax and she removes the phallus.

Her hands wander back up to my breasts but only the tip of her fingers touch me, soothingly,
calming me down. I want nothing more than to turn around and sink to my knees and thank her but
instead I resume my position at her orders.

She leaves me there and I feel cold and alone and abandoned. I tremble and suddenly I’m close to
tears. The sounds I hear suggest that she’s getting dressed.

“You can open your eyes now, my B’El, but do not move your head. Hold your position.”

It’s so hard to obey. I try to stay calm but despite myself my heart rate increases. I know it won’t take
long before I’ll start to tremble again, but then Kathryn is back and pulls me up. She holds me tight
against her chest and my breathing returns to normal.

Her right hand rests on my right breast and her left is drawing circles on my stomach. She reminds
me to keep looking straight ahead, and then she’s gone again. My heart rate starts to pick up again
but moments later she is back with a warm washcloth.
She is still behind me. If I’d lowered my eyes I’d see her hands cleaning me up, but I don’t. I stay as
still as I can and the cloth washes my sweat away. She cleans me up thoroughly but still stays out of
my sight.

When she finishes she orders me to stretch out my hands and lower arms and puts my neatly folded
clothes on top, with freshly replicated panties. She pulls my hair aside and kisses our bond mark at
the side of my neck. She tells me that I have done well and that she is proud of me. I stand up
straighter at her praise. She kisses me again.

“I’ll go to the bridge now, my B’El,” she says. “I want you to wait five minutes before getting
dressed. Then you’ll return to work and I want you back at our quarters not later than 1900 hours.
Oh, and by the way, you didn’t neglect me this morning.”

I don’t even get the chance to thank her for the play session before the door closes behind her.

Kahless, I should not have written that one down. Now, I’m more than horny and have less than an
hour before the start of my shift. And as on edge as I am at the moment I really hope that there will
not even be a minor disaster. There’s no telling how I’d react.

-x-x-x-

81 hours to go.

Now I know, how I’d react, I mean. I lost it, big time.

There was a minor glitch in the turbolift system, no one got stuck, no doors closed unexpectedly, but
the reaction time was down by fifteen percent, and less than an hour into my shift I was yelling at
one of the engineers who had caused it by not finishing the maintenance she had been assigned to do
yesterday.

This early in the day I at least had the decency to call her into my office to reprimand her but I’m sure
that the words I used are not sanctioned by the Starfleet manual of conduct.

And just before lunch, before I had the chance to really calm down, Seven of Nine waltzed in, fresh
from regeneration, and starts tinkering with my engines without so much as a ‘by your leave’ or a
simple ‘hello’. She just looked at me with those deep blue eyes, and told me with that arrogant, cool
voice of hers that she’s following the captain’s orders and that my permission therefore was
irrelevant.

If I had been in only a slightly calmer state of mind I simply would have reminded her of Starfleet
regulations, especially the part where it says that the Chief of Engineering has to be informed about
every modification or system’s change even if the orders come from the captain of a vessel.

As it was I was not in an even remotely calm state of mind and instead of arguing with Seven I
simply deactivated the console on which she had been working. The surprise and aggravation in her
eyes when it suddenly stopped responding to her input was a real treat.

I was sure that now she would come up with a logical explanation of what she wanted to do, as she
usually did, but no, she didn’t. She called the captain, and what did Jane… what did Captain
Janeway do? Did she listen to my later confirmed concerns? No. Did she offer even the slightest
explanation what that damned Drone was intending to do to my ship? No, she didn’t. She just
ordered me to step down and let Seven do her job. I refused.

Not the smartest thing I ever did because it brought the captain right down on my turf, and she wasn’t in a charitable mood.

The only thing that saved my job was the fact that Seven continued with her modifications while Captain Janeway read me the riot act in my office, and before she was through with making me feel about two inches tall with a big hat, an alarm went off and we avoided having to deal with a plasma leak by mere seconds. Seven’s modifications, as I later learned meant to improve the replicator system, bypassed two security check-points which let pressure built up in the closed plasma conduits and would have led to the leak.

The crisis averted, Captain Janeway made it abundantly clear that she would not tolerate any further defiance on my part and that if I ever again outright refused an order she would make me regret it. At the time I was still angry and I wanted to tell her that nothing like that would ever have happened if she just would keep that damned Borg out of my engine room, but I had just enough common sense and self-control left to hold my tongue.

I’m hot-headed but I’m not a complete fool, and besides, she is right. I should never have outright refused her order; instead I should have asked to speak to her in private and should have voiced my concerns in a more rational way. I know that, and I knew it when I provoked her with my refusal, my insubordination. It was a knee-jerk reaction I deeply regret; not only because it sent me into the dog house with my Mistress and my wife.

So, as much as I long to be with Kathryn, I’m not looking forward to tomorrow night. The doctor caught me throwing up after dinner and wanted me to spend this night with Kathryn but I convinced him to wait and let me stay in the brig. It will give Kathryn a chance to calm down and to find a suitable punishment for my abysmal behaviour.

Should I have the nightmare again, I’ll welcome it as down-payment on my punishment.

[End of B’Elanna’s Diary]
The Nipple Ring

Kathryn let the papers sink into her lap. She was reluctant to read on. She soon would reach the time when she had lost control during a punishment and she really didn’t want to know what B’Elanna had written about that. To gain some time she ate the rest of her sandwich and exchanged her once again cold coffee for a fresh one. She just had settled back on the couch when B’Elanna came home. Kathryn greeted her with a kiss that would have revived a two weeks old corpse, B’Elanna only gave her a regretful smile. She simply was too tired.

“Take a shower and go to bed, my love, I’ll join you in about an hour.”

B’Elanna nodded and disappeared into their bedroom.

-x-x-x-

[B’Elanna’s Diary]

69 hours to go.

I never have been as unsettled after a night spent with Kathryn as I am now. I also never have seen her that angry before.

I was waiting in the playroom when she came home, naked and kneeling in the corner with my hands on my head. I had put a padd on the couch table with my apology and the polite request to be allowed to atone for my transgressions. She ordered me to get up and turn around. She was pale and calm but I could see the anger and hurt in her eyes, and I knew that whatever she had decided to do with me, I deserved it.

She silently removed the nipple ring, the ring with her initials, the sign that I was hers. She turned around and walked back to the living room. At the door she said, “Get dressed and join me out there, B’Elanna. We have to talk.”

My gaze stayed glued to the door long after she had left. I had expected to be beaten, to be denied orgasm for the foreseeable future, to be put in bondage, to be banned from our bed, and any sort of other thing, but that I had not expected.

I had not expected to be repudiated by my Mistress. I had not expected to lose what meant the most to me right after the mark of our bond on my neck. I never had been more afraid to move into a room than last night, not even when I had to report to Captain Picard.

My Mistress had moved the chairs that normally face the couch to face each other. My heart sank at the sight because I correctly surmised that I wouldn’t even be allowed to kneel at my Mistress’ feet.

