I Naviganti 1

«K’lalatar Prkori K’lalatar Prnak’lirli
(Infinity Diversities in Infinite Combinations)»

by Monica MicioGatta
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Dedicated to my Mother

Author’s Notes: «Star Trek: Enterprise» and its characters are not mine. I used them only to enjoy myself and I’ll bring them back at home before midnight. No payment was received for this work. T’Mir in this story is my own creation.

I’m writing my stories in Italian because this is my native language and I enjoy doing it (and Seti - my best friend and my first betareader - doesn’t want to read them in English). I’m trying to translate them into English, because my friend Mihaela told me there’s a lot of people who would like to read it, and Asso and Seti agree. So if you like them, please, let me know. There’s no reason to continue in translation if no one is interested in them.

This story is set between «Harbinger» and «E2» in the universe of «Enterprise.»

Story written by a new trekker. :-D

Someone told me this story is very similar to a story by «Distracted». I didn’t read her story and all the similarities are accidental. I do not intend to offend anyone (in writing and sharing this story). The only references are to the stories «Eternal Warrior» by Stub and Quills and «Gateway» by Quills.

Many thanks to Asso, Inga and all the «How cute is Connor Trinneer/Trip Tucker?» fans on TrekUnited who supported me in this work, in particular to Tishkajaku, who patiently betaread this work!

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For some brief moments they believed that they would have traveled in the Expanse, at least for a few hours, without encountering any major problems.

Those few moments of peace had almost the taste of panic.

«No problem!? And now what do we do?»

The atmosphere was tense. What’s so bad about that?

Everyone expected that the temporary peace would be shattered at any moment.

No one felt that calm in months.

It was all too quiet.

Then, finally, Lieutenant Malcolm Reed broke the deadlock of quiet stillness, «Captain! A ship is coming out of warp. Right in front of us.»

A small gold cylinder appeared just after the bluish lightning that preceded it. The shuttle was moving in a diagonally sloping side to the trajectory, which, in turn, was decidedly uneven. «They’re firing,» continued Malcolm.

«Polarize the shields,» Captain Archer leaned slightly forward in his chair, watching the unknown shuttle on the screen, from which fired a yellowish beam perpendicular to the route of Enterprise. «But who is it firing on?»

The tactical officer shook his head, «There are no other vessels in sight.»

Another beam left the shuttle, passing within a hundred of kilometers below the hull of Enterprise.

Archer turned to his science officer, «T’Pol, do you recognize the ship?»

The Vulcan shook slightly her head.

«It’s shooting at us,» said Reed.

The yellow ray, this time, brushed a warp nacelle.

«They must not have good aim,» Archer noted. He turned to Hoshi, «Hail them.»

«They’re firing at random,» Reed noted then, his low voice barely audible.

«Are there signs of life on board?» asked Archer.

T’Pol briefly checked her display. «I cannot read it,» she said, then added, after a few seconds, «yes.... a sign of life.....» She looked up at the captain. «It’s Human.»

«Human?» Jonathan’s voice was incredulous. How could there be a man out there?

«No, I must correct myself,» she said. «It’s .... Vulcan.»
Archer sighed. «I can see why it’s navigating that way.» It was probably due to the amount of trellium-D spread in the Expanse: the Vulcan on board was crazy, like the ones on the Seleya.

T’Pol checked the sensors again. «Captain, I have conflicting readings, now revealing again a sign of human life.»
«Make up your mind, Subcommander,» he said.
«They’re answering the hail,» Hoshi said.
«On screen,» said the captain. The image of the golden shuttle lost against the black sky was replaced by the one of its interior. In the foreground appeared a console, behind which an empty chair moved.
«This is Captain Jonathan Archer of the starship Enterprise. We ask you to identify yourself and disable your weapons.»

A hand appeared on the console. «Thanks to heavens.»

The officers on the bridge of Enterprise looked the young woman that appeared in their visual field. She had short hair, a little longer than the Vulcan standard, but combed much more messy, and from the blacks tufts stood unequivocally two pointed ears. «I am T’Mira, the captain of the shuttle Verne,» she smiled. «Thank goodness you’ve received my SOS!»
«We haven’t received any SOS,» Jonathan said. «And if you don’t disable your weapons, we will be forced to fight back!»
«Captain Archer, unfortunately, navigation systems and weapons controls are down,» she briefly checked her instruments. «Am I shooting?»

Archer let out a slight sigh and looked at Reed, who replied, «She’s shooting without aiming, and the intensity does not seem dangerous with polarized shields. Maybe even without them.»

The captain turned back to the woman on the screen, who was working frantically at the console. «You’re shooting around at low intensity.»

The woman sighed. «Shit,» she said suddenly, punching a firm hand on the console. «Did I stop?»

Archer shook his head. «No.»

T’Mira gave another blow to the console, then she vanished under it again.
«Captain,» T’Pol called. «The life support of the shuttle and the navigation system are seriously damaged. She’s got no more than an hour of air.»
«Captain T’Mira. Listen to me.»

The woman appeared in the visual field, showing only the yellow jacket of her uniform. «Yes?»
«Your life support is faulty.»
«I wonder what’s not damaged,» she said, pushing with her elbow a piece of cable that had just fallen on the rudder.
«I’d like to board your ship, but I cannot do it safely if your ship continues to shoot at random.»
T’Mir sat down on the chair. «Can you shoot my phaser and get it off?»

Malcolm nodded. «Yes, her shields are damaged.»
«Those too!» said T’Mir, typing frantically on the console.
«Hold on something,» Archer said, «we’re going to shoot.»

The red beam went from Enterprise to a precise part of the hull of the shuttle Verne.

T’Mir lost her grip on the chair and fell out of sight.
«Captain T’Mir?» called Archer.
«Weapons out of order, sir,» the tactical officer communicated.
«Captain, our strike has further damaged the life support of Verne,» T’Pol announced. «She has eighteen minutes of air left.»

