

Star Trek Dragon

"Freedom's Price"

By

Jon Wasik

"The energy signature ends directly ahead," Lieutenant Commander Vendar Perkins reported.

Captain Chris Harriman looked up from his console next to his chair and stared for a moment at the streaking stars on the view screen. "Bring us out of warp five hundred thousand kilometers from the location," he ordered.

Lieutenant James Trikal nodded his head from the helm and began keying in commands.

"Three...two...one..."

Immediately, the stars stopped streaking by as the *Dragon* dropped from Transwarp velocity to sub-light. Directly ahead was nothing but a debris field.

"Scanning the field now," Vendar said immediately. "I'm detecting no weapons signatures, not even Borg...in fact, I see nothing there that deals with the Borg, not even an ion trail." She sighed and turned around to look at Chris. "I'm sorry, but it looks like we've run into another dead end."

Chris nodded his head, not letting his frustration show for once. In a sense, he had expected it to be another dead end...and now that it was...

"Very well...stand down from red alert," he said. "Helm, bring us on our original course towards the center of the galaxy, warp fifteen..."

"If we would have discovered the Borg today, they would have been fully regenerated, and there's not a chance in hell we can take them on now. Let's just hope that anyone who encounters this single cube will be able to defend themselves..."

"Bringing us about seven-one mark one," James said.

However, before Chris could give the final order, a sensor alarm sounded on Vendar's console.

"Captain, I'm reading a warp signature approaching us fast! It appears to be masked...but the mask is weakening. It's dropping out of warp right next to us!"

Chris didn't call for red alert yet simply because they didn't know what was coming at them. A bright light flashed in the distance and a moment later a very small vessel appeared. By all accounts, it appeared to be a shuttle.

"We're being hailed," Vendar added.

"On screen," Chris ordered as he and his first officer, Lieutenant Commander Tom Halkrat, stood up from their positions.

Instead of seeing a pristine image of a new alien, mostly static met his eyes. He could barely make out words...

"Help us...you have to help my people...PLEASE!"

With that, the image cut out, showing the vessel yet again.

"Scan for life signs," Chris ordered, confused.

"I'm reading one life sign," Vendar replied. "Very faint, and fading."

Chris immediately tapped his comm badge. "Bridge to sickbay, prepare to receive a patient in critical condition. Vendar, beam the life sign directly to sickbay and tractor his shuttle into our shuttle bay."

She didn't respond and simply nodded as she moved to work, keying in commands. "Transport complete. Engaging tractor beam..."

Chris immediately moved towards the turbo lift. "I'll be in sickbay. You have the bridge, Tom."

As Chris entered sickbay, he saw an injured humanoid with gray skin lying on a bio bed. Commander Kara Trial and her nurse were both hard at work.

"We can't give him tricordrazine," she commented bitterly to her nurse. "His body will reject it. Give me the sub-dermal regenerator."

The nurse handed her the device, which she immediately began to wave over the alien's chest.

She smiled and nodded approvingly. "Well, at least something works on this guy. Internal bleeding has stopped..."

She set the device down, then looked at Chris and nodded. "He's all yours for now, Captain."

He opened his eyes, which were a glowing purple underneath, and sat up in his bio bed.

Chris stood next to him and said, "I'm Captain Chris Harriman of the Federation Starship *Dragon*."

"R' Hojan," the gray-skinned man said in an odd sounding voice. Almost computer like... He seemed hopeful, like he expected to see something or someone by that name. Then realization crossed his face. "Please, you have to help my people. For centuries they've been a slave race, mining our own resources... please, *help* us!"

Suddenly an alarm sounded on Kara's console. The alien appeared to be choking, then fell back hard in the bio bed.

Kara immediately placed a cortical stimulator on his neck and started feeding charges into it. Finally, the tone stopped, signifying that he survived.

She shook her head as she moved to his side and took the stimulator off. She looked at Chris and shook her head. "I don't recommend reviving him again for another twenty four hours I'm sorry."

Chris simply nodded his head. "Very well... maybe we'll get some answers from his shuttle. Keep me informed, Kara," he finished as he moved towards the turbolift.

Commander Kalia Tarkent cursed as she hit her head on the low ceiling again. "Damn this thing, couldn't they have made it any taller?!"

"I agree," the familiar voice of Chris stated, startling her. She spun around and looked at him.

"Umm... sorry, sir."

Chris shook his head in confusion. "I don't get it... the alien in sick bay is taller than we are... yet this thing is too small for us. I wonder if it's not his... he did say something about being under the rule of someone."

She shrugged, also not knowing. "All I know is... their technology is something else. It seems like this ship's weapons were completely destroyed, as were its defensive systems. Its power core is completely off line... and it looks like our power isn't compatible what so ever with this shuttle's."

"What can you tell me about the propulsion systems?" Chris asked in return.

Kalia smiled and moved out of the shuttle and around to the field propulsion emitters of the vessel. "One of a kind," she stated. "All I can tell you is that it somehow taps into hyperspace to give it some sort of a boost... I wouldn't even really call them field emitters, more like hyperspace engines of some sort. Their sub-light engines use some sort of fusion or fission reaction, I'm not sure because they appear to be all but destroyed."

Chris simply nodded. "Anything we can use?"

Kalia shook her head. "No... at least, nothing that will help us. I don't think this thing can get overwarp three."

"Something that uses hyperspace... but can't get over warp three," Chris commented with a grin on his face. "Pretty pathetic."

Kalia shook her head with a smile. "I know. But I'd say this thing can get almost up to warp speed alone with its sub-light engines, if they are as powerful as they look."

"Too bad we couldn't get a better look at it," Chris commented, bending down to inspect one of the sub-light engine housings. "What's the ship made out of?"

"That's a mystery," Kalia said, shaking her head. "Some material I'm not familiar with, that's for sure."

Chris stood up and gave a distant stare. "We may have to engage in combat with larger ships with the same technology as this ship," he said, looking at her morbidly. "Conduct some tests on this shuttle with weapons, see what you can come up with. I want to know what kind of damage we can do when shields drop."

She looked at him, curious as to why they would have to engage one of these in combat... So she simply nodded and replied, "Aye, sir."

He looked at the vessel one last time then headed for the exit. She frowned after him, then shrugged and moved to one of her aids. They had work to do...

He seemed shy at first after the door opened. He simply stood there and peered in at the senior staff gathered in the briefing lounge next to the bridge. Finally, after a little prodding from the security escort, he entered the room.

The alien was very tall, over two meters tall. A standard deck on the *Dragon* was two and a half meters tall... Chris was willing to bet this alien's head nearly touched the ceiling in a corridor. He had mottled gray

skin with eyes that just seemed to glow with energy... Other than that, he appeared mostly humanoid.

Being as friendly as he could, Chris motioned to a chair next to his. "Please, come in."

The alien looked at him, looked at every senior officer... then slowly complied. He moved to the chair and slowly sat down.

"Now, let's start with the basics," Chris started. "Who are you?"