She ordered me to sit and I obeyed. What else could I have done? Fall at her knees and beg for forgiveness? She never would have allowed such an extravagant and uncharacteristic gesture. It would have done more harm than good.

So, I sat straight with my feet close together and my hands in my lap, but I didn’t dare to raise my head to look into her eyes. She would have read all my fears in them, all my insecurities, all my
She would pity me, and I didn’t want pity, I wanted love. But it was as if she could look right into the centre of my soul without having to see my eyes.

She said, “I still love you, B’Elanna. No angry words can ever change that, but the way you acted yesterday has brought up a number of questions. Yesterday I might have let you off with a sound thrashing, but I had a whole sleepless night to think and the better part of today’s shift. I can’t and I won’t let you go on like you are now. So far everyone has been cutting you some slack because of the prison sentence, but your lack of self-control is appalling and I’m not only speaking about yesterday, I’m speaking about the last couple of weeks.”

She fell silent as if she expected me to protest, and I wanted to but I also was honest enough with myself to know that she was right. I wanted to tell her that it was all Seven of Nine’s fault with her overbearing, icy arrogance, but the Drone was not the only one who had made my temper snap in the recent past. I wanted to beg her to give me another chance, but I couldn’t. It would not have changed the truth, the one truth I could not deny, the one truth she already knew when she asked, “Do you trust me, B’Elanna?”

That’s when I looked up. She had to see the sincerity in my eyes or she would not have believed me…

[End of B’Elanna’s Diary]

-x-x-x-

Kathryn looked up when the door to the bedroom opened. B’Elanna was wearing shorts and a long-sleeved sweater and held a blanket under her arm.

“The bed is too big for just one person. May I lie with you?” She asked shyly.

In answer Kathryn petted the seat next to her and pulled B’Elanna’s head on her lap, “Rest my B’El, you had a long day.”

B’Elanna looked up, sleep already heavy in her eyes. She smiled and said, “Long but good. You’ll see tomorrow at the senior staff meeting.”

“What’s at the senior staff meeting?” Kathryn asked.

“A surprise, but I promised that I would let the others tell you. It’s good, really good, but I can’t tell any more.”

Kathryn was curious but she also knew that B’Elanna was too tired to give her a real answer, “Sleep, my love, I can wait ‘til tomorrow.”

Kathryn tucked the blanket around B’Elanna. B’Elanna smiled, snuggled closer and two minutes later she was asleep. Kathryn refocused her attention on the journal pages, but kept one hand on B’Elanna’s side, stroking her gently.

-x-x-x-
…or she would not have believed me. I told her that I didn’t trust myself, that I did no longer know who I am.

She asked me who I wanted to be and I answered that I wanted to be her slave and her wife and her lover and her friend and her chief engineer.

And then she asked, “And who of them do you think is lacking?”

The answer to that was easy but seemed to have surprised her, “All of them. How can I be a good wife or friend or lover or slave when I’m not there to share your joys and your sorrows and your burdens? How can I be a good Chief of Engineering when I lose my temper at the drop of a hat and terrorise my crew on a daily basis? Please, help me, Mistress, help me, my Kathryn.”

A small smile appeared on her face. It wasn’t one of her real smiles but it was genuine enough to let me feel a bit better. She then told me that I would once again become the perfect wife and slave when my sentence would be up in a few days.

“And for the other thing, you’re not the only one to blame for your lack of discipline. I should have called you on it weeks ago but I thought that having to stay in the brig was punishment enough. I was wrong. I should have taken into consideration that without the daily security of your normal life you would be more in need of a firm hand than ever. That was an oversight on my part and it will change.

“From now on ‘til the last hour of your sentence is over you are not allowed to touch yourself in any way, you will use the sonic shower at the highest setting and whenever you lose your temper you will call me immediately and will be punished at the end of your shift. Do you accept those conditions, B’Elanna?”

“Yes, Kathryn, thank you for giving me another chance,” I answered, and she replied with the sweetest words I ever heard,

“I love you, B’Elanna Torres. I will always give you another chance. There are no conditions on my love.”

Kathryn pulled the nipple ring out of her pocket and put it on the couch table. She said, “You still belong to me, my B’El. You are mine but I will only put the ring back on when you have proven that you can stay out of trouble. You’ll get it back when I have had no reason to punish you for five consecutive days.”

And then she ordered me to strip and return to the play room to be punished for my disrespectful behaviour the day before.

I can still feel the cane marks spread over my buttocks and thighs, but as always when I kneel in front of my Mistress to thank her for disciplining me I felt much better, despite the pain and my unfulfilled arousal. But the best part was that my Mistress allowed me to make love to her when we retired to the bedroom, and then she put cuffs on my wrists and afixed them to the headboard with a short chain to make sure that I would not inadvertently touch myself during the night as I am prone to do. She also told me that I would not be punished should I accidentally touch myself in the brig during sleep. Mistress was even generous enough to let me continue with the slave positions, of course without the preliminary masturbation.
When she kissed me good night I promised myself that I would work very hard to get my nipple ring back and despite my pain and arousal I fell asleep very quickly.

[End of B’Elanna’s Diary]

-x-x-x-

Kathryn bent down and kissed B’Elanna’s shoulder.

It had taken her almost a month to earn the ring back and the original piercing that grown closed by then. It had to be redone, and Kathryn had put her on the rack to do it. Not because it was necessary, B’Elanna would have held still without being restraint. Kathryn did it because she enjoyed the aesthetics and vulnerability of the rack. She wanted it to be a pleasurable experience for both of them and so had spent almost an hour teasing her beloved and bringing her to the brink of an orgasm with the explicit instruction that she would only be allowed to come when the needle pierced her skin.

B’Elanna was very proud to wear the nipple ring. She was proud to be her slave. Perhaps it was time to give her a mark that would not be as easily removed.

Kathryn shook her head at herself. Only the night before she had been convinced that she was not treating B’Elanna enough as an equal, and that that was the reason why she felt that growing distance between them. Now, she considered that the problem was not the way they interacted but that they didn’t interact enough, so to speak.

After having spent the day reading about their nights together, of reading about the time they had spent talking, playing chess, cuddling, kissing, playing in the play room and all the other things that had made her horny recalling and had even made her come a couple of times, she had come to the insight that ever since B’Elanna’s return from the brig such times had been comparatively few and far between.

Kathryn had enjoyed to see B’Elanna interact with her friends again and had sent her to play with Tom and Harry in the holodeck more than once. She had encouraged her to spent time with Sam Wildman and Naomi, and had even joined them a couple of times in the Flotter program. Kathryn was determined that that would change.

She yawned but there were only a few pages left and Kathryn knew that she would not be able to sleep ‘til she had read all of it, not only out of curiosity, but she somehow felt compelled to finish the diary.