Archer nodded. «Captain T’Mir,» He called again, «you okay?»
«I think I’ve stabilized my trajectory,» the Vulcan communicated, not yet returning on view.

Malcolm nodded. «The Verne has a more regular course.»

T’Mir reappeared over the console, a wound on her temple: red blood poured from the cut. «How am I going?»
«Much better....» Archer said, slowly, staring at the blood, «you.... you have less than eighteen minutes of air. If you place the shuttle under Enterprise, we can dock with you.»
«I’m more than willing to try,» she said. «If the Verne cooperates....»
«Forgive my curiosity, but for security reasons we must know. From your name and.... ears, we thought that you were Vulcan.»

T’Mir briefly looked up to the fifteen inches screen where the Archer’s image appeared. «Yes.»
«But your blood is red.»

The woman put her hand to her temple. «-Caz....-» she whispered, then she brought her attention back to the console. «I’m only half-Vulcan, Captain. For the other half, I’m Human.»

Archer turned to T’Pol with a malicious grin, to which she merely raised an eyebrow. «I did not think Vulcans and Humans were already.... crossed.»

T’Mir kept attention on the controls, sliding hers hand on the consol. «No, indeed it is.» She looked up and smiled at the captain. Right: she smiled too much to have green blood. «The quantum dating on Verne will confirm that I and this jalopy come from the future....,» she paused, «....of another universe.»

Jonathan could not help but cringe and smile at the same time. Another time agent, this one even more outlandish than Daniels. But this thing would have made a fool of T’Pol.
«Another universe?»

T’Mir nodded and then moved her eyes on the front window. «I’d love to continue to discuss these niceties, Captain Archer. Can we do that after docking? I’m almost under Enterprise.»
«Okay. Archer out.» He motioned to Malcolm to follow him and together they went down in the hangar.
The golden shuttle Verne was lying on the closed door. They now could clearly see the extensive damage. It was a miracle that there wasn’t a breach in the hull. Reed looked at the sensor in his left hand while the right hand he held a phaser. «Why isn’t she already out?» «Maybe she’s waiting for my permission.» Archer opened his pocket on the sleeve and took out the communicator. «Captain T’Mir, you can get out,» he said. «I’m trying!»

He heard the shrill voice of the Vulcan. «But this damn door is blocked!» «Bad language, for a Vulcan captain,» said Malcolm. «Only half Vulcan,» Jonathan pointed out, «and from another universe.»

Reed looked closely at the door. «It looks like it has melted.» «T’Mir, listen to me,» Archer said, «walk away from the door, we will try to open it with a phaser.»

Malcolm knew that was a job for him. He aimed at the opening and less than a minute later, the door fell on the floor of Enterprise. A moment later, T’Mir’s smiling face appeared in the doorway. «Thanks, guys,» she said, jumping out, «this shuttle was becoming a trap.»

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2nd Chapter: Doctor-Patient Relationship

T’Mir put her elbow on the window shelf in front of the decontamination chamber and her chin on her hand.

Dr. Phlox’s smile between the ridges greeted the young woman. «So you’re the Vulcan-Human from the future of another universe?»

She smiled. «Small town gossip spreads like wildfire....» she said, «are you very open-minded or do you simply accept the fact until you have evidence?»

Phlox smiled. «You’re clean. You may exit the decontamination chamber, so I can cure the wound on your temple....» When he was face to face with the girl, Phlox continued: «And the cut on your hand.... do you have other injuries?» «I’ve been tossed around a bit, but I do not think I’ve got anything broken.» She sat on the black ergonomic biobed. «I guess what you find on me will remain confidential. Doctor-patient relationship.»

Phlox looked up from the medical tricorder in his hand. «Unless it is a danger to the crew.»

The Vulcan sighed. «It won’t be, but could I ask you to inform only Captain Archer?»

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Hearing Archer’s voice, T’Mir looked out the door. «No, I’m just retrieving my clothes.»

Archer pointed to the shuttle. «In this state I think it’s difficult to be able to fly this in a short time.... especially since we do not have the opportunity to give you useful spare parts, here in the Expanse.»

The woman sighed. «It’s very bad, isn’t it?»

Jonathan went into the shuttle, while T’Mir was taking some clothes from a locker at the foot of what must be her bed. «Yes, but if we come across a planet where we can get some spare parts, I have a couple of men who can do miracles.»

She smiled. «Thanks.»

«In the meantime, you’ll be our guest here on Enterprise,» Archer smiled at her. «What are you doing in the Expanse, by the way?»

«An experimental flight, between two universes and two different times.»

Jonathan felt that he should be skeptical, but what the girl was saying fascinated him. «I hope you are not in a hurry to resume the mission.»

T’Mir shook her head. «If I could go back in the Verne.... I don’t think I would.»

«Who attacked you?»

«Xindi reptilians,» she said, «and I also have been caught in a lot of anomalies. I fused the warp drive just a moment before crossing your path.» She held up a blue dress, it looked to be an XS size, which wouldn’t leave too much to the imagination even if worn by the tiny Vulcan. «I bought this in Paris, damn....» She put her hand into a hole in the fabric. «I burnt a lot of stuff.»

Archer smiled, imagining her in that dress. «Do not tell me you wear those clothes in your future Starfleet.»

T’Mir laughed. «Yes, but only to make Soval angry.»

«The ambassador Soval?»

«Admiral,» she said. «In my universe he’s an admiral. He gave me this mission and I do not think he will be very happy when he sees what I’ve done to the Verne....» She smiled. «Yay, this is safe!» She showed him a black T-shirt on which was printed an inscription in white.

«Logic is my poetry: 2 b V - 2 b
This is a tautology.»

Archer looked at her quizzically.

«To be or not to be.’ I was the first of my Logic class.»

He laughed. «I do not doubt it.»
Phlox’s voice on the intercom interrupted their dialogue. «Phlox to Captain Archer. Can you come to the sickbay?»