He looked around nervously for a moment, then looked at Chris. In that odd computer-like voice, he said, "I am Rendal of the Venshai."

Chris smiled, pleased that they finally got something out of him. "I'm Captain Chris Harriman."

"Then you are the leader of this vessel?" Rendal asked, hopeful.

Chris frowned and nodded. "Yes, I am."

Rendal immediately looked relieved. "Thank goodness. Please, you have to help my people!" He was hysterical now, his eyes wide with hope. "We need help, we can't go on living like this any more!"

"Hey, hey, easy now, *easy!*" Chris stated in a sympathetic tone of voice. He put his hand on the alien's shoulder, which seemed to calm him down immediately. "Look, friend, we can't help you unless you tell us what you need help with! Start at the beginning, now, would you?"

The alien started nodding his head incessantly. "Right, right... I'm sorry. Please accept my apology."

Chris frowned again, then realized that he must be very used to living under an oppressive species... where if you didn't apologize constantly for the slightest mistake, they would hurt you...

"That's all right... just, tell us what's wrong."

He sighed and took in a big breath... "You see... centuries ago, no one is even sure just how long ago, a species called the Vendoth came to our world. We had just barely attained technology to travel faster than the speed of light when they came to our system. They announced their name and said that they would be gracious enough to teach us their ways of life, which they said was perfect and pure."

Realization already dawned on Chris. He already knew what the rest of the story was going to be like... but he listened any way.

"Back then, we were in awe of space travel, and we thought, 'here is this species willing to teach us how to survive and explore space... how to interact with other aliens.' So we accepted..."

"But we did not like the ways of the Vendoth. They wanted us to always revere and serve them. We refused... and they became angry. They said we insulted their greatness. They claimed they were being nice by teaching us their ways, and then we turn around and insult them. So they conquered us in one *very* short battle.

"From that day on, we have been their slaves, mining our own resources and handing them over to the Vendoth..."

Chris nodded his head. It was almost exactly as he had expected it would be... "I see..."

"We've calculated that if we continue mining, in one year... we will be past the point of no return. Once there... our resources will never be able to recover, and if we do manage to liberate our planet after that time... we will never be able to sustain life on our planet alone. That would mean our only plan of attack would not work..."

Chris frowned curiously. "What is your primary plan of attack?"

Rendal looked at Chris again. "On our planet is one of the Vendoth's planetary shield generators. We figure it would take us an hour to reconfigure it and update it to permanently defend us from the Vendoth... but the problem is all of the Vendoth stationed on our planet as well as the single vessel in orbit. That's why we need help..."

"And that's where we would come in," Chris filled in the rest. "You need us... to help liberate your planet."

Rendal nodded. "Yes... that's correct."

Everyone around the briefing table looked at him, expecting him to come right out and say that they would help...

... But that wasn't going to happen. This entire situation produced a dilemma for Chris...

"Look... we would like to help you... but we have a prime directive that states that we can not interfere with either of your cultures."

Rendal's jaw dropped in surprise... as did everyone else's. "Captain!" Lieutenant Admarquet stated in surprise.

He glared at her a moment. "Ada, you and I both know that fact." He then hesitated... and let his hesitation show on his face. "However... my morals also dictate that we should help them... hence my

dilemma.."

That silenced everyone. They couldn't understand this..Chris had always let himself be driven by his morals. Why the sudden change now? That's something he didn't want to discuss with them...

"So therefore..I'll make my decision in four hours," he said. "We'll reconvene then. Dismissed."

Everyone hesitated, wondering what was with the sudden change in heart..but then stood up and left. Rendal was once again escorted by security to his quarters..leaving Chris alone to contemplate...

The twinkling stars..so beautiful and bright..only they weren't twinkling. Chris had an unhindered view of them, with only a thick piece of transparent material between his ready room and the vacuum of space...

He searched those stars for an answer..but could not find one..for they did not help. He was alone..he no longer had Sarah to consult. Tom was a friend, yes..but not someone he had often confided in. He trusted him..but...

It wasn't the same. Chris had gotten over Sarah's death about a month ago, with a little help from someone... But he still missed her. She was usually the one who would help him realize what needed to be done..but she was not here to give that moral support...

He was alone now..stranded in the Kalium galaxy with a crew that looked up to him for guidance and support..yet how could he support them if he couldn't figure himself out either?

His thoughts were startled as his door chime sounded. He collected his nerves for a moment, then said, "Enter."

He heard the doors part and then close with a hiss, as well as the familiar sound of footsteps approaching his desk. He simply remained sitting there in his chair, staring out into the ocean of stars...

"Captain?" Vendar's voice asked.

He smiled when he heard her voice. "Hello, Vendar." He didn't turn to greet her.

"I came to inform you that it's been nearly four hours..we're all waiting for you in the briefing room."

He frowned and turned to look at her. She hadn't sat down, she simply remained standing in a ready position. "You could have told me that over the comm system."

She shrugged innocently. "Maybe..."

He smiled as he realized why she had come personally. She wanted to help her Captain..but more than that, she wanted to know why he suddenly changed his way of thinking.

"You want to know why I didn't immediately jump into this ordeal," he said..not asking, but stating. Vendar simply nodded and smiled. "Well, then, have a seat."

He was surprised himself that he was going to tell her... As she sat down, he wondered why he trusted her more than he trusted his own first officer..and friend since the *Enterprise* days and even before then...

"For the past two and a half..hell, nearly three years," he began, "I've given many orders..many orders that will get this crew in trouble, should we make it home. If I give the order to help this man's species..it will simply be getting us in deeper. We're already up to our necks as it is..."

She nodded her head in understanding. "I see..as Captain, you feel it is your duty to force the Federation's morals onto the rest of the crew?"

Chris shook his head, half expecting her to have said that. "No..if anything, when I make an order, I'm forcing *my* morals onto the crew. But they agreed to let that happen to them the moment they signed up at Starfleet Academy. It's what comes with the job..following other's orders."

"So then what you're saying is..that you feel responsible for what happens to this crew," she amended.

"That's precisely what comes with *being* a Captain," Chris stated, talking more to himself than her.

"Every order you give could either save them or kill them. I have control of their lives..I've had control of their lives for nearly three years now. In that time..I've condemned them to who knows how many court marshals. Why should I add to those charges? Would it not be selfish to order them to break the prime directive *simply* because *my* morals say that we must?"

Vendar leaned forward and put her hand on his desk, bringing his attention to her. "Look, sir..I *know* I speak for everyone when I say that we are behind whatever order you give. We have been so since we were first stranded here. We may not have always agreed..but in the end, it somehow or another worked out. You're not the only one here with morals, you know."

That's when it hit Chris... She was *right!* Why did he think he was the only one with morals?

"I'm willing to bet that if you put it up for a vote..everyone would agree that helping this man's species is the right thing to do, the thing that we *must* do."

Chris nodded his head for a moment, deep in thought... She was right..he knew his crew enough to realize that they would follow him to the ends of the universe if need be..and they would support him in the process...