-x-x-x-

[B’Elanna’s Diary]

56 hours to go.

Just as I feared I didn’t stay out of trouble for long. I could still feel and see the cane marks from last time when I was called to our quarters at the end of my shift to pay for losing my temper and yelling
at a crewman. Kathryn had already been waiting and I was on my knees in front of her before the
door had slid closed behind me. She didn’t need to order me to assume ‘kneeling attention’.

I knew I would be punished for yelling at that block head. I don’t regret it. He didn’t deserve any
better and I’m sure that he will keep his mouth shut in the future.

It’s one thing when I yell at Seven of Nine and call her names, but quite another when people do that
behind her back. I thought the news that I don’t tolerate anyone speaking disrespectfully about her
had made it even to the farthest corner of the lower decks, but it looks as if Crewman I’m-too-dumb-
for-my-own-good Munro didn’t get the unofficial memo. Well, now he knows.

I was lucky that Kathryn didn’t ask what our almost altercation had been about. I’m not too keen to
admit that I sometimes feel the need to defend that stupid Borg.

[End of B’Elanna’s Diary]

-x-x-x-

B’Elanna’s not completely surprising admission brought a smile on Kathryn’s face.

-x-x-x-

[B’Elanna’s Diary]

Anyway, Kathryn basically told me that if I ever expected to get the nipple ring back I would have to
do better. She ordered me to strip and go kneel in the corner of the play room, taking position 17.

Kneeling in a corner with my ankles crossed doesn’t faze me but having to put my hands on top of
my head with the palms up and the elbows pressed to the side gets to me every time. It makes me feel
vulnerable and exposed which in itself is ridiculous since there are other slave positions which are far
more explicit in that regard.

My Mistress made me wait, as I knew she would. It’s supposed to build anticipation and get me in a
sufficiently contrite frame of mind, and usually it works. This time, however, I didn’t regret a single
word I’ve said. Worse, when I was allowed to turn around and look at her all thoughts of punishment
or a vague sense of guilt left my brain and my blood fled to my lower regions.

Mistress had changed out of her uniform and was now wearing dark brown leather trousers that
stuck to her like a second skin, calf-high stiletto boots in a slightly lighter brown. They were at least
five and a half inches high, and I could only think of caressing them with my lips and breathing in
their scent.

And then I looked up and my breath caught in my throat. She was so breathtakingly beautiful in the
white men’s dress shirt, unbuttoned but knotted at the waist, beautiful and regal and ready to take on
the world. My admiring gaze fell on the cat of nine tails in her hand and I could no longer restrain
myself.
I got on my hands and knees and crawled the few feet that separated us. I reverently kissed the tips of her boots. I wanted to rub my cheeks against its soft length but I didn’t dare. So, I came back up to my knees and kissed the hand holding the whip. Her free hand patted my head and she told me that I was a good girl. Kahless, was I ready to come then.

My blood was rushing through my ears and I had trouble to even hear her orders. I was in a daze when I finally rose and walked over to the St. Andrew’s cross. My Mistress shackled my feet to the lower parts of the cross and guided my hands to the handholds in the upper part. She pulled my hair to the side and kissed the scar at my neck. Had the contact lasted only a second longer, I would have started to beg for release.

I expected to feel the cat on my back, instead the first stroke was directed between my legs and at least two of the leather thongs hit my clitoris. The pain was so intense and surprising that I cried out, but it also knocked down my arousal quite a few notches, and in the end it was due to that first stroke that I was able to take the punishment without disgracing myself and my Mistress by having an unauthorised orgasm.

The strokes were hard, one following quickly after the other. I soon lost count but I somehow managed not to cry out again. Tears were running down my face and I allowed the pain to get to me. I deserved every single stroke, not for what happened with that crewman. He’s insignificant, but for everything I had done earlier that made me lose my ring and my Mistress’ trust.

And then, suddenly, it was over and I felt my Mistress’ hands covering my own. She told me to let go of the handholds and to step back. I had to make a conscious effort to get my fingers that had cramped around the wooden handholds to open up. I pushed myself away from the cross and managed to take two steps back before my legs gave out and I sank to the floor almost in slow motion.

I landed in my Mistress’ arms before my knees hit the floor but instead of getting me back up she guided me to lie on my front. I knew she had only hit my back, but my whole body was burning in agonising pain. So, I did what my training demanded and focused on my breathing. I didn’t try to take deep breaths just yet. I knew that only would have made it worse, but I tried to slow my breathing down and soon the pain faded enough to allow me to turn my head in search of my Mistress who was at the other side of the play room fetching the first aid kit.

She looked worried. I smiled at her to show her that I was alright but she didn’t smile back. For a moment I feared that I had done something wrong, that I had used my safeword without being aware of it, but there was something in her eyes that convinced me that it wasn’t about me.

Mistress knelt next to me and I only then became aware of the scent of my blood. So, she must have broken the skin at some point, not surprising if one takes the hard knots at the end of the nine strands of the cat into consideration.

I wanted to thank her for disciplining me but she put a finger on my lips and began to treat my back with some cleaning balm and the dermal regenerator. The familiar buzzing was very soothing and I fell asleep.

When I woke up again my head and shoulders were resting on Kathryn’s leather clad legs, a light blanket was covering me. I was on my side facing away from her. Kathryn was stroking my hair. It was pure bliss, but then I heard her.

She whispered, “I’m so sorry, my love, so sorry. I lost control. I should never have chosen the cat. I’m sorry.”
The slight wavering in her voice told me that she was crying. I tried to get up to take her into my arms but the slight discomfort I felt lying down flared up into pain. Kathryn’s hand froze in mid-motion and she fell silent. I took a controlled breath and let it out; the pain receded.

I thanked her for punishing me and told her that I loved her. Kathryn sobbed and no force in the universe could have kept me from sitting up and pulling her in my arms. The pain and devastation on her face made me forget all about my own, only physical pain. I held her close and between sobs she repeated over and over again that she was sorry.

When the sobs had finally quietened down to the occasional sniffle she confessed that she had lost control during the whipping. She said that she had only wanted to give me enough pain to last for a couple of days as an incentive to exert more self-control in the future. She said that I had arched into every stroke, welcoming the kiss of the cat.

Her voice faltered when she told me that seeing the tears running down my face had aroused her and that she had increased the strength of her strokes. She told me that she had admired how I was able to stay otherwise quiet and that suddenly she had felt the urge to make me cry out in pain. She said that she had had a climax at my silent abandon and that she only had become aware that she was drawing blood after her orgasm.

Kathryn said that she was sorry for losing control like that and that she would understand if I’d no longer respected her as my Mistress, because a real Mistress would never lose control like that. And then she looked at me.

No whip could ever hurt as much as the fear I saw in her eyes. I knew words would not be enough to make it go away, and so I kissed her, deeply, passionately. There was a glimmer of hope in her eyes when our lips parted. I held eye contact and told her that I loved her and that I trusted her and that I knew she would never really harm me and that I had deserved to be punished and that I admired her strength for doing it.