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4th Charter: Live long and prosper

She had been given small quarters on the central bridge, with no view of open space, but it was much more comfortable than the night part of Verne. She took a shower and then put on a clean uniform that had miraculously escaped the burns. «Come in,» she said, when she heard the bell.

Archer appeared in the doorway, holding a PADD. «Hello,» he said.

She turned, a bit surprised. «Hello.»
«May I come in?»
«Of course, this is your ship.»

Jonathan let the door shut behind him. He raised the PADD. «Phlox informed me.»

T’Mir smiled insecurely.
«It’s a bit.... hard to digest, I mean.... get used to it.» He moved the PADD, as if it served to support the shocking information he had just received. «Certainly it is a.... good evidence of what you claim.»

She nodded. «I know. I just told you the truth.»

The captain nodded. «Then I think I should say.... welcome back.»

T’Mir smiled and ran to hug him. «Thank you.... I’ve missed you!» She held the hug for a long time. Then she withdrew a step. «Can I take a ride on the bridge?»

He laughed, «Of course, I thought your first destination would be another one.» He held out his arm and she took it. «These are the uniforms of the future of your universe?»

She nodded. «I saved a few clothes.... those fucking Xindi have burned almost all my dresses in the attack.»
«I don’t think that was their primary intent.» The turbo-lift opened, giving access to the bridge. «I guess I should introduce you,» Archer said, «you already know our tactical officer, Lieutenant Malcolm Reed.»

T’Mir smiled.
«At the helm we have Travis Mayweather.»
«Captain T’Mir,» greeted Travis.
«Oh, just T’Mir. On this ship I’m just a guest.»
«And my science officer, T’Pol.»

T’Mir gave her an almost shy smile, raising her hand in the Vulcan salute. T’Pol just nodded. The young woman lowered her hand and sighed slightly.
«At this moment we haven’t Hoshi Sato on the bridge, our communications officer, she has just finished her shift and went to the mess hall.»

T’Mir shifted her gaze from T’Pol to Archer. «I think.... I’ll do the same. The emergency rations of the Verne were sh.... were very bad.»

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5th charter: Languages

The mess hall was almost empty, but all the people present had the blue uniform of Enterprise. T’Mir was uncomfortable, her uniform stood out as the yellow sun in the blue sky. If her clothes had not burned, she could have at least been in civilian clothes, but the ones that were saved were not exactly suited to her first ride on Enterprise.

She opened a compartment on the table and pulled out a plate of pasta with bacon and rosemary sauce, then she went straight to a table next to a door. When Hoshi looked up and smiled, T’Mir gave her the Vulcan salute. «-Dif-tor heh smusma.-» (Live long and prosper.)

The young woman smiled and returned the greeting.
«-Se el-shi?-» (Is this seat free?)
«-Ah. Sanosh, Hoshi Sato.-» (Yes, how do you do? I’m Hoshi Sato.)
«-Sanosh. T’Mir.-» The Vulcan sat next to the interpreter. «You speak Vulcan very well, Hoshi.»
«-Shaya-tonat.-» (Thanks) Hoshi looked curiously at the Vulcan. «You haven’t a Vulcan inflection. Not even American.» She gave a moment to think and then said: «It seems almost.... Italian.»
«^Hai un orecchio incredibile, Hoshi.^» T’Mir said, in Italian. (You’re so talented in languages!)

She smiled. «Do you speak Italian fluently?»
«Almost better than the Vulcan and English, by now. I spent the last four years in Italy. I pick up very easily inflections of the place.»
«Where did you live?»
«I stayed at the Vulcan embassy, I studied at Starfleet in Milan.»

Hoshi smiled. «I was in Milan a few years ago.... to study Italian. It is a beautiful city.»
«It’s huge,» said T’Mir. «I struggled to get used to its chaos. I grew up on the En.... on a big ship more or less like Enterprise. Eighty-four souls, counting the captain’s cat.»
«Our captain has a dog.»
T’Mir looked at Hoshi slightly surprised, but she did not seem to notice. She pointed to the plate in front of T’Mir. «I thought you Vulcans do not eat meat.»

T’Mir nodded. «Yes, but I’m only half Vulcan.»
«That’s right, I’ve almost forgot. You come from the future of another universe. «

The Vulcan smiled: «Infinite diversity in infinite combinations.»

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6th charter: Kash-nohv

After getting out of the shower, T’Mir dug into a small pile of clothes. She should go back to Milan and Paris to replace the ones that were lost. As long as she was able to go home. She put on a turquoise dress, which had gold embroidery on the lapel. She sat on the floor cross-legged, closed her eyes and inhaled deeply.

Her mother taught her to meditate.

This way, she could balance her two sides, the Vulcan and Human, that very often, as on that day, rose to the surface and, furiously elbowing, prevailed over the other. After the attack, she ran away at warp speed, the engines screaming mercy; the strong emotions raised when she was on that ship were still unleashed in her, she really needed to go to her favourite place, in meditation.

A beach. The sand was white, the sea turquoise as her clothing.

There was also a palm tree behind her.

All quiet, everything was perfect.

She opened her eyes slowly. She felt much better. She stood up and stretched. «It’s time,» she whispered. She emerged from her quarters and walked slowly, without any doubt, through the corridors of grey metal, the neon lighting. She rang the doorbell and went in when she heard the permission to enter. «Am I disturbing you?»

T’Pol raised an eyebrow, scrutinizing the girl from head to foot. «No.» «We can.... I was wondering if we can speak for a few minutes,» said T’Mir, in Vulcan.

The science officer stared for a few moments at the young woman. She did not like her. She gave her a sense of discomfort, as when she was in the presence of Tolaris, and among all the emotions that she had been able to experience, she didn’t like that at all. T’Pol blinked rapidly. «I was instructed to speak English on this voyage and I’d appreciate it if you’d respect that.»