He stood up without speaking and headed for the exit. Vendar stood and followed him out onto the bridge, across the command area, and to the doors to the briefing room. He hesitated for a moment..then moved forward a centimeter, forcing the doors opened. He walked in..and found everyone looking at him.

He stood there, Vendar next to him now, and looked at his crew. He was going to say something..then stopped. Instead of trying to justify his decision, he said, "I want battle readiness reports with in the next hour. Rendal, is there any way we can contact your people and tell them to be ready to strike?"

A huge smile came across Rendal' s face. "Do you have cloaking technology?" he asked.

Chris nodded his head.

"Good. If we take a small craft in on the opposite side of the planet from where the Vendoth ship is..and if we provide a little momentary distraction, we should be able to get in past their sensors..hopefully. I can direct you to the location where you can beam down, as well as a time. "

Chris smiled. He was a little uneasy with Rendal saying ' hopefully' ..but it was good enough. "Then we' re set. James, prepare the Captain' s Yacht. I' ll accompany you and Rendal to their planet." He then looked to Tom. "Tom, you' ll be our distraction. While we approach the planet from the opposite side of the ship, you' ll be entering orbit and..well, doing what ever it isyou need to do, short of starting a conflict."

He nodded and replied, "Aye, sir."

"All right, people..let' s get to wok!"

With that, everyone smiled and stood up, moving around Chris and Vendar and out onto the bridge. Everyone looked curiously at Chris as they passed..but they weren' t doing so because of his decision..and knowing that fact helped him feel like he made the right decision.

Finally, he looked at Vendar, who simply smiled at him and left the lounge, leaving him alone once again...

"We' ve dropped out of warp," the ensign at the helm reported.

"Standard orbit," Tom simply replied.

Right one cue, Vendar' s console sounded an alert. "We' re being hailed by the vessel in orbit..."

Tom smiled and stood up, hoping they were getting their full attention. "On screen."

A moment later, an..odd humanoid appeared on screen. It was..well, a lizard, by all accounts. Its skin texture was clearly leathery in the stark lighting on the command center of its ship. It had deep-set eyes with only slits for noses..and this one had two strings of hair leading from the top of it' s mouth. It reminded Tom of an old Japanese mustache.

"*I am VenQa' Po'Telch of the Vendoth,*" the alien said in a gruff, clearly male and dominating voice.

Tom nodded in acknowledgment. "I' m Lieutenant Commander Thomas Halkrat of the Federation Starship *Dragon.*"

"*Why are you approaching our planet?*" Po' Telch asked, clearly agitated.

Tom shrugged innocently as he moved closer to the view screen by a couple of steps. "We are explorers. When our sensors detected an M-class planet with a highly advanced ship in orbit, we became curious and wanted to investigate."

"*We do not take kindly to lesser species,*" Po' Telch stated bluntly, clearly looking at Tom with discontent. "*You have a choice...you can either leave our system or surrender your selves to us for rehabilitation into our society.*"

Tom frowned in what he hoped looked like sincere concern. In part..he really was concerne d. "We mean you no harm *or* disrespect. We simply wish to make contact with new species."

"*You have done so already!*" Po' Telch stated at almost a shout. "*Now move on!*"

"Our sensors detect another species on the planet below," Tom countered, never showing any form of dominance. He had been warned *not* to do that by Rendal... "We would like to contact them and learn about them, as well as the Vendoth, if that is acceptable."

"*It is not acceptable!*" Po' Telch then took a moment to look at Tom..and Tom *swore* he smiled an evil smile! "*You are human...what would happen if we were to send a message to the Kiklar and tell them that a starship of humans was near our space?*"

That' s when Tom' s back became rigid. That *truly*d frighten him. The Kiklar were not to be messed

with... "Look," he said, trying to contain his defiance and fear at the same time. "We simply wish to make any exchange if possible. An exchange of information, technology, what ever... anything that would show that we can coexist peacefully."

"*The Vendoth do not coexist with inferiors!*" Po' Telch stated, angered. "*You now have twenty minutes to leave this planet. If you do not leave, we will not require the Kiklar to destroy you...for my ship alone will be adequate.*"

With that last threat, the channel was closed, giving Tom a clear view of the planet and the...*different* looking ship in orbit. It was roughly the size of an Intrepid class vessel and was mostly rounded. From above, the ship almost looked like an old Native American arrowhead with two powerful protruding sub-light engines.

He moved back to the command chair, hesitated a moment, then sat down. He gave no orders, he simply sat there, staring at the Vendoth ship in orbit.

After a minute, the ensign at the helm asked, "Orders, sir?"

Tom smiled in defiance. "Remain in orbit until three minutes before our time is up," he simply stated. "Once we reach that time, take us back the way we came at warp nine. Let' s not show them we can reach Transwarp velocity... because they might think it an insult."

"Aye, sir," she replied, smiling back at him.

To her left, however, Vendar looked at him with a frown on her face. "Sir...this computer recognizes that ship, and it just now brought up a file on the Vendoth."

Tom' s eyes suddenly went wide. He stood up in surprise and moved to her console. "Are you sure?"

She looked back at her console, shook her head in confusion and wonder. "I' m positive. There' s a file in here under a high security lock out...only the Captain can access the file...and that' s only with his situational access code."

Tom looked back at the Vendoth ship...wondering how in the world there could be a record on a species that was only just now encountered...

The bright shimmering cleared, leaving Chris wondering if the transport coordinates had been accurate. There was nothing but blackness...

But a moment later, a light shot on...in fact, several lamps of a sort shot on. He quickly realized that they had beamed down into some kind of a bunker.

Everyone around them was just as tall and lanky looking as Rendal...and each one of them had a surprised look on their faces. The one closest jumped out of his bunk and ran up to Rendal.

"My friend, you made it!" he whispered gleefully, trying to keep quiet. "We heard you had been killed!"

Rendal smiled and did something with his hands. Chris guessed the...odd gesture was a friendly hello of some sort. "No, they didn' t. And..." he waved to Chris, "This man and his starship has agreed to help free us!"

Everyone was now crowding around the group. Their eyes quickly diverted from Rendal to Chris...which made him nervous. Instead of a shout of glee or something around the lines, they simply did with their hands what they had done towards Rendal.

Chris quickly went into action. "We don' t have a lot of time. Our plan is to send troops down here tomorrow to aid you in taking out all of the Vendoth. I don' t...mean to sound unsympathetic about what has happened to your people, but the fact that there are no longer a lot of you and there aren' t a lot of Vendoth makes our job very easy, especially since there' s only this one complex left to worry about."

"Do not fret over how we feel about what has happened," one Vendoth female stated. "We have long accepted what they have done to us."

"We no longer have to live with it, though," Rendal piped in, trying to raise everyone' s spirits. "With the help of this man' s brave crew, we will soon be free!"

Chris smiled at his enthusiasm...and hoped it would be justified. "Can you be ready to take action at twelve hundred hours tomorrow?" he asked.