She objected. She said that she had never intended to draw blood and that she had lost control and that she was not worthy to be called my Mistress. And that last statement hurt as much as a phaser blast to the heart.

I replied that I loved her and that nothing she did could ever change that, but I still saw the guilt in her eyes. I wanted to tell her that even if I’d died under her lash it would be an honourable death because my suffering would give her pleasure, but I knew that she was not in the right frame of mind to be receptive of such thinking. Instead I tried to make her understand that it still had been a just punishment, even if I had ended up getting a few more lashes than initially planned and that I still loved her and always would.

I don’t know if she believed me, but I hope in time she will.

I stayed the night. I just couldn’t leave her, and I think we both needed the contact, needed to feel and smell the other, needed to hear the other’s heart beat. I just hope that it was enough to allow her to forgive herself. There still was so much pain in her eyes this morning.

Perhaps that’s why a Mistress, Mistresses and Masters should not feel love for her slave. If they don’t have feelings for us it’s so much easier to rationalise any loss of control, but I’m selfish enough not to want that. I would rather give up being Kathryn’s slave than being her wife, her lover, her friend. I just hope that I’ll never have to.

[End of B’Elanna’s Diary]
Even now, months after it had happened, Kathryn still felt guilty and was ashamed by her unusual lack of control. Her own trainer and Mistress, she knew, would have been appalled and she would have made her pay dearly, and a part of her was still convinced that her body should have made to suffer for the weakness of her mind. That evening she even had offered B’Elanna the cat to take her retribution but she had outright refused and Kathryn had been a bit surprised not to find even a hint of that in B’Elanna’s diary.

Her beloved’s words and their tender love making had gone a long way to make her feel better, but the incident had also changed her; or rather it had changed something between them. She had become very careful in her punishments, one could even say very lenient, and she was extremely prudent not to lose control again which in consequence had led them to no longer switch roles. They were either B’Elanna and Kathryn, captain and chief engineer, Mistress and slave, but the gentle sliding between roles that had been an essential part of their private life was gone.

Kathryn knew that B’Elanna missed it but she was too well trained to say anything. She missed it herself, but a part of her had been so afraid to once again cross the boundaries that she just couldn’t allow herself that freedom. She had not trusted herself not to lose control again, until last night. Seven’s presence, Kathryn now understood, had been like an insurance that she wouldn’t. Oh, B’Elanna still would have received the full tally of eighteen strokes on her breasts and fifty-eight on her buttocks. She just would have used her bare hand and a paddle instead of the cane and the riding crop.

She had been so proud of her beloved who for the first time in far too long had let herself really feel the pain, had not tried to shield herself.

And now that she had read most of the diary, Kathryn had a pretty good idea why: last night, B’Elanna had really felt the need to atone. She had wanted to be punished. She had not just followed the rules they had set up shortly after taking the Oath, B’Elanna had really felt that she deserved every single stroke – and that had made all the difference.
The Dream

Kathryn fast read through the rest of the diary and was surprised to find some sort of post scriptum at the end. Another letter addressed to her.

“My beloved Kathryn,

now that you have read through all of my ramblings I have no doubt that you know better than I do what’s still wrong with me. I still want to talk to you about what I learned yesterday evening during our talk with Seven of Nine and the dream I had later that night.

I think that ever since my return from the brig I have only played at being your slave. I desperately wanted to be perfect for you to make up for all the times you had to spend alone because of my stupidity. The more I tried the less I found myself adequate.

In a way, blowing up at Seven was the perfect way to get rid of some of the pressure that feeling of inadequacy produced. It had the added bonus of allowing me to assuage my guilt at being such a bad slave and wife.

And that’s where I failed you, my Mistress, my love. You punished me for losing my temper and conduct unbecoming, but I wanted to be punished for being a bad slave and ultimately a bad wife. Sometimes I even faked my loss of control just to feel your discipline, and yes, I’m telling you now because I hope you will make me pay for what was practically a lie.

I unconsciously have been holding back all that time, I understood that while skimming over my entries just now, and that turned the genuine relationship we had, a relationship that allowed us both to switch between roles without feeling awkward, that allowed me to be your mate, your equal one moment and the next your slave or just a crew member and feel comfortable not only in the different roles but also in the changes… It turned that relationship into something almost superficial and false and at the same time it put too much emphasis on it.

I’m sorry that it took me so long to understand that and I’m even more sorry that I couldn’t nip it in the bud.

The conversation with Seven, when you told her about the psychological needs and intricacies of our way of life, let me see how much of that we had already lost, how much we had allowed to drift away. I needed that reminder of what we are, or rather we were all about, but it took the return of my dream about the Barge of the Dead to let me really understand.

I chose the moniker ‘dream’ deliberately because this time I didn’t wake up drenched in sweat but saw the nightmare through – and I doubt that it will return. I already told you of my conclusion but I’ll still describe it as long as it is fresh on my mind. You might see more in it than I do.

It started as always, with Kortar, the captain of the Barge, telling me that I’m a disgrace and brought dishonour to my house and my ancestors. In the past I woke up when Kortar came at me with the branding iron. Tonight I defended myself.

At first I couldn’t do much more than to duck out of the way. One should think that finding a weapon on a ship filled with Klingons should be easy but not on that ship and with Klingons who had already accepted their fate. I finally got the chance to rip off the middle bars of the banister separating the bridge and the steering wheel from the lower deck and now had two wooden bars to fight with.
Kortar probably had expected me to try to run, but not to fight back and I was able to bat the branding iron out of his hand when he charged at me. He laughed and moments later a batleth materialised in his hands and he charged again. For the fraction of a heartbeat I thought that this was the end. The batleth should have sliced through the wooden clubs with an untrained child holding it, but it didn’t. The moment his blade hit the clubs they changed into a pair of metleths.

I was so surprised that I would have almost lost my grip on them.

Kortar laughed again. He said that if I continued to fight well I would die the death of a warrior and be sent to Sto’vo’kor. I answered that I had no intention whatsoever to enter Sto’vo’kor any time soon.

We continued to fight. He said that now that I had finally shown some courage he would be able to show leniency and send me back to my life provided I denounced my Mistress. I laughed and told him that I would never leave you and that that would be a dishonourable act that would rightfully send me to Grethor.

He repeated his offer. In answer I ducked under his defences and put a tiny cut on his thigh. It drew blood. I told him that in my hearts my mate and my Mistress and my lover and my captain and my best friend were one and the same – and that I wouldn’t want it any other way. I had to dance out of the way to stay out of the range of his batleth.