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T’Mir nodded. “Okay.... May I....?”
“It would be better to go to the mess hall, where there are chairs, here I have no room for you to have seat.”
“This is a thing I wish to discuss in private.” Her voice was soft, almost shy. “We can sit on the ground, as in meditation.” T’Mir lowered cross-legged and T’Pol sat down, reluctantly, in front of her.
“You think I’m a V’tosh ka’tur, right?” (Illogical Vulcan)

T’Pol raised an eyebrow. “I do not think it’s important what I think of you. We are on the same ship, you need to repair yours, and we can live civilly until you can resume your journey.”
“Ignoring each other?” T’Mir shook her head. “It is an idea I don’t like.”
“I see no reason....”
“I know. I would like to let you see it, but I do not want to force you.”
“Come to the point, *Captain*,” T’Pol stressed the girl’s rank, as if to underline the distance between them.
“-Kash-nohv-.”

T’Pol stiffened suddenly, but tried not to show it. “I must ask you to leave.”

T’Mir sighed. “I was afraid you’d have this reaction. I’m really sorry. I.... It is not a coincidence that my name is T’Mir. That of the first Vulcan on Earth.”

The woman stirred uneasily. “I still do not see your point.”
“I have been named after her. My father chose it.”

T’Pol shook her head slightly. –Father?....–
“But I know it’s hard to convince you,” continued the girl, “and then I’d rather you to see it yourself.”
“Captain, if you insist on this line I’ll have to call security.”

T’Mir smiled sweetly. “Oh please.... I know you can protect yourself. I ask only to put your fingers on my face for a fusion. You’ll initiate it, and you’ll release when you want to. I must tell you something, but I’m not able to. If you see with your eyes....”
“I haven’t the ability to meld and I cannot do it. I....”
“The Pa’nar syndrome is not really a disease, you will find out soon,” T’Mir said, “and in any case I’m half Terran, I can’t be infected.”

T’Pol shook her head, she felt anger and fear emerge under her skin. She didn’t like those feelings. “And you know these things because you come from the future of another universe?” There was skepticism in her voice.
“The mind meld is not a power. It’s just a discipline.” T’Mir still waited a few seconds, under the gaze of T’Pol. Then she put her feet on the floor and got up, turning to leave.
“No,” T’Pol stopped her, “That will be agreeable.”

T’Mir looked slightly surprised. It was so strange that she had changed her mind, but it was better to take advantage of it. “You know how it works. And you know that you can stop whenever you want.”
T’Pol nodded. Slowly she raised her hand, still uncertain, undecided. She could still give a boot to this V’tosh ka’tur and run towards the bridge, hiding behind Malcolm Reed. But now her hand was resting on T’Mir’s face and she heard her own voice saying the mantra for the mind meld. That idea of hiding behind Reed was really illogical.

When she opened her eyes, she was sitting at a table of Enterprise mess hall, reading the data on a PADD. Not surprising, after all, perfectly proper, quiet. She almost expected to see Tucker try in every way to make her smile.

«They’re so good.»

She turned toward the voice, her eyes widening. There was a girl, no more than six years old, black hair and brown eyes, sitting next to her. She was eating strawberries. She had pointed ears.

T’Pol heard her own voice: «Yes, and they are very healthy.»

She got back analyzing the data on the PADD.

The child finished the strawberries and gave a slight smile to T’Pol. She nodded, «Come here.» She lifted the girl and took her in her lap. The girl gave her a kiss on the cheek and leaned her head on her shoulder. «M’aih, I love you.» (M’aih = mommy)

The Vulcan half closed her eyes, gently resting her cheek on the child’s hair. Then she heard a voice from behind, a voice that she didn’t have the time to recognize. She only heard, «Here are my women!»

T’Pol pulled back abruptly, moving away from T’Mir, and fell back on the floor. Her breathing was laboured.

«M’aih!» the girl cried out, leaning forward. «Are you okay?»

T’Pol looked up and recognized in T’Mir’s eyes those of the vision. «W-why did you stop?» «I didn’t, you stopped.....»

T’Pol stared at her for long. «What did you show me?»

The young woman helped her up and put her arm around her shoulders. «The future of another universe.»

She shook her head, «No. You’re lying.»

T’Mir closed her eyes. «No.... I would never do that. And I could not even; it can’t be done in a mind meld.» She took her face gently in her hands. «Look and see yourself .... I have your eyes.... and especially I have your ears.»

T’Pol stared at her. It was true. «You....»

T’Mir smiled and hugged her, them kissed her on the cheek. «M’aih, I missed you so much....»
The Vulcan stood there for a few seconds, and then placed her hands on the girl’s shoulders. «I... I dreamt of you.»
«I know,» T’Mir showed no signs of losing the hug. «You told me, that when you were a little girl, sometimes you played, you dreamt of having a daughter....»

T’Pol shook her head slightly. «Not only those times.... I dreamt of you.... two days ago.»

The girl withdrew slightly. «It was when I left the interuniversal slit.»

The ship suddenly shifted beneath them. T’Pol strongly hugged T’Mir as she wanted to protect her, until Enterprise was stabilized. «Is someone firing at us?»
«No, I don’t think so,» T’Pol got up, «wait here.» She left the room and ran on the bridge. «An anomaly,» Archer said, «but fortunately small. Check out to see if there are other bigger ones.»

T’Pol immediately resumed her post, replacing the science officer on duty. «I don’t see any other anomalies.» She looked up from the sensor. «We’re dropping out of warp.»

Jonathan pressed a button on the controls, «Archer to Engineering. What’s going on down there?»

Chief Engineer Tucker’s fast and slang voice said, «The anomaly has rerouted cables in higher ratings. It’ll take a while to fix ‘em up, we must remain at impulse.»
«Okay,» Archer sighed.
«Captain,» T’Mir’s voice came unexpected on the bridge.