There was a lot of whispers in reply, the Venshai were discussing it but not trying to alarm any guards outside of the bunks. Finally, Rendal left the crowd again and moved to Chris. "They say they can be ready."

Chris smiled at looked at everyone else. "I know a lot of you are worried...and to be honest, a lot of you may die tomorrow. But remember one thing..." He smiled as he remembered the quote on the dedication plaque of the *Dragon*. "They may take our lives...but they will *never* take our freedom!"

There was no cheer to that statement, simply a lot of nodding heads and whispers of agreement.

"I hope to see you all tomorrow," Chris said as he stood erect again, ready for transport. He tapped his comm badge and said, "Harriman to Trikal..two to beam up."

Once again, the bright light of the transporter engulfed his vision. However, before he lost sight of the bunks around him...the Venshai once again made their gesture..it wasn't a hello..it was a thank you...

"Computer, access all files regarding the Vendoth," Chris stated in front of the computer console. Everyone waited patiently in the briefing room.

"*Situational access code is required.*" It was only the second time Chris would ever have to use his situational command code, a code that every captain was given and was meant to use only when it was necessary...*absolutely* necessary.

"Authorization Harriman echo gamma 7 4 7 delta bravo 8 Zulu 5 3 7 Zeta 9 2 7 5 5 fox trot."

After the computer processed his code, it did not respond, it simply brought up the data. He transferred the data to every console on the briefing table then turned around and sat down in his chair. Everyone commenced to read the files.

The information Chris learned was astonishing. It seems that after Praxis exploded, after Captain Kirk's final mission, the *USS Excalibur*, an Excelsior class starship, encountered the Vendoth..but the file didn't say how, where, or precisely when. All it contained was information on how to defeat the Vendoth..information that was out of date and nearly useless. It did, however, contain some useful information.

The Vendoth's weapons, when they impacted on the shields of a Federation vessel, altered the properties of the shields..turned the area of impact into matter..energy from matter. It was similar to replicators in a fashion. Furthermore, the Vendoth's shields held a similar principle. When a weapon impacted on the Vendoth's shields, they weakened..but formed a hard shell over the weakened area. This shell, unlike the one the Vendoth's weapons created, was very difficult to penetrate.

Chris smiled as a thought occurred to him. He waited while everyone else finished reading..then got everyone's attention by tapping his fingers on the tabletop for a moment.

"Ada..judging by the information we've been given..could our cutting phasers cut through the hardened shell part of the Vendoth's shields?"

She considered the question for a moment, then nodded her head. "I believe so," she replied. "I don't have enough information to be sure..but I'd say that'd be our best bet."

"We've got schematics for the very class of vessel that's in orbit of the Venshai world," Chris started.

"What we'll do is hit the shields above the shield generator with a full spread of torpedoes. Once their shields are weakened and all they have left is the shell..we'll target it with our cutting phasers and take out their shield generator..and then go from there."

Ada nodded her head. "I agree with that tactic..that definitely is the only way I can see to get around their shields."

"Now we don't want to enter the system at a speed faster than warp nine point eight," Chris continued. "They can't go any faster than that..and we want them to think that we can't outrun them if we do run. So that if we do have to run, we can have them chase us..leaving the planet to be liberated. Any other suggestions or comments?"

No one spoke..they all thought it was a good, solid plan.

Chris smiled and nodded. "Then prepare for battle. Ada, I'll need your best security officer to accompany our Britar insurgency force, but I'll need you at tactical."

Ada shrugged her shoulders. "My best man is a Britar."

Chris stood and nodded his head. "Then dismissed."

Everyone quickly left the briefing room, their time short. They didn't have long before the battle would ensue...

When everyone left, Chris moved to the large windows in the briefing room and stared out into space. It was something he did almost every time before a battle. And every time, the stars did not seem like a vast, peaceful ocean of stars..instead, they seemed ominous..deadly...

Many people might die in this battle...many people..but it was worth it.

He turned around and headed out to the bridge. They only had a few hours left...

"We've dropped out of warp," James confirmed. "Approaching the Vendoth vessel fast."

"We're being hailed," Vendar added.

"On screen," Chris ordered.

With that, the face Chris had seen on the communications recording appeared. *"I am VenQa' Po' Telch of the Vendoth,"* he stated. *"You have the gall to approach our planet again?"*

Chris was unfazed. "I'm Captain Chris Harriman of the Federation Starship *Dragon*," he stated. "You are holding people captive on the planet below...we have come to rescue them."

Po' Telch let an evil laugh rock through the bridge of the *Dragon*. *"You dare defy the Vendoth? How shameful of you. You will surrender now...or feel your punishment before your death."*

Chris shrugged innocently. "I've never been known to surrender. It's not in my nature. So...prepare to lose your first conflict against the Federation."

Once again another laugh echoed from Po' Telch. *"We have encountered your Federation before."* This confused Chris. How could they know about the Federation? As far as he knew, the three Vendoth vessels that had encountered the *Excalibur* were never returned to the Kalium galaxy...

Po' Telch smirked at Chris's look of confusion. *"Your people keep so much information from you, it is no wonder you are inferior and hated by the Kiklar. A device of yours...the Guardian of Forever, allowed VenQa' Ja' Omoq to travel to our planet and he gave us information regarding your technology. We shall defeat you without a problem."*

Chris wondered if that was during the one time the *Excalibur* encountered the Vendoth...or possibly some other time, an unrecorded encounter, perhaps. If it was, though, it had to be from the past...or they were dead. If the Vendoth had information from the future...the *Dragon* was surely out of its league...

"Listen, Po' Telch," he stated angrily. "You can bully others around...but you are talking to Captain Harriman of the United Federation of Planets. We will not surrender, and we *will* walk away from this battle." It wasn't arrogance...it was what he hoped would be the outcome.

"You will address me as VenQa' !"

"Not today, I won't," Chris stated defiantly. He signaled for the channel to be closed. By now, they had provided enough of a distraction that the cloaked Captain's yacht and runabouts were entering orbit. Hopefully, the Vendoth did not detect them.

He adjusted his posture in the command chair. "Ada, target their shield generator, full torpedo spread. Fire on my command."

"Torpedoes locked and loaded," she replied.

He waited patiently, knowing that a vessel as small as the Vendoth could easily outmaneuver torpedoes fired from this distance.

Then again, he thought if they are as arrogant as they seem...they might not bother to move...

A ball of energy resembling a Romulan plasma device suddenly shot away from the Vendoth ship. A moment later, it impacted on the *Dragon*, causing the ship to lurch hard.

"Direct hit!" Ada stated. "Forward shields are down to eighty-two percent. Shield grid four-D is beginning to solidify."

"Fire!" Chris ordered when the *Dragon* finally settled down.

With that order, eight Quantum torpedoes, followed closely by sixteen Photon torpedoes streaked away and impacted in one spot on the Vendoth vessel's shields. As expected, energy turned into matter as the Vendoth's shields weakened in that area. It was a hard shell now...