He tried to provoke me by saying that no true Klingon warrior would ever submit to another Klingon. I laughed again and told him that the whole Klingon courtship rituals were based on shows of dominance and ended in at least a symbolic submission of one partner. He didn’t have an answer to that. I then asked him if the captain of a Bird of Prey was not the undisputed master over the lives and deaths of his soldiers and if the power the Klingon chancellor held over every single Klingon in the Empire was not basically the same as the power I had given my Mistress – with the main difference that I could walk away from my Mistress at any time should you act as dishonourably as Gowron had in the past, starting with the way he became Chancellor in the first place.

Kortar laughed again, but this time it didn’t sound derisive but genuine, and he said that the current chancellor would not even be given the chance to argue his case when his time had come. He would be bound for Grethor no matter how he’d die.

Our fight went on the whole time, and I’m not sure how I managed to hold my own against a real Klingon warrior. Defeating them on the holodeck because I’m smaller and faster is one thing, but for real, even in a dream of my own making, I shouldn’t stand a chance. Anyway, we fought and we talked, and at one point I almost lost when Kortar called my devotion to you in question.

He said that if I was so proud to be owned by “that Human” then I would wear her mark for everyone to see and since I didn’t that it could not be for real. I answered that the bond mark on my neck and the nipple ring where all the signs of ownership I needed.

Kortar replied that the bite mark was a sign of belonging and union, not of ownership, and that the nipple ring can and had already been taken from me and thus would not count. I was close to conceding that point when it came to me that with dermal regenerators and plastic surgery every mark could be removed or replaced. He of course didn’t agree and continued to taunt me.

He started to insult you. He insulted my Mistress. He said that you’re not worthy to be called the Mistress of a true Klingon warrior, the Lady of a Klingon house. He said that no Klingon worth their ancestry would ever sit at the feet of a mere, small Human.

I laughed and told him that there was nothing mere or small about you, and that you had more
honour and strength and courage than Kahless and all the other Klingon heroes combined. And I started to tell him about our journey, about the impossible odds you defeated time and again. We even stopped fighting, so he could listen more closely.

And than he said something that really hit me. He said, “I admit that she is a strong and cunning warrior, but she is still not worthy. A honourable warrior would not hide the true nature of your relationship.”

I was floored and suddenly we were fighting again. He laughed at me because I didn’t have an immediate, witty comeback for him. I started to have trouble defending myself. My arms were getting heavy and with each parry it was harder to hold off his batleth. Then the tip of his weapon sliced my left arm and the scent of my blood gave me strength.

For a moment an image flashed through my mind: I was hanging from the ceiling hook in the play room. You were standing behind me, whip still in your right hand, and you were licking tiny droplets of blood from the marks on my back that you had put there moments earlier. That’s when I finally understood and I laughed at my own foolishness.

I counterattacked and when I had Kortar on the defensive I told him that we didn’t hide. I told him, “We don’t hide, Kortar. We don’t hide that we are lovers and mates, and yet we don’t have sex on the conference table during a senior staff meeting. It would be unprofessional. We don’t hide that we are Mistress and slave, but still Kathryn does not lead me through the corridors on a leash. Everyone with eyes to see, however, would still know. There is no dishonour in any of our actions.”

Kortar stumbled over a coiled rope and landed on the deck. I kicked the batleth out of his hands. It disappeared together with my metleths. I walked over to the brazier and pulled out a branding iron with a short handle. I told him again that in my heart, in my soul there was no dishonour and that I would prove it to him.

I turned the metal poker around and pressed it against my cheek. I could feel the heat, but there was no pain. Kortar had come back to his feet and studied my face. He took the iron from me and put it back into the brazier. He closed his hands to fists and put them in front of his chest in a formal greeting I had only read about in history books.

He said, “Well done, B’Elanna Torres, daughter of Miral of the House of Ka’tal. You are not like other Klingons, but you are a honourable warrior. Return to your mate and your Mistress and stay true to the voice of your soul and your ancestors will be proud.”

I woke up and I smelled the still lingering scent of our love making. Your weight pinned me down. Your index finger was hooked into my nipple ring. The pain in my buttocks reminded me of the caning, and I suddenly had the feeling that my world had rightened itself after it had slowly been drifting out of alignment.

I felt your breath on my skin and it made me wet, just feeling you this close to me, relaxed in sleep, free from the burden of command you wear so well. I could have come from the sheer intensity of it all, of the feeling of safety and completeness and fulfilment.

It was then that I understood my dream, that I understood why my subconscious had brought me back to the Barge of the Dead again and again: Ever since my time in the brig I have hidden behind my roles, chief engineer, mate, friend, slave. I was only one at the time, instead of being all, all at once.

I can’t do that any longer. I can no longer just be the slave or the friend or the mate, because I’m all of that, all the time. I am your mate when I’m kneeling at your feet as your slave, and I am your slave
when I’m arguing with you about an engineering problem as your chief engineer. I can no longer be only part of what I am.

You deserve better than that. We deserve better than that.

I’m sorry that I didn’t see it sooner, and I promise I’ll try very hard to do better in the future. I love you, Kathryn Janeway, my captain, my Mistress, my love, my mate. You are my everything.

B’Elanna.”

Kathryn couldn’t help the tear rolling down her face at the heartfelt declaration. In a way it was as if a weight had been lifted off her shoulders.

B’Elanna was right. They both had been relying on their different roles for too long instead of being all they were for each other at all time. It wouldn’t put an end to their play sessions, on the contrary. It probably would reintroduce the ‘play’ into their session that had been missing for some time now. It wouldn’t put an end to her need to punish B’Elanna for her misdeeds. If anything it would allow them to feel the different parts of their lives more deeply.

Kathryn looked down at her sleeping mate. She seemed so young and innocent, as if nothing had ever hurt her.

Giving her the diary to read had been a great gift. It was a sign of B’Elanna’s complete and unconditional trust, and Kathryn vowed to herself to do everything in her power to prove worthy of that gift.

Still, there was something about that dream that kept bothering her and she was tempted to reread B’Elanna’s account, but it was late and there was a senior staff meeting first thing in the morning with a mysterious surprise for her. So, she reluctantly bent down to wake B’Elanna up and move them both to the bedroom.

-x-x-x-

Kathryn woke to the aroma of fresh coffee and the feeling of soft lips travelling up her arm, “Good morning, my B’El.”

“Good morning, Mistress. Would you like your breakfast now or may I serve you in the shower first?”

“I think I’d like to feel your hands on me. Shower first.”

B’Elanna rose to her feet and smiled at Kathryn. She stretched out her hand to help her Mistress out of bed. The steam coming from the coffee mug on the nightstand wafted to Kathryn’s nose, “Let me rectify that, my love. Coffee first. I would ask you to join me in bed but then we’ll risk being late for that mystery proposal of yours.”

“You get proposals all the time, Kathryn, and no, I won’t tell you what it’s about. I gave my word,” B’Elanna said with a smile.

“And if I ordered you to tell me, as your Mistress?” Kathryn asked.
The twinkle in Kathryn’s eyes told B’Elanna that it wasn’t a serious question, but she still answered seriously, “Then my Mistress would have to punish me for disobedience or you would know that I have no honour because I don’t keep my word.”