T’Pol turned to her, her glance more than eloquent, ‘I told you stay in my quarters!’

The hybrid deliberately ignored her, continuing to speak with Archer. «I have good experience on warp drive, Jon.... aehm! Captain. With your permission, I’ll go down to Engineering to help.»

Archer let out a knowing smile, that didn’t go unnoticed to T’Pol. «Permission granted.»

The girl smiled, «Thank you!» She ran away.

While the captain turned toward the helm, T’Pol stared at him, thinking. She tried to remember if the voice she heard at the end of mind meld with T’Mir could have been.... «T’Pol?»

The Vulcan started.
«T’Pol, are you okay?»
«Yes, sir. There are no anomalies in sight, for now.»

Archer nodded, looking inquiringly at his first officer. T’Pol brought her attention to the sensors. Then looking up slightly, she stared again at the captain.
T’Mir hadn’t her hands. They resembled, in miniature, Archer’s hands and the way she had behaved with him on the bridge, calling him «Jon».... She shrugged off the idea: yes, T’Mir was the result of her union with a Human, but that was in the future of another universe.

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7th chapter: Sa-mekh

T’Mir stopped just outside the door of the engineering and took a deep breath. She ran a hand through her hair, trying to comb it somehow, and then straightened her uniform, making sure there was no fluff on it. She went in straight through the door. «Wow,» she said, «I love this place.»

Taking a secure grip on the ladder leading to the top of the warp drive, she looked over the bottom.

Commander Tucker was sitting with one leg bent, one elbow resting on the ground, his left hand in a tangle of wires and in the right hand he held a tool to fix them.
«Commander Tucker?» Her voice inflection seemed almost drunk and then she suddenly shut up.

Trip looked up and stared at her. «What are you doing here?»
 «Captain Archer has asked me to come to here to help.» --^Che ballista!^-- she thought to herself (^what a liar!^). «I’m pretty good with engines.»

Trip looked not too convinced. «We have very good mechanics here, and you’re a guest. It would be rude to make you work.» That Vulcan must have been less than thirty years old, but Trip had never been able to tell the age of a Vulcan. And by the way, how old was T’Pol?

T’Mir smiled. The jealousy of certain males toward technology had always amazed her. No one could touch Archer’s ship, or Tucker’s engines. Soval got mad, of course in the Vulcan way, when she broke his communicator down in pieces. It was also true that she had broken several of Soval’s communicators, while she was «exploring» them. She sat down next to him, opening a door. «Many cables are fused. To change them it’ll take a lot, if one doesn’t know how to crimp the wires as well as you do.»

Trip froze, then set the crimper down on the floor, staring at the visitor. «Don’t you have to repair your own shuttle?»

T’Mir pulled out the wires. «I can’t do it because the engine is completely gone. I’ll need spare parts.» Then she took a damaged cable. «Test me. These cables have nothing to lose.»
«All right, as you want.»
«I have to pay for food.»

The engineer laughed. He thought himself to be the only one who used that idiom on Enterprise. «Get me a cable. It’s behind you.»
T’Mir turned and looked at several pieces of copper wire covered with black sheath. «Ten or thirteen?»
«Thirteen.»

The girl handed him the cable he had requested.
«You’ve a good eye.» Trip smiled. Yes, perhaps he could bear her hands in his engine, just to repair the cables in higher ratings. Only that, no more. She better keep her hands far away from his injectors....

T’Mir smiled and retrieved a pair of thick scissors, with sheathed handles. «I grew up in a place like this.» she said, as she began to cut the melted wires. She picked up a cable. «Do you use electric or laser welding?»
«Laser,» Trip handed her a welder, «I guess there is no need to warn you to keep your hands away from its ray.»

T’Mir just smiled and held up the right sleeve of her uniform, showing the diagonal line of a scar across her wrist. It looked pretty old, she should have gotten it several years earlier.
«Ouch. It must have been painful.»
«I saw the stars and I was not close to a porthole.»

The commander laughed, «You have too much of a sense of humour to be a Vulcan. It must be true that you’re half-Human.»

T’Mir put down the welder, «Small town....» she said.
«...gossip spreads like wildfire.» Trip completed. He passed her a crimper. «Do you mind?»
«No, indeed, it’s what I most like to do.»
«How quick is your ship?» he asked, while welding a cable.
«Warp seven.»
«Seven, wow,» said Tucker, «would you let me take a look at the engines?»
«Suit yourself, if you can still find something good.» T’Mir thought that if she returned home after showing the shuttle to a Human, Soval would have cut her into pieces. But he would have done it with all his Vulcan phlegm.
«What technology mounts?»

T’Mir closed the crimper to attach the plug, placing the cable in the compartment and connecting it to the outlet. «Well.... it had warp and impulse drives.... it had a phaser cannon, a distance bioscanner.... it had a life support replication of air and water.»

Trip looked at her, «Had?»
«Everything went down or exploded. It seems that the only thing left is the communications system.»
«What did you do for the food?»
«All packaged crap. My mission was to last only seven or eight days.»

Tucker smiled. «The captain told me that it is a test flight. Maybe you should have found a place outside the Delphic Expanse. You have been attacked by the Xindi, and caught a number of anomalies.»
"Yes, but the anomalies just tossed me a bit here and there. Xindi weapons burnt almost all my clothes, and now I can only use this uniform...." She was almost sadder for the clothes than for the Verne. But, in fact, the clothes were hers, the Verne Soval’s. Well, he would put the shuttle with the communicators she broke.

"Is that the uniform of the future?" asked Tucker.

"Something like that."

Trip looked down at the pile of cables that T’Mir was arranging. She had gone very fast, not as him, but definitely more than most the other engineers who were on board. He stared at T’Mir’s hands soldering and crimping the cables. There was something wrong.

T’Mir realized he was staring at her, turned and smiled at him. «Commander? Am I distracting you?»