"James, bring us around to aim us directly at the shield generator," Chris ordered. "Ada, prepare to fire the cutting phasers. Prepare the phaser cannon as well in case we need to destroy the rest of their shields in that area."

"Coming about to course three one two mark three two," James stated. "Ten seconds until our next course correction."

Broscha of the Britar insurgency force materialized in some sort of corridor, the rest of his team with him. He immediately saw two Vendoth turn towards them in surprise.

They are tiny! He thought in astonishment. He had expected them to be huge lizard people...but instead, they were shorter than even the humans!

He fired a shot at one, while another Britar fired at the other. Both fell to the ground, stunned...possibly dead. They didn't know for sure what to set their weapons on, all they knew was that their weapons needed to be set high to penetrate the Vendoth's hide.

"Come on," he stated in his gruff voice, motioning for his other three companions to follow him.

Weapons fire started sounding from all around them, all throughout the complex as other Britar forces beamed down to strategic locations near Vendoth life forms.

Suddenly, a blast screamed from around the corner and impacted one of Brosha's companions in the head, throwing him against the wall where he slid down to the ground, blood trickling from an open wound the size of a coconut.

Another shot at Brosha, but he was smart enough to move out of the way. The Britar next to him, however, was not and took it in the neck.

Brosha quickly shot down the corridor, not even bothering to aim. His weapons fire immediately impacted on the Vendoth's weapon, throwing it out of its hands where it later exploded.

The Vendoth used the explosion as cover, and quickly jumped out at Brosha and caught him in the abdomen.

Pain shot through Brosha's body as he slammed against the wall and fell to the floor. The other Britar, T' Nal, tried to shoot the Vendoth, but missed and was also hit hard by the Vendoth.

The Vendoth extended some sort of claw from his hand? It wasn't natural, it was some sort of hand-to-hand combat weapon that was strapped to his wrist. The claw was neatly placed inside T' Nal's neck, killing her instantly...

The Vendoth then stood up and turned towards Brosha, ready to make the next killing blow...

"Shields at sixty percent!" Ada stated as another energy weapon hit the *Dragon*. "Grid twelve-G is beginning to solidify!"

"We're in position!" James stated. *About time...*

Chris stood up in excitement and moved towards the view screen. "Fire!" he ordered louder than he needed to.

A moment later, two very thin and intense crimson beams shot forward and hit the solidified Vendoth shields. When they hit, they caused two *very* bright points of light that nearly blinded Chris.

"It's working!" Ada stated. "We're *cutting* through! We'll reach the regenerating shields in ten seconds!"

The Vendoth ship fired again, hitting the *Dragon* and nearly throwing Chris to the deck.

"Shields at forty five percent," Ada added to her report. "The Vendoth are beginning to turn!"

Terror struck Chris's face. He had completely forgotten to take the fact that they could maneuver into consideration...

"Fire the phaser cannon, stay with them, James!" he ordered. The *Dragon* was definitely quick in maneuvering...but they wouldn't be able to keep up with the Vendoth for very long...

The *Dragon* began to maneuver around the Vendoth, trying to keep up with the solidified shields. A moment later, a very large crimson beam shot down the middle to join the Borg cutting phasers the *Dragon* was using...

"Quantum torpedoes, high yield!" Chris added to his order. "Fire!"

Once again, eight Quantum torpedoes flew away from the *Dragon*. The first four impacted on the shell...but the last four impacted against the hull of the Vendoth ship, causing an explosion to rip across the Vendoth vessel's hull.

The phaser fire finally stopped as the cutting phasers ran out of charge...but Chris did not celebrate, for the *Dragon* began to shudder.

"We've rotated close to the planet!" James stated in alarm. "Hold on, I'll get us out of here."

When another Vendoth weapon hit the *Dragon's* shields, Chris decided that was a bad idea. "No, don't!" he stated. He moved back to his console and brought up sensor readings.

"Bring us about to one two mark five eight," he ordered. "Full impulse!"

"But that'll take us directly into the planet's atmosphere!" James stated in alarm, already moving to comply.

"I know!" Chris stated. "That's why we need full impulse so that we can break away from the planet's gravitational pull."

"Engaging full impulse power," James stated, the planet beginning to fill the view screen. "Entering upper atmosphere."

The ship started to shudder and shake even more as atmospheric resistance seemed to set the *Dragon's* shields on fire.

"Shields are at twenty-percent," Ada reported. "There's some buckling along the hull."

"Target the Vendoth vessel and fire full spreads of torpedoes," Chris ordered.

"Targeting sensors have failed," Ada replied to Chris' s dismay. "I' m trying for a manual lock..but since we' re in the atmosphere, no promises."

"We' ve entered the troposphere," James stated. "If we remain on course, we' ll ~~areixt~~ be at the other side of the planet."

"We can' t have that, not with cloaked vessels in orbit there," Chris stated. "Pull up and bring us back out of the atmosphere, James."

"Engaging lateral thrusters," he replied, keying in the command.

However, before the *Dragon* could begin to pull up, it lurched down and hard, throwing Chris against his arm rest and bruising his stomach.

"Shields are down!" Ada shouted in alarm. "Hull breach on decks eight through ten!"

"James, get us out of the atmosphere!"

"I can' t pull us above fifty five degrees or we' ll stall," James replied. "You do realize that this is an almost kilometer long vessel with over fifty decks!"

He was right. The *Dragon* was a massive vessel..trying to pull it out o f a planet' s atmosphere, even at this speed, was going to be difficult unless they watched what they were doing...

"Lock phasers and return fire!"

He heard Ada tapping at her console in response, trying to establish a manual lock..but the Vendoth vessel was small and the *Dragon* was rocking back and forth in the atmospheric turbulence...

Perhaps going into the atmosphere wasn' t such a good idea after all! Chris thought wryly...

Finally, a tone sounded on Ada' s console. "Direct hit to their foward weapon' s array," she stated. "But that leaves their aft weapons array and a few of their forward weapon' s arrays..we' re ~~thout~~ out yet."

Chris realized that as another weapon hit the *Dragon* hard, throwing him out of his chair and to the deck. He' clously observed the carpeting many a time in the past two and a half years...

He pushed himself up and felt that he had bruised his ribs..but he hadn' t broken them this time.

"Hull breach on decks twenty eight through thirty four!" Vendar reported.

"We' re entering lower orbit now!" James finally stated to Chris' s relief. The shuddering of the *Dragon* immediately became less as it attained a higher and higher orbit...

He stood up and looked back at Ada. "Think you can target their power core now?"

She smiled and keyed in the command. A moment later, the launch siren wailed.

Chris turned around and watched as Quantum and Photon torpedoes streaked away from the *Dragon*. The damaged Vendoth vessel couldn' t maneuver out of all of them and took heavy damage.

A moment later, the Intrepid-class sized vessel exploded in a huge cascade of released energy...

Chris smiled triumphantly, glad it was finally over. He sat down in the command chair and brought up a sensor scan of the planet below...