“You are one of a kind, my B’El. Come up here, I want something beautiful to look at.”

B’Elanna blushed a bit at the implicit compliment and obeyed quickly. As always her posture was perfect and she seemed at peace in her skin. Kathryn asked the computer for the time and since they still had almost two hours she ordered B’Elanna to touch herself.

“No, my B’El, don’t close your eyes, look at me. I want to see the passion rising in your eyes.”

B’Elanna licked her lips and obeyed. She gently cupped her breasts from below and presented them to her Mistress. Her right index finger circled the aureole and the nipple hardened like a well trained dog follows the slightest sign of his master. She pinched the nipple with index finger and thumb, rolled it between them and pinched it again.

“Play with the nipple ring and stroke your clits. Give me a show.”

B’Elanna’s body arched into her own touch as soon as she began to rub her clits. She moaned but held eye contact with Kathryn. The picture perfect of burning desire and deep devotion she presented was too much to resist for the proverbially stoic captain to resist. She put her coffee aside and scooted close enough to kiss B’Elanna.

“Don’t stop, baby,” she whispered in B’Elanna’s ear after the first kiss.

She had one hand in B’Elanna’s neck, holding her close. The other slid along B’Elanna’s left arm, past her fingertips and entered her with three fingers. B’Elanna’s inner muscles clenched immediately around them and Kathryn knew that she had already started to fight against her need, to try and stave off the impending orgasm for as long as her Mistress wanted. As enticing as that knowledge was, however, Kathryn was not in the mood to let her beloved suffer and they didn’t have the time to draw it out too much.

She ordered, “Come for me, my love”, and licked the bite mark at B’Elanna’s neck, their sign of union and belonging, as Kortar had called it in B’Elanna’s dream. It pushed B’Elanna over the edge, and her willing abandon brought Kathryn close to her own release.

“Come, it’s time to take a shower.”

Kathryn stepped under the warm spray and pulled B’Elanna with her who immediately got on her knees and kissed Kathryn’s flat stomach. She looked up, her eyes still dark with desire, and asked, “May I serve you, Mistress?”

Kathryn leaned back against the tiled wall of the shower stall and answered, “You may, but you are not allowed to use your hands. Put them behind your back.”

B’Elanna alternated between tiny licks and butterfly kisses on her way down to Kathryn’s centre. The smell of her Mistress’ arousal was intoxicating and made her ready to come again. She kissed the reddish blonde curls reverently and stopped to inhale the wondrous scent for a moment. She would have to be careful not to make her Mistress come with the first lick, and so she was almost tentative when the tip of her tongue parted the outer labia.

Suddenly there was a hand on her head that pushed her closer to the love juices she wanted to taste, “That’s it. Make me come now, and then take your time for a second round.”
They had to forego breakfast but made it to the senior staff meeting just in time. They both had been carried away in the shower.

The senior staff meeting went like most routine meetings with the department heads giving their weekly reports and the Doctor and Neelix taking up most of the time. Finally Captain Janeway asked if there was anything else and B'Elanna spoke up, “Yes, Captain, Ensign Kim and Seven of Nine have a proposal to make and as chief engineer I endorse their request. It will make our journey safer and possibly faster.”

“Ensign Kim, I’m all ears.”

“What we propose is this,” Harry said and activated the wall view screen. “This is an enhanced but miniaturised version of the Astrometrics lab on Xena. It will need less energy than the original and with a few modifications of the long range sensors it will allow us to get accurate sensor readings from half a quadrant away, at least with someone who knows how to interpret the incoming data.”

“That’s a tall order, Ensign.”

“Lieutenant Torres already made the necessary calculations; Engineering can spare the energy needed to run the Astrometrics lab. To built it, it would need about a week of Ensign Kim’s time and two to three days of Lieutenant Torres’ time. To cover all shifts in the new Astrometrics department I’ll need one crew member with a scientific background to assist me.”

“Seven, I told you yesterday, you simply can’t work double shifts every day, and that means you’ll need at least two assistants, four would be even better, but that’s for the captain to decide,” B’Elanna said.

“I’m gratified to hear that the three of you are not yet ready to take over my whole job.” There was a note of admonishment in Captain Janeway’s voice and her face showed a slightly stern version of her command mask, though it was still far from her death glare.

Unsurprisingly Harry started to babble that they only had been thinking how to make this work and that they didn’t want to presume. His fluster was adoring and Kathryn had a hard time not show her amusement.

B’Elanna pulled Harry back in his seat and stood up, “Captain, I apologise if we went too far in our planning. We might have gotten carried away. As the senior officer I take full responsibility, ma’am.”

“Captain, it was my idea. So, it’s for me to take responsibility,” Seven said.

“You’re all responsible, and by the end of the shift I want a detailed plan of prognosticated performance, energy requirements, work hours and everything else.”

“Here, Captain. Since I didn’t need to regenerate last night I took the liberty to formalise the proposal. This padd contains all the data you want, including a list of personnel with the necessary scientific background.”

Seven walked around the desk and put an activated padd right in front of Janeway. Her face showed the hint of a self-satisfied smirk, and it took Kathryn considerable self-control not to burst out...
“Alright, people, this meeting is adjourned until I had time to read through all of this. Return to your stations, all of you. Lieutenant Torres, you’ll receive a copy of the padd. I want your recommendations on personnel. Dismissed. Tuvok, you’re with me.”

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Tuvok and the captain retired to the Ready Room where Kathryn finally gave into her feeling and laughed, “Gods, did you see Harry’s face? As if he had just been caught with his hand in the cookie jar, and Seven riding to B’Elanna’s rescue. It was just hilarious.”

Tuvok raised his left eyebrow at his captain’s uncharacteristic outburst, “All three of them showed a surprising degree of teamwork and solidarity, especially considering the volatile nature of the relationship between Lieutenant Torres and Seven of Nine.”

“I think you might see some change there in the future, Tuvok. Seven’s actions in Engineering the day before yesterday made B’Elanna reconsider her stance on Seven. Not that I expect them to stop arguing any time soon,” Kathryn said still smiling.

“Lieutenant Torres’ volatile emotions might just be what Seven of Nine needs to reclaim her humanity.”

“That does not sound very logical, Commander.”

“There’s no need to insult me, Captain. Despite the Borg alterations Seven of Nine’s basic genetic code is Human, as is half of Lieutenant Torres’. They could learn from each other and become reliable friends. This project is the first logical step,” he said neutrally.

“You might be right, my friend. But I still think that we’re in for interesting times while they figure it out. They still have a lot of steam left in them,” Kathryn said.

“Are you talking about that obscure curse about living in interesting times?”

“I do, Tuvok, and ever since I got us stranded in the Delta Quadrant that Chinese curse certainly has proven true, especially to those I got killed.”