"No.... it’s just that...."  
"It’s the pointy ears?"

Trip’s eyes widened, looking at her. «How?»

"They’re sexy, aren’t they?"

He jumped. «Eeeeh?!»

T’Mir laughed. «No, seriously, am I not doing a good job?»

Trip looked down again on the girl’s hands. «No, indeed. Except that.... you use very good technique, which.... I thought I had invented it myself.»

They heard footsteps on the stairs, and soon after appeared T’Pol. «Commander Tucker, the captain sent me here to....» She stopped, staring T’Mir and Trip both sitting with one leg bent vertically, the other on the ground with an elbow and the hands that expertly crimped cables.

Tucker, at the sudden silence, looked up at her. «Subcommander, you ok? You seem pale.....»

T’Mir looked at her. "-M’aih?-"

T’Pol shifted her gaze on T’Mir. It was the moment of breaking a rule and take advantage of a thing that Trip couldn’t do. «- Es tu sa-mekh?-» she asked in Vulcan to T’Mir. Trip was hopeless at languages and T’Pol, at the beginning of the mission, had been specifically requested to speak in English.

T’Mir glanced at Tucker. «-Uf tu ken-tor?-»

«-Vesh’ svi’ kash-nohv pra’la?-»

"-Ah.-" replied the young woman.

Trip looked at them questioningly. «Why have I the distinct feeling that you’re talkin’ about me?»

T’Mir turned to him: «Because we *are* talking about you.» Then she turned back to T’Pol, «-Ra-i?-»
Tucker looked at them both with his mouth open. «And so brazenly?!»
«Ma ka el’ru.» said T’Pol. «Var-tor?»
«Glazhau uf taran.»
«Tell him, that’s all,» T’Pol concluded in English.
«Olozhikaik!» T’Mir said, laughing.
«Tell me what?!» Trip asked, feeling slightly exasperated: two Vulcans within two meters from him!

T’Mir turned to him. «I am a Vuhlkansu-komihn. Half-Vulcan, half Human.»

He shrugged. «Yes, this item is known. But....?»

The girl leaned forward and hugged him. Trip, by instinct, drew back slightly, but she kept her grip. «I love you, Daddy,» she whispered. This time Tucker pushed harder, pulling him from the girl’s hug and stood up abruptly. «What?!» He stumbled in his own footsteps and fell back, sliding down from the warp drive.
«Trip!» T’Mir and T’Pol called out together.

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8th chapter: A great teacher

«Here you are!» Phlox said, after pushing the hypospray against Trip’s neck. «Is it better?»
«It still hurts!» cried Tucker.
«Come on, do not be a baby. As you Human say, ‘the bum does not hurt for a long time’ [this is an Italian saying....].... Well, I don’t really ever understand this saying, given that a blow is still a blow....» He turned to the door from which T’Mir and T’Pol were entering. «Oh, here are your women! I leave you some privacy.»

Trip looked up to heaven. ‘My women....’ Phlox had known it before him.

T’Mir smiled and sat on the biobed next to him, not too close, she didn’t want to take his breathe away. «How are you?»
«I’m....» he started, but stopped. After a pause, he said: «I don’t know.»
«You don’t know?» T’Pol raised an eyebrow.
«I mean the blow,» T’Mir stressed.
«Oh, that.... Phlox gave me....» He pointed to his neck. He shook his head and stared at the young woman. «But were you serious?»

T’Mir tilted her head, smiling. «Didn’t Phlox show you my DNA analysis?»
«Yes, but....» He looked at T’Pol, which of course wasn’t offering him the slightest help. Yeah, he would find more support from.... his daughter. «I understand why you crimp cables as I do.» he said, laughing.

T’Mir grinned. «All I know about the warp engines I learnt it from you.»
«Or better,» interjected T’Pol, «from Commander Tucker in another universe.»
Trip glanced sideways at the Vulcan, but was T’Mir to give voice to his thoughts: «How to keep away all the poetry.»
«However, it’s evidently the future of another universe.»
«M’aih, come on, I’m here now!» T’Mir stopped her. «However, we are genetically related.»

Trip could swear that he saw the shadow of a half-smile on T’Pol’s face. He was going to make a joke about it, but Archer came through the door of the sickbay.
«How are you?» he asked.
«I’m okay, Captain. I’m going to get back to work.»
«Wait,» Jonathan put his hand on his shoulder to stop him, «Phlox told me that you felt dizzy.»
«Yes, but....»
«It was my fault,» T’Mir said, then added, whispering, «He has a thing for pointy ears....»

Tucker whirled toward her: «Quit that!»

T’Mir smiled.
«I want you to rest for a while,» Archer remarked, «that’s an order.»

Trip sighed.
«I can finish the work on the wires, it won’t take too much,» T’Mir proposed.
«I’ll help you,» T’Pol said.
«Okay, go. We have to go to warp as soon as possible.» When the two Vulcans came out of the sickbay, Archer looked back at his chief engineer. «T’Pol told me they were talking to you and you lost your balance.»

Tucker shrugged, nodding. «Yes, that was it.»
«Trip, you wouldn’t fall from the top of a warp drive just for a chat.» He clapped a hand on his shoulder. «Stay in the sickbay, I think the two Vulcans can finish the job. T’Pol will check that T’Mir does everything correctly.»

Tucker shrugged. «It wouldn’t be a problem.»
«Wouldn’t it?»
«No....» Could he tell that? Of course. «....She is a genius in wiring. She crimps like a goddess.»

Archer laughed as he left the sickbay. «She must have had a good teacher.» He took a few steps in the hall when he noticed an acceleration: –We are going to warp.-- thought. «A very good teacher.» he corrected himself.

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9th chapter: The picnic

«Come in,» T’Pol said when she heard the doorbell. She was sitting on the ground, in pajamas, in the meditation position.