Brosha pushed himself up and stared the approaching Vendoth in the eye. "Why do you resist your masters?" the Vendoth asked. "It is very shameful to do so..."

"It would be an even bigger shame *not* to resist," Brosha replied bitterly. "If I submit, it is a sign of weakness."

"It is not dishonorable to show weakness before your superiors," the Vendoth replied matter-of-factly.

"My only superior is my superior officer," Brosha bit back. "And I do not show weakness in front of her..for that would make me weak, and she would no longer want me to be on her security force."

Instead of a reply, the Vendoth lunged at Brosha, quicker than he had expected. He tried to move out of the way, but the blade caught his right shoulder, splashing blood along the blade.

Brosha took the movement to his advantage, however. While the Vendoth was just landing and turning around, Brosha moved to his back and used his entire force to slam the Vendoth against the wall.

The Vendoth was stunned for a moment..but only a moment. He pushed hard against Brosha, sending Brosha to the ground yet again.

He shot up quickly, not giving the Vendoth a chance to do more damage, and ducked under the swinging arm and blade. He grabbed the Vendoth's arm and jabbed his fist into the armpit of the Vendoth.

The Vendoth yelled in pain and surprise, and then did so even more as Brosha picked him up and threw him back over his head. He spun around again and moved against the wall, a plan in mind. *I hope that blade is as sharp as it feels...*

The Vendoth jumped up in fury and spun around to face Brosha again. He sneered, which made him look very deadly, and lunged yet again at Brosha.

Broscha expected the speed this time, however, and quickly ducked and move to his left, letting the Vendoth' s blade implant itself in the metal wall. *Just as sharp as I had hoped...*

He brought his arms up and around to slam down hard on the Vendoth' s immobilized arm. The sound of cracking bone and screeching metal filled Broscha' s hearing as the Vendth' s arm broke free of the blade' s constraints.

Broscha took the Vendoth' s stunned look to his advantage and rushed into him, pushing him against the wall on the other side of the corridor. The sound of snapping ribs filled his ears.

He did not revel in his successes.. instead, he reached for the Vendoth' s throat. It took every ounce of strength Broscha had to punch the Vendoth' s throat and at least rupture his throat.

He let the Vendoth fall to the ground, where it sat choking on its own fluids as they entered his wounds...

"You were a worthy opponent," Broscha huffed out, out of breath and out of strength. "But you are not the ultimate species..today, you are the lesser species."

Through the sounds of his choking, the Vendoth managed to choke out, "Our defeat..will be..avenged..."

With that, he used his last breath. He fell over to his side, limp..all of his life gone from him...

Broscha regarded him with respect and honor. He was a worthy opponent..worth fighting against.

He looked around and noticed that a few other Britar had gathered around them during the fight, something he hadn' t expected. He nodded to them, he didn' t smile..for a very skilled warrior had died today..as did three others, his comrades.

He looked back at the Vendoth, then walked away, wanting a situation report...

Chris smiled as Rendal appeared on the view screen. His image was slightly distorted because of the damage done to the *Dragon*, but he could clearly see the pleased look on Rendal' s face.

"*We' ll have the shield generator up and running in half an hour*, Rendal stated triumphantly. "*Thank you for your assistance, Captain Harriman.*"

Chris smiled and nodded back to him. "It was our pleasure."

He was half lying. Eight people had died on the surface and twelve had died on the *Dragon* during the battle. It had been a nasty business... Once again, Chris had given an order that sent people to their deaths...

But that was part of being a commanding officer, part of being a *bridge* officer, for that matter.

"*For the first time in...a long time...my people can experience freedom again. We' re forever in your debt, Captain Harriman. We' ll be able to survive from here on out.*"

"I hope you succeed," Chris added. "I wish we could stay here longer, but our long range sensors are heavily damaged and we don' t want to be ambushed by any other Vendoth ships. ~~W~~ wouldn' t last a minute in another fire fight."

Rendal nodded in understanding. "*Then good luck to you, Captain. May your journey take you home.*"

With that, the communications channel was cut. Chris let himself smile one last time, then sat down in the command chair again.

"So..another day another species liberated?" Tom asked in a half -amused tone of voice.

Chris let out a small laugh, barely audible. "Indeed..." Chris shook his head, then looked up at the view screen. "James..bring us on our original course for the center of the galaxy, warp eight."

"Changing course to two one mark one," James replied. "Warp eight."

"Engage."

Captain's Log, supplemental:

Once again, we have made an impact on another part of the Kalium galaxy. It seems we are leaving a trail of allies and enemies behind us. More allies than enemies, though...thankfully.

Long range sensors are still damaged, but their resolution is increasing by the minute. Hopefully we'll be able to get back into Transwarp velocity with in the next hour...

He finished his log entry and stood up to head for his ready room. He was about to give the bridge over to Tom..when a sensor alarm sounded on Vendar' s console.

"Sir..long range sensor resolution has increased enough to show us that there' s a planet ahead of

us...with a rather large armada in orbit."

Fear struck Chris as one single thought passed through his mind. *Vendoth armada...*

"Drop us out of warp, yellow alert," he ordered, sitting back in his chair. "Show the armada on screen."

A moment after the streaking stars turned into infinite pinpricks, the view screen changed slightly...to reveal an armada of Vendoth ships.

"Holy..."

"We're dead," Tom stated coldly as everyone regarded the view screen with fear. They were already moving towards the *Dragon*, their weapons charging...

However, before Chris could give the order to warp out, Vendar said in an alarmed voice, "I'm reading a massive tachyon surge near the center of that armada."

With that, a huge bright blue explosion of energy ripped across space. The shock wave hit the *Dragon* almost immediately, telling him that it wasn't normal energy and was traveling faster than the speed of light. It did little damage, however.

"Some sort of temporal anomaly has formed!" she added as Chris regarded the bright blue vortex that formed. "Wait...not temporal...temporal *and* spatial!"

This interested Chris. If it was spatial...where did it lead? His curiosity got the better of him. "Scan the anomaly, see if you can determine where it leads."

"I'm trying..." Vendar complied hesitantly... "The Vendoth ships are all being pulled in, half the armada's already in it."

The *Dragon* began to shudder as the gravitational forces reached out further and further into space...

"Back us off, James, we don't want to be pulled in too," he said cautiously...

"The rest of the Vendoth fleet is through the vortex," Vendar added. "I'm starting to get clear readings from the other side. The vortex is in a state of temporal flux, but the locations seem consistent in an area of a hundred thousand light years...centralized in an area of about ten to fifteen thousand light years..."

She then looked at Chris with an astonished look on her face. "It's...home..."

Chris's eyes went wide. He stood up in surprise and walked forward to stand between the helm and the Ops station. He looked over to Vendar and asked, "Can we go through it?"

She looked at her console, began to enter in a request...but then more surprise, and fear gripped her. "Sir, the vortex is collapsing!"

