

Subject: A Fallen Comrad
Author: Lt. Jake Arrington
Stardate: 80719.1900
Time: After The Betazed Mission
Scene: Starion Bay

Jake walked down the ramp of the Starion still wearing his Black Ops gear. He was carrying his helmet in one hand, and a gun in the other. Several crew members were walking around the Starion Bay assessing the damage and making repairs to the Starion. As he approached the huge bay doors, they slowly slid open making a whirring sound. He exited and looked to his left as he made a sharp right for the turbo lift, and stepped onto it.

Jake: Deck 8!

The doors closed and the turbo lift began to hum as it moved upward to his destination, and stopped at deck 8. The doors swished open, and he walked down the corridors to his quarters and opened the door and went inside.

Jake: Computer, lights.

The lights turned on to full intensity, and he threw his helmet and gun onto the bed and removed the black ops armour and gathered it all up and hung it neatly in the closet. He then went to the replicator and ordered a Jamaican Blend coffee, double strong, double sweet and sat down at the table in front of the computer and activated it. He had several recorded incoming Sub Space messages.

Jake: Computer, play back messages. Audio only.

The computer beeped a few times, and he sat back in his chair with his coffee and put his feet up on the table and waited for the first message to play. The first message he received was from his friend's wife. Mrs. Masterson. Her voice seemed very worried.

Message #1: Jake. Umm.. It's me, sorry to bother you. I wondered if you have seen or heard from my husband. I'm really worried about him. He hasn't called me in several days. I'm sure it's nothing, but his family misses him dearly. Could you let me know the minute you hear anything? Thanks. Bye.

The expression on Jake's face was also kinda worried. Normally when he got back from a mission, his friend was always waiting by the door of his quarters to hear the stories of battle. Jay was always the curious type.

Jake: Computer, halt playback. Locate Ensign Jay Masterson.

<There is noone onboard by that name.>

Jake: WHAT? Computer, locate Ensign Jay Masterson.

<There is noone onboard by that name.>

Jake: That's odd. Computer, display crew manifest of USS Independence.

The monitor activated and brought up a long list of crew members names on the USS Independence in alphabetical order by rank. And through all the Ensigns, he didn't see Jay Masterson's name on the list. But he knew that his friend was a crewmember. He finished his coffee and set the cup down on the table and stood up and straightened his uniform and exited his quarters and headed for the turbo lift. On his way there, he heard Dr. Gray over his comm badge.

[Lt. Arrington, please report to sickbay.]

[I'm on my way.]

Jake: (After getting into the turbo lift) Sickbay.

The doors closed and the turbo lift moved, and stopped at its access port just down the hall from Sickbay. The doors opened, and he stepped out, entering Sickbay, with a very worried look on his face. Dr. Gray looked at him, tears filled her eyes. She was standing next to a body covered with a blanket, a stasis field surrounding it. Jake ran to the biobed where she stood and put his arms around her.

Dr. Gray: Oh Jake... I'm so sorry.

Jake: What is it?

Dr. Gray deactivated the stasis field and stepped back. Jake grabbed the edge of the blanket and ripped it back and almost lost his strength in his legs as the expression on his face suddenly turned frightened, tears filling his eyes quickly as he looked at his best friend, laying with his arms across his chest, eyes closed. A wound in his stomach area.

"NO!", Jake shouted as he threw his arms over his dead friend's body and began crying uncontrollably.

Dr. Gray put her arms on his shoulders and pulled him away from the body and pulled the blanket back over it and reactivated the stasis field, then she turned Jake to face her and held him.

Jake: (Bawling into Dr. Gray's shoulder) Why him? Why him? He was my best friend. We have been through a great deal together.

Dr. Gray: I don't know baby. I just don't know. I read the report from the EMH in the computer. She said something about the events leading to a holodeck accident, but the wound corresponds with fowl play.

Jake: (Pulling away from her, tears running down his cheeks, but his face suddenly turning to an expression of anger) Are you saying someone murdered him? Dr. Gray: It looks that way. But the sensor readings from the holodeck show that the only life sign there during the incident was Ensign Masterson.

Jake: Does the Captain know about this?

Dr. Gray: The report shows that the EMH asked for the Captain to come to Sickbay to see what happened, but through all the battling, he never made it.

Jake: Where is the Captain now?

Dr. Gray: He's in Holo-suite 2 with Commander K'raye.

Jake: (Heading for the door) I'm going down there.

Dr. Gray: (Grabbing his arm) I.. Suggest we wait for a more convenient time for the Captain to make his way here. He left strict orders not to be disturbed.

Jake: (Turning to face her) I can't believe what I'm hearing. You're telling me the Captain is too busy to hear about a murder?

Dr. Gray: No, I'm telling you that it's best to wait for him to get here. He knows he has been asked to come here, it's just a matter of time. He's a busy man.

Jake: Fine, I'll be in my quarters. Lemme know when he gets here.

Dr. Gray: Wait! Aren't you forgetting something?

Jake: (Turning to face her) What?

Dr. Gray: Me.

Jake went to her and put his arms around her and gave her a soft huge.

Jake: I'm sorry hun. I guess I'm being selfish.

Dr. Gray: No, don't be sorry. It's quite expected that you would feel this way after losing such a good friend. I liked him too. He was always so full of energy. I just thought you'd want me there to help you through your pain.

Jake: (Pulling away from her and looking her in the face) I do. You know I do. But right now, I have to send a message to his family and inform them. His wife is gonna freak. I've always hated doing this.

Dr. Gray:I know. Look, I have a few things to finish up in here. I'm going to move his body to a stasis drawer. I'll see you in an hour when we arrive at DS23. Captain is granting us a short break. After that mess I don't blame him.

Jake:(Kissing her gently on the lips) Okay. See ya in an hour. Love you.

Dr. Gray:Love you too.

Jake turned and walked toward the door. Dr. Gray was holding his hand as he walked away, and as her arm raised, extending all the way, almost being pulled by Jake, she let go of his hands and sadly watched him exit Sickbay.

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