Trip came in slowly, dressed in civilian clothes. «Do I disturb you, you are meditating?»
«No. I’ve just finished,» She stood up to blow out the candles, «how are you?»
«Phlox said I’m fine. T’Mir asked me to come here....»
«Yes, I know. She just called to say she’ll be some minutes late. She can’t find something.»
«What?»

T’Pol shook her head slightly. «I don’t know.» She pointed to the bed. «Have a seat, please.»
«What do you think?»
«About what?»
«T’Mir.»

T’Pol take long minute to respond. «I have not yet an idea.»
«From the future of another universe,» Trip laughed, «this is crazy.»
«There are several hypotheses that suggest that our universe is not the only one, but only a part of a larger multiverse.»

He shrugged. «But T’Mir is not a theory.»

T’Pol sat down beside him. «I think what she says is true.»

Tucker stared at her for a while. «Really?»
«Yes. It is a possibility.»
«She could also come from the future of *this* universe.»

T’Pol raised an eyebrow. «There is no reason for her to lie about this.»
«Maybe it’s to do as little as possible to pollute the timeline. Do you remember what the captain said about his meeting with Daniels?» He sighed. «But.... the girl.... What do you think about her?»

She shrugged her shoulders slightly. «It’s clear that she does not follow the Vulcan discipline.»
«She’s nice» he said, smiling, «a little crazy and with great manual skill.» He looked at T’Pol. «I like her.»

The doorbell rang. «Come in.» T’Pol said, cutting off the conversation with Trip. He grinned - that was typical of her.
«Sorry I’m late,» T’Mir said, entering with a basket, «I couldn’t find the checkered tablecloth.»
She sat down and put on the ground a red cloth. «I found only this one.»

Trip laughed. «A picnic on the floor of T’Pol’s quarters?»
«Why not?» smiled the girl.
«Great!» Yeah, why not? Especially if their aim was to drive T’Pol crazy. Trip sat on the ground with his back against the bed. Then he turned to T’Pol. «Aren’t you coming?»

She sat down, unconvinced, in front of T’Mir. «A picnic?»
«In my universe we should have done a picnic, but we haven’t made it in time. I would like to recover at least in part. Unfortunately I could not arrange very much.» She pulled out plates and cups, two bottles and a circular container. «Would you pour the drinks, daddy?»

Trip started.
«Sorry.» T’Mir said. «I.... I just used it, but I believe that now it is better I use your nickname ‘Trip’, also to avoid questions from others crewmembers.»

«It’s not that I mind it.» He poured iced tea for T’Pol and milk for himself and T’Mir, who handed him her glass. «But, you know.... suddenly I found out I have a child and.... this is not what happens every day. Especially if the child is.... How old are you?»

«Twenty-six. I’ll be born in two years.»

Trip turned to T’Pol: «This means that you’ll have her.... at what age?»

T’Pol gave him a look of condescension.
«Why do you have this obsession with her age?» asked T’Mir.
«What do you mean with ‘obsession’?»
«You keep trying to find out her age.»

Trip shook his head. «But that’s not true!»

T’Mir looked at him knowing that was the exact opposite. «Well, I brought a thing I know that everyone loves.» She opened the container. «Pecan pie.»
«Ah, yes, T’Mir, I love you,» Trip leaned forward and kissed her on the temple.

She smiled. «I missed you so much....»
«What has happened?» asked Trip.
«Well....» The Prime Temporal Directive was replicating like a tape in her mind, read with Soval’s stern voice. «I....»
«#T’Mir, you must not say anything about your nature.#» Soval’s voice was warning her.
«When....»
«#T’Mir, you are there for a mission.#’
«I mean....»
«#T’Mir, remember that interuniversal flights do not serve for the good of one....#»
«I....»
«#....But for the good of the many!#»

—^Ma vaffanculo! Sta’ zitto, rompipalle!!!!— (“Got to hell! Shut up, you pain in the ass!”) «I was born and lived here on Enterprise, landing here and there on the explored planets, you taught me to work on engines and T’Pol the Vulcan discipline. When I was fourteen we had to get off to celebrate on a planet with a huge turquoise sea and green land.... it looked a bit like Earth, but with much more water. And.... our shuttlepod was gone, with you inside. I was found by Soval six years ago. The shuttlepod was found destroyed.»

Trip had a shiver of dread thinking that her daughter had been so close to Soval.
«So, no picnic.» T’Mir sighed and smiled. «But we did it now.» She got up quickly and settled everything.
«What had we have to celebrate?»

T’Mir pushed the cloth into the basket. «Well....» She looked up at T’Pol. «You were going to give me a little sister.»

T’Pol felt her stomach twist. It must have been a wonderful universe until that point. «Where have you been since the shuttlepod was destroyed when Soval has found you?» asked T’Pol.
«I am a rarity, even in my universe. Those people knocked down our shuttlepod to kidnap me.»
«Why?» asked Trip.

T’Mir shrugged. «Because I’m unique,» she smiled.
«You’re not here by accident,» Trip said.
«No. Soval needed a pilot to test the Verne. I have been able to choose my destination. I wanted to see you.»

The intercom rang. «Archer to Tucker.»

He got up, slightly reluctantly, and he pressed the button of communication. «Trip here.»
«I need you in the engineering.»
«Coming,» Trip smiled to the two women, «see you later.»

T’Mir leaned on her side, placing herself as when she was working on the engine.
«You learnt that position from your father,» T’Pol ascertained.

T’Mir laughed. «Yes, I know. You didn’t what me to stay so.»
«You have back pain,» she said.
«Yes. I have never managed to hide anything to you,» she smiled, «but it is not due to the wrong position. I’ve taken quite a beating on the Verne.»
«It was dangerous to come in the Expanse, you should have chosen another place. Another time.»

T’Mir shrugged. «I am here with you, I’m fine.»
«We can try to ask Dr. Phlox if he has any remedy for your back pain.»