Chris looked at the view screen, dismay quickly filling him as the vortex began to shrink, rotating as it went. A moment later...it was gone...

That could have been their only chance to get home...and they missed it...

Chris' head sank, as everyone else on the bridge began to sulk. He moved back to the command chair and eased himself back into it.

He wanted to say something, to apologize... He felt responsible...

But he couldn't. He was too heart broken. In the matter of two minutes, he had missed their only opportunity to get home...

"Resume course," he ordered, standing up again and heading for his ready room. "Tom...you have the bridge..."

He entered his ready room, not waiting for a reply. He then moved around his desk and sat down in his chair...

Then, he buried his head in his arms...

Then a more alarming thought occurred to him. Not only had he missed an opportunity...but the Vendoth armada had just found a way to strike...at the Federation. And the Vendoth...were powerful indeed...

He spun his chair around and gawked at the streaking stars. The Federation was in danger...and it would take everything they had...to win the upcoming battle.

I'm sorry, everyone he thought, realizing that he had just pissed off the Vendoth. They were mad at the Federation now...because the *Dragon* had liberated a planet. Now the Vendoth could exact more revenge than they probably ever thought possible. They would try to enslave the Milky Way galaxy...

Then Chris thought of something. Something that sparked hope in him. *If just one vessel could stand up to the Vendoth...then maybe there's a chance. Hell, the Excalibur crew, a crew that was only in existence a hundred years ago...had been able to outsmart three Vendoth vessels...*

There was hope. The Federation stood a chance because it had a knack for survival. They would win...or they would die trying...

He smiled as he stared at the rainbow colored streaks as those thoughts passed through his mind. One last thought passed through his mind, something that had sustained him. . and is crew, for that matter, since the *Dragon* first launched. The quote on the dedication plaque for the *Dragon*, something that many people believed in and fought for. Freedom...

"They may take our lives..but they will never take..our freedom!"

THE DRAGON'S CREW



Chris Harriman
Rank: Captain
Position: Commanding Officer
Place of Birth: Wisconsin, Earth
Species: Human
Date of Birth: December 10th, 2347

Chris Harriman was born in Southern Wisconsin, where he was raised for the majority of his life. He is one of the only people in his family to have joined Starfleet, the others being his father, grandfather, and great grandfather (John Harriman of the *Enterprise-B*.) He graduated from high school in the top ten percent of his class, but instead of going to the University of Wisconsin in Madison as his mother wanted, he decided to follow in the footsteps of his father and grandfather and joined Starfleet Academy right after graduation in 2365. Despite showing a real aptitude for Quantum Physics, he decided to instead concentrate his studies on navigation and piloting. He graduated a year ahead of his class in 2368 at the rank of Lieutenant, Junior Grade. He was originally posted to Starbase Earhart, but his skills as a pilot caused him to be sent all around Federation space, shuttling high-ranking officials, critical condition patients, and many other officers. In 2371, right after the disappearance of the starship *Voyager*, Chris was assigned to his first starship, the *USS Intrepid*, and was promoted to Lieutenant. He served aboard that starship until after the Baku incident, when he was assigned to the *USS Enterprise*. He only served aboard that ship for four months but at the end of his service was promoted to Lieutenant Commander. He was then assigned to the first *USS Dragon*, NCC-27749. After a brief skirmish with Jem' Hadar battle ships, the first officer was killed and Chris replaced him, earning him a promotion to Commander. Near the end of 2377, after the destruction of the first *USS Dragon*, Chris was given a promotion to Captain and given command of a prototype class of starship. His promotion from Lieutenant to Captain in just six years is a testament to his abilities as a pilot and, more importantly, a leader.



Sarah Caft
Rank: Commander
Position: First Officer
Place of Birth: Betazed
Species: Human/Betazoid
Date of Birth: Earth Calendar April 21st, 2347

Although Sarah Caft was born on Betazed, neither of her parents were full-blooded Betazoids. Despite her only being partially Betazoid, she does have full telepathic capabilities and can read more than just emotions. However, since her early entrance into Starfleet Academy in 2365, she has all but renounced the use of her abilities. She graduated at the top of her class in 2369 as a full Lieutenant; area of study was Quantum Physics and Spatial Theory. She was immediately assigned to the Excelsior class *USS Prometheus* as science officer. She remained on the *Prometheus* for several years and was promoted to Lieutenant Commander in 2373. After the *Prometheus* was decommissioned that same year, she was assigned to a science station on the edge of Federation space, near Pacifica, until her assignment as Chief Science Officer to the *USS Enterprise* at the same time Chris Harriman was assigned to it. After she left the *Enterprise*, she was promoted to Commander and given the position of First Officer aboard the new *USS Prometheus* after it's recaptured from the Romulans. In 2377, Sarah was assigned to the *USS Dragon* NCC-27749-A as first officer.



Kalia Tarkent
Rank: Commander
Position: Chief Engineer
Place of Birth: Wisconsin, Earth
Species: Human
Date of Birth: May 13th, 2347

Although Kalia Tarkent was born in Northern Wisconsin, her family later moved to Southern Wisconsin, where she attended High School along with Chris Harriman. Though the two never became friends, they had met several times. Kalia also entered the Academy early in the summer of 2365 and studied in the Engineering program, with an emphasis on advanced warp theory and warp mechanics. It was in the Academy that Kalia and Chris Harriman became close friends. Kalia also graduated a year early in 2368 and went on to serve as an engineer aboard several starships, including the *Bozeman*, *Ambassador*, and the *Enterprise-D*. In 2371, while serving aboard the *USS Bozeman*, an accident in engineering caused Kalia to receive a lethal dose of Theta radiation. She was shuttled to a near-by medical starbase by Chris Harriman where she underwent several months of rehabilitation. In 2374, Kalia received a promotion from Lieutenant-Commander to Commander and was assigned as Chief Engineer of the *USS Galaxy*, and a year later she was given the same position aboard the *USS Swansea*. In 2377, Kalia was offered a position in Starfleet's Research and Development section, but declined so that she could serve aboard the *USS Dragon* as Chief Engineer.



Kara Triel
Rank: Commander
Position: Chief Medical Officer
Place of Birth: Betazed
Species: Human/Betazoid
Date of Birth: Earth Calendar October 5th, 2346

Although half Betazoid, Kara Triel has no telepathic abilities what so ever. Born into a family of Ambassadors, she was one of the only persons in her family to ever join Starfleet Academy. As a child, she displayed a great interest in medicines and early on showed a great aptitude for cross-cultural physiology and medicine. In 2364, she joined the Medical program at Starfleet Academy. She graduated in 2370 as a full lieutenant and was assigned as a doctor aboard the *USS Enterprise-D*. After the destruction of the *Enterprise-D*, she went on to serve aboard Starbase 13. In 2373, she was promoted to lieutenant-commander and given the position of Department Head on Starbase 13. In 2377, she was promoted to Commander and was assigned as Chief Medical Officer aboard the *USS Dragon* NCC-27749-A.