“The people who died on that mission aside, Kathryn, would you change anything?” Tuvok asked.

“Would I give anything to return us to the Alpha Quadrant? Yes, I would. I would sacrifice my life and even B’Elanna’s to do that. Would I give up my command to keep B’Elanna at my side? Yes, in a heartbeat,” Kathryn said; her good mood suddenly evaporated.

“Will you ever accept that the choice you made then was not a choice at all? You did what Federation protocol, the Prime Directive and your character demanded you to do.”

“Probably never, my friend. Let’s have a look at that proposal though I’m sure that Seven made sure that all the numbers fit and the ts are crossed.”

-x-x-x-
As soon as the door to the Ready Room had closed Harry groaned and let his head bang against the conference table, “We’re screwed, we’re so totally screwed, planning a whole new department without the captain’s input. We’re dead.”

“Calm down, Starfleet. It’s not as bad as you think. The captain was not really angry. She merely wanted us to know that we were a bit overzealous and that next time we propose something of this magnitude we’d better do it in her Ready Room instead of blindsiding her at a senior staff meeting. Everything will be fine,” B’Elanna answered.

“You should know, Maquis. She’s your wife,” Harry said.

“Lieutenant Torres’ judgement is not based on her personal relationship with Kathryn Janeway, Ensign Kim, it’s based on her experience with Captain Janeway’s command style,” Seven said before B’Elanna had a chance to reply.

“Actually, Harry, it’s a bit of both,” B’Elanna conceded. “Let’s just go back to our stations, and I wouldn’t be surprised if she put a commendation in your file for independent thinking, Starfleet. The captain will summon us if she has questions or call for a senior staff meeting when she has made her decision. The worst thing that can happen is that we might have to build the Astrometrics lab in our own time. In any case it will be worth the extra effort, if only to get you out of my engine room, Seven.”

“Oh, Maquis, admit it, you’ll miss her. No one else stands up to you when you throw one of your temper tantrums,” Harry said with a relaxed smile, considerably calmed down by B’Elanna’s words.

“No one else gives me as much reason to get angry, and I’ll never admit that I might come to miss that,” B’Elanna answered with a wink towards Seven who replied with one of those small, tentative smiles of hers, and somehow B’Elanna felt compelled to make it appear more often.

-x-x-x-

Kathryn and B’Elanna were sitting on the couch, a blanket draped over their naked bodies and the soft strands of 20th century jazz playing in the background.

They had had dinner in the mess hall with Seven and Harry and some of their enthusiasm for the new project had infected Kathryn and she had started adding her own ideas. At first she had been sceptic, the performance specifications Seven gave on the padd were just too exaggerated. On the other hand if that new lab worked even half as good as Seven projected, it would be a vast improvement over the data they were able to gather now.

Seeing B’Elanna’s dark and Seven’s fair head bent over a padd, for once discussing technical data instead of arguing about it; had made her extremely hot. When they had called it a night and had returned to their quarters Kathryn had showed her mate exactly how hot – not that B’Elanna had in any way been adverse to the passionate demonstration.

After having been taken pressed up against the door B’Elanna had turned the tables and made love to Kathryn on the floor. Exhausted, they had ended up on the couch and B’Elanna had pulled a blanket over their sweaty bodies.
Kathryn knew that they should turn in and get some sleep but there still were a few things that she felt they needed to discuss. So, she decided to just ask.

"Tell me, my B’El, when you all came up with the Astrometrics project would I have gotten a call from security had you worked in main engineering instead of being sequestered in one of the labs? And no, my love, this is not your Mistress asking if you need to be punished."

"There was a point when Harry looked as if he feared us coming to blows any time. Poor Starfleet, he really was afraid that you were angry about the proposal."

"You’re getting off topic here, B’El, but I admit I enjoyed his squirming. He would make such a delicious slave, always eager to please and serve," Kathryn said.

"You could have him if you wanted to, Mistress. He already adores you and I’m sure he would be a good student. The colour of our skin and hair complement each other. I’m sure we would look great kneeling in front of you."

Kathryn turned her head and kissed the mark at B’Elanna’s neck. She had not missed the slight trembling in the voice her beloved had tried to disguise by speaking very softly.

"You are mine, B’Elanna Torres, only you. My life is full enough as it is. When would I have time for another slave? And what would I do with a male slave? Not to speak of the fact that my operations officer is in love with my helm’s man."

"Yeah, but Tom’s too stupid to see that. He’s too busy to save holographic damsels in distress in his Captain Proton program,” B’Elanna said.

"Harry will be busy with the lab project for quite some time, too busy to go and play with Tom on the holodeck or elsewhere. It might help Tom to buy a clue, according to the old saying that absence makes the heart go fonder."

"Or more forgetful,” B’Elanna whispered.

"We are the living proof for it’s accuracy, my B’El. But you still have not answered my question. So, how did it all start?” Kathryn insisted.

"Purging the gel packs from that latest infection was a challenging process due to the minutiae required, at least in the beginning. By the time Harry joined us in the lab laden down with a tray overflowing with dinner it had become an extremely boring process. Harry’s arrival was just the distraction we needed.

"Off in the lab we had totally missed the false alarm about the neutrino readings and he told us all about it. He blamed the detour on the inadequacy of our sensors and the fact that we don’t have the equipment to make sense of the readings we do get now. He said that if we had an Astrometrics lab like the one on Xena we could have saved some valuable time over the years.

"I, of course, told him that our sensors are the best Starfleet has to offer, even better then the ones on Enterprise. Seven, of course, declared that the lab on Xena was not half as good as it could be with some Borg enhancements. She also said that our sensors would be considered sub-standard in three-thousand two hundred and twenty-nine species the Borg had encountered.

"I was about half a second from blowing up at her for slighting our technology, once again, when I saw, when I recognised the expression in her eyes. She was baiting me, deliberately. So, I challenged her to prove it. Needless to say that Seven convinced me that it could be done, though Harry looked at us as if we had each grown an additional head.”
“But that sounds like it was purely theoretical. What let you come up with the idea of actually trying to build a lab?” Kathryn asked.

“Yes, it was theoretical, and if not for Harry it would have stayed that way. He asked if it couldn’t improve performances if we just updated the long range sensors. He quickly realised that traditional bridge stations don’t have the analytical and diagnostic tools to deal with the amount of data even traditional sensors pick up, not to speak of enhanced sensors, and that the tools we have at the science labs would take weeks to get through it.

“Harry apologised, but then I saw the look in Seven’s eyes, full of excitement. I said, ‘Spill it, Borg!’ In five minutes she sketched up something that would enhance our long range sensors and cobbled together two engineering consoles usually only used in emergencies to analyse the data.

“Of course, we started to argue, and after a while Harry must have had enough. He shouted and made us shut up. Then he told me that if I wanted Seven to stay out of my engine room I simply would have to build her her own lab, perhaps in a miniaturised form. Starfleet was uncharacteristically sarcastic but it got the ball rolling, and we really got creative.