Thomas Halkrat
Rank: Lieutenant-Commander
Position: Chief Science Officer
Place of Birth: Starbase Earhart
Species: Human
Date of Birth: June 1st, 2350

Thomas Halkrat was born in space, on board Starbase Earhart. Both of his parents were Starfleet officers working in the field of science, which allowed them to encourage his skills in science. He has discovered that science skills *do* seem to be genetic in his family as it is the only field he feels he was ever good in. In the early summer semester of 2368, he made his way to Earth where he entered Starfleet Academy, and where he briefly met Sarah Caft and Chris Harriman. He quickly excelled through basic sciences his first year and went on to advance several projects along with some of the Daystrom Institute's finest. He graduated in 2372, and is one of the only students in history to graduate into the rank of lieutenant-commander. He was assigned to the *USS Idaho* for a while, and then was assigned to the *Enterprise-E* at the same time Chris and Sarah were, where

he formed a close friendship with the two. After his service aboard the *Enterprise*, he was promoted to Commander and given the position of First Officer aboard the *USS Odyssey*. In January of 2377, the *Odyssey* fell under Cardassian attack and the Captain was killed. Starfleet lost contact with the *Odyssey* after that, but two days later, long range sensors detected the *Odyssey* firing on a Federation starship. Before the *USS Enterprise* could respond, the other starship was destroyed. Once the *Enterprise* arrived on the scene, Tom relinquished command of the *Odyssey* and claimed that the Dominion had been in control of the other starship. A full inquiry was opened, but all sensor records from the incident had been deleted and no bodies had been found in the wreckage. The crew of the other ship unaccounted for and no evidence of murder, Tom was only convicted of the needless destruction of a Federation starship and demoted to the rank of lieutenant-commander. He has now been assigned as chief science officer on board the *USS Dragon*.



Vendar Perkins
Rank: Lieutenant
Position: Junior Operations Officer
Place of Birth: Paris, Earth
Species: Human
Date of Birth: November 20th, 2355

Vendar Perkins was born in the capitol of the Federation, Paris, on Earth. Although the majority of her family lineage is French, her Father was from North America, hence the last name of Perkins. Both of her parents were in Starfleet, her father in the special operations section of Starfleet Tactical, and her mother in Starfleet Command. Throughout her entire life, she showed great patience, and later in her teens, she exhibited even more patience and great self control, surprising and impressing her instructors. Her parents both thought she would become an Ambassador, but her patience took her on a different course, and when she entered Starfleet Academy in 2373, she majored in the operations field. In 2377, she graduated with the Starfleet Award and was allowed to choose any position she wished. After conversing with Captain Harriman, she decided to sign up with the crew of the *USS Dragon*.



Ada Marquet
Rank: Lieutenant
Position: Chief of Security
Place of Birth: *USS Zhukov*, deep space
Species: Human
Date of Birth: February 1st, 2345

Ada Marquet displayed a great interest in martial arts during her childhood. By the time she was fourteen, she had mastered her first art of martial arts, though by her own admission, there had not been much to master in that skill, and went on to study more complex martial arts, such as Tae Kwan Do. In 2363, she entered Starfleet Academy in the security field, and graduated in 2367 as a lieutenant. Over the years, she served as a security officer aboard several starships, including her birth place, the *USS Zhukov*, as well as the *USS Intrepid*, *USS Zimmerman*, and the *USS Kyushu*. In 2373, she was inducted into Starfleet Intelligence and the Peace Corps at the rank of Commander, where she took part in several classified events. In 2375, she took part in a highly sensitive incursion where she breached mission parameters to a serious degree. All other information on this event is classified, and Ada was demoted to the rank of lieutenant. She continued to serve in Starfleet Intelligence until 2377 when she was recruited by Captain Harriman to serve aboard the *USS Dragon*.



Terry Latrael
Rank: Lieutenant
Position: Ship' s Counselor
Place of Birth: Betazed
Species: Betazoid
Date of Birth: Earth Calendar April 26th, 2341

A full Betazoid, Terry Latrael, given a human name for reasons that his parents never revealed, displayed a level of empathy and emotional understanding beyond even most Betazoids. In 2360, he applied for Starfleet Academy, but did not pass the entrance exam. He attempted the exam again in 2361 and succeeded, though barely, and majored in psychology. He graduated a year early from the Academy, in 2366 (medical and psychology fields generally call for a 6-year degree rather than a 4-year) as a lieutenant, junior grade and was assigned to the *USS Vladimir*. In 2371 he was promoted to full lieutenant and became the *Vladimir*' primary counselor. He has served with absolute distinction aboard the *Vladimir* and has received several commendations. He is renowned for being able to help resolve conflicts between crew members in one counseling session through a use of traditional therapy as well as the use of his telepathic abilities to help crewmembers understand one another. In 2377, he was requested by Chris Harriman to serve aboard the *USS Dragon*.

James Trikal
Rank: Lieutenant
Position: Primary Helmsman
Place of Birth: Lake Armstrong, Luna
Species: Human
Date of Birth: May 19th, 2350

James Trikal was born on the Earth' s only natural Satellite in the colony of Lake Armstrong. His Father, who was an operation' s officer at a Starfleet station on the moon, often found a way to get his son's pilot in simulator missions, which he quickly discovered James loved and had a natural aptitude in. When James was only 14, he began to pilot Starfleet training shuttles, and at 16 he began to shuttle people around in-system on the weekends. In 2368, he entered the academy and displayed an aptness in several fields, but he focused only on piloting and navigation. He graduated in 2372 as a lieutenant, junior grade, but in less than a year he made lieutenant and was assigned to the *USS Archer* as a helmsman. He later served aboard the *USS Forester*, and in 2375 was assigned to the *USS Intrepid*. There, James Trikal was a key figure in the T' Laulland incident just before the end of the Dominion War, the only dark spot in his record keeping him from promotion to lieutenant-commander. In 2377, he was offered a position by Captain Chris Harriman to become helmsman aboard the *USS Dragon*...

R' Sharn
Rank: Lieutenant-Commander
Position: Junior Operations Officer
Place of Birth: Andor
Species: Andorian
Date of Birth: Earth Calendar January 14th, 2350

R' Sharn was born to a fairly high-placed family on the Andorian home world. For the first ten years of her life, she endured training to become an Ambassador, like her father, but despite her parent' s attempts, she simply could not maintain concentration in that area. So they allowed her to explore a general education path, which eventually led her to Starfleet Academy in the fall of 2368. R' Sharn maintained a general education for her first two years, but then, as a challenge and dare from a friend, she decided to try her patience with operations, which she later discovered was a strong point for her. In 2372, she graduated from the academy as a lieutenant, junior grade. Her first assignment was to the *USS Dragon*, NCC-27749, in which she stayed on for four years. She was promoted to Lieutenant and assigned to the *USS Frontier*, NCC-50148. However, the same week of her assignment aboard that ship, it disappeared in a battle with the Dominion...and has not been seen since...

THE *U.S.S. DRAGON*