“Harry joined in as soon as he had clued in on the fact that we would not start beating up on each other and that we were serious. In retrospect and only among us I admit that it felt good to work that close together and really accomplish something. It makes fighting with Seven so much more fun.”

Kathryn kissed B’Elanna, “I’m proud of you, my love. I would have hated having to punish you again. I can still feel the cane marks on your buttocks.”

“I’m alright, my love. Let me show you, in the bedroom.”

“You should be tired, my B’El,” Kathryn whispered.

“How can I be tired when I have you in my arms?”

That were the last words spoken that night.

-x-x-x-

Ten days and another encounter with the mysterious neutrino emissions later the Astrometrics department was ready to be inaugurated; and Neelix wouldn’t be Neelix if he had not thrown a party to celebrate that occasion.

Kathryn and B’Elanna wore formfitting, matching evening gowns, one black and one blood red. The skirts went down to the floor and when they moved it gave the impression as if they were gliding over the floor. Their shoulders were bare and the hair swept up in a bun.

The only decoration on B’Elanna’s neck was the scar from the bite mark Kathryn had put there. Kathryn wore a choker with the mark of the House of Katal, B’Elanna’s House, in a more obvious presentation of their bond. In the past they had not been that open about their relationship, and there was not a single crewmember who not at one time or the other had let their eyes linger on either of their necks. It got Kathryn thinking.

Her mind wandered back to B’Elanna’s last dream about the Barge of the Dead. The words ‘wear her mark’ repeated themselves in her mind, and Kathryn felt her eyes irresistibly drawn to the bite
mark at her wife’s neck. She instinctively touched the spot where her own at the moment covered mark was.

Kathryn had a hard time to focus on the conversations going on around her but to most crew members she was her usual attentive self. She was even able to alleviate some of Ensign Tal Celes trepidation of having to work with Seven of Nine or rather under Seven’s command; but still there was something that kept eluding her, that she couldn’t quite grasp.

When Kathryn and B’Elanna finally returned to their quarters Kathryn let herself drop on the couch. B’Elanna slipped out of her shoes and pulled the red dress over her head in one fluid movement. She had been wearing no underwear but before Kathryn could comment on that she had knelt down in front of her and removed Kathryn’s high-heeled shoes. She put the feet in her lap and started to massage them.

Kathryn groaned, “How do you always know what I need, my B’El?”

“Not always, but I’m working on it. In this case, however, I could see it in the way you moved during the last hour. It was easy for me to see that your feet were starting to hurt but you seemed to enjoy yourself. So, I thought it would be enough to do something about it later,” B’Elanna answered.

“If I had known what you’re not wearing under that dress we would have left much earlier.”

“And here I thought that your distraction that evening was due to my attire,” B’Elanna answered with a smile.

“You certainly were at the centre of it, my love. Come up here. My feet are fine. Let me return the favour. Your shoulders are still tense. What did you do to yourself?” Kathryn asked.

“The lab had to be operational before we could modify the last couple of power and sensor couplings. Harry and Susan took the ones in the crawl space just on top of the bridge. Seven and I worked on the ones in the aft region. The Jeffries’ tubes there don’t give a lot of wriggling room and we had to work overhead for hours. Even Seven rolled her shoulders when we finally were done. I sent her to regenerate for a couple of hours before the party, but the hot shower I got was apparently not enough to get rid of the tension,” B’Elanna said.

“Then let’s do something about it, baby. Let’s go to the bedroom and I’ll give you a backrub.”

As soon as B’Elanna was settled on the bed Kathryn straddled her, put some oil in her hands and started to work the kinks out of her beloved’s back. B’Elanna moaned in relief.

“Your back is a mess, my B’El. You should really learn to delegate.”

“Kahless, that feels good. The couplings we had to install were not in one of the usual Jeffries tubes but in one of the aft crawl spaces. Seven and I were the only ones who could fit.”

“What about Susan Nicoletti? She’s a few inches shorter than Seven,” Kathryn said, more to keep B’Elanna from falling asleep than because she needed to know.

“To get to the crawl space one has to pass through an area of slightly elevated radiation levels. I didn’t want to risk it.”

“Risk what?” Kathryn asked.

“To expose Susan to radiation,” B’Elanna answered, “any kind of radiation.”
Kathryn let B’Elanna’s words sink in while she worked on the cramped muscles.

“Are you telling me,” she said with the slight edge of her Captain’s voice, “that Vorik and Lieutenant Nicoletti…”

B’Elanna’s sudden move to turn around and sit up nearly threw Kathryn off the bed, “I’m such an idiot. I promised to let them tell you yourselves. The Doctor only just confirmed it that morning, but with the Astrometric labs test runs and the party there simply was no time. Now, I’ve spoiled the surprise. I must be more tired than I thought.”

“It’s alright, B’El. I won’t let them know that I had a bit of forewarning. You know I never wanted to command a generational ship,” Kathryn said.

“I think that you did a good job those last three years, my love,” B’Elanna said with a smile and pulled Kathryn under the comforter.

“Only by trying my best to ignore the fact that there’s a helpless, innocent child on board. If word of Susan’s pregnancy spreads I could have a real problem on my hands, B’Elanna. At the moment we’re in a rather quiet region of space but there’s not telling what waits around the next corner. We’ll have to take precautions to protect the kids, and if every pair on board decides to have a family we’ll soon run out of space and energy. We’re screwed.”

It was rare for the captain to let herself get spooked by what ifs but B’Elanna knew what to do if it happened. She claimed Kathryn’s lips and kissed her tenderly. Sometimes that turned into passion, sometimes it was just the confirmation of the unwavering trust she had in her wife. This time Kathryn was still tense when the kiss ended.

“Not everyone on board wants children, Kathryn, and those that do know that our resources are limited. After our encounter with the Borg no one on board needs to be reminded that the Delta Quadrant can be extremely hostile and dangerous. Trust us, my Captain, trust your crew and we will find a way, together.”

Kathryn’s only answer was to snuggle in B’Elanna’s arms and allow herself to be held. They both quickly fell asleep.

-x-x-x-

The next morning Lieutenant Nicoletti and Ensign Vorik ‘surprised’ her with their news. The real surprise, however, was when they told her that she was expecting twins. They also had some ideas about building a nursery with an independent life support system, doubly enforced bulkheads, a small medical bay, in other words a self-contained unit inside of Voyager to protect the children and their caretakers.

The subsequent encounters with the Hirogen forced them to postpone the realisation of those plans and put a lot of other things on the backburner for a while. Eventually they returned to some sort of normality and Kathryn and B’Elanna once again had more time together as mates and as Mistress and slave.

For their second anniversary the crew gifted their captain and her chief engineer with a three-day holiday on the holodeck and to everyone’s surprise no red or yellow alert interrupted their belayed honeymoon.
THE END

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