The girl shook her head. «No, the Phlox of my universe and another dozen of doctors had already tried everything. Anesthetics have no effect on me. Even those that will be found in the next thirty years.» She returned to sit straight. «If you want me to go back in my quarters, you can tell me.»

T’Pol shook her head slightly. «No. Have we ever tried Vulcan neuro-pression?»

The girl smiled. «Yes, of course. It’s the only thing that works a bit.»

She nodded. «So it’s logical. Lie down; it will do well against back pain.»
«Aren’t you tired?»
«Do not worry. With Commander Tucker I do three sessions a week.»

T’Mir laid prone on the bed. «I know. I thanked Phlox more than once, for having persuaded you two to do it.»

T’Pol pushed gently, touching the sides of her daughter’s the spine. «Why?»

She laughed lightly. «Because if you hadn’t done neuro-pression, I probably would not have been born.»
The Vulcan moved her hands higher. «I do not understand what you mean.»
«Of course you do. You just don’t want to admit it,» she turned slightly, «not even to yourself.»

T’Pol put her hands on her shoulders. «You have to stay straight.»

T’Mir turned back, smiling. «Exactly.»

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10th chapter: Parents and daughter

When the doorbell rang, T’Pol jumped up and went to open it. Trip smiled at her doorway and she brought a finger to her lips.
«What?» whispered Trip.

T’Pol looked toward the bed. «T’Mir is sleeping.»

He looked at his daughter, asleep, with her hands near her face, sleeping like a baby. «I’m glad she seems not to suffer from insomnia like me....» he whispered. «Why is she sleeping in your bed?»
«I did her neuro-pression, she had back pain. She has fallen asleep there.»

Tucker turned to her. «We did a good job.» he whispered, and his soft breath pulled back slightly the hair from her ears. T’Mir was right: he found them sexy.
«In another universe,» she said.

Trip put his hand on her hip and walked over to her so much to touch her. «So why not try to do so here?»

T’Pol thought over the temptation for a while. Sure, she wanted to repeat the «experiment» of a few days before.... She gave him a slight push on his chest, to move away. «Not in front of our daughter.»

This time he could not blame her. «Then you like her.»

T’Pol stared at him. «Of course, she’s my daughter.»

Tucker laughed softly. «Logical.»
«NOOOOOOOOO!»

T’Pol and Trip turned toward T’Mir. The Vulcan ran beside her and took her by the shoulders.
«T’Mir. Wake up. It’s just a dream.»

She opened her eyes and sat up suddenly in bed. «Where....?»
«On Enterprise.» The Vulcan sat down beside her.
«Where are they?»
«Calm down. You’re safe,» T’Pol held her, making her put her head on her shoulder as in the vision of their mind meld.
«They who?» asked Trip.

T’Mir shook her head. «No.... nothing.... «
He hugged both women. «You’re trembling,» he whispered, kissing her daughter on her hair.
«Can we stay like this for a while?»
«Of course,» whispered T’Pol.

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11th Chapter: Family Reunion

«Archer to T’Pol.»
.... «Archer to T’Pol.»
.... «Sub-commander, please reply.»
.... «T’Pol?!»
....

T’Mir opened her eyes. She was lying on T’Pol’s bed, turned slightly on her left side, her forehead resting on her mother’s shoulder, who was sleeping with her back against the wall. She could feel a warm body behind her, and imagined that Trip had fallen asleep on the same bed with her in the middle.

She put a hand on the Vulcan’s shoulder. «M’aih» she said. «Hey.... T’Pol.»

The woman awoke with a start. «Yes? What is it?»
«Jonathan is calling you.»

T’Pol turned on her side to get up and stood when she saw Trip sleeping like a baby, on the outer side of the bed.
«Do I need to move away?» asked T’Mir.
«No.» She shook her head. «I don’t want to wake up.... your father. I will climb over.» She got up slowly, put her foot on the edge of the bed and....
«T’Pol?!»

....Slipped and fell completely over Tucker.
«T’Pol, not here with the baby,» said Trip, waking with a start. T’Pol pulled up quickly and ran to the door.

T’Mir threw a punch, not too hard, on Trip’s the shoulder.
«What have I done?» he said.
«I’m not a baby!»

Meanwhile, T’Pol had opened the door to Archer, who was calling her, and was now looking at her strangely. «You okay? It’s almost five minutes I’ve called.»
«Yes.... Captain....»
Archer noted an inflection of embarrassment in her voice and could not help but draw a little personal satisfaction.
«I’m sorry, I must be sleeping deeply.»

Hearing in the background - and especially having recognized the male voice - Archer leaned slightly into the door. «Have I interrupted something?»

T’Mir sat up and leaning over Tucker, went over the bed and exclaimed: «Yes, we were sleeping great!»
«T’Mir!» Trip was tempted to plug her mouth with one hand.

Archer looked at the girl and laughed. «Sorry, but I need my science officer.»

T’Mir shrugged and went back on the bed, resting her forehead on Trip’s arm. «If you only need her, I go back to sleep.»
«I get dressed and I’ll be right on the bridge, Captain.»

Archer nodded. «Of course, see you on the bridge.» He turned around and before leaving he added: «I’m sorry if I interrupted your family reunion. But it is a case of force majeure.»
«He knows?» asked Trip.

T’Mir nodded, but before the captain went away, she shouted after him something that neither he nor the other two officers understood. The tone seemed playful, and Archer walked away laughing. On the bridge, he approached Sato, and, almost in a whisper, asked: «Hoshi, what does the word ‘rompipalle’ mean?»

The communications officer looked at him in amazement. «It’s .... it’s an Italian word.» she said, trying to wander. At the time on Enterprise Hoshi knew there were only two people who knew Italian: she and T’Mir.
«And what does it means?» he asked.
«Trust me. You do not want to know.»

(rompipalle = pain in the ass - more or less!)

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12 ° Chapter: Spoily Lizzy

Left alone with Trip, T’Mir leaned on her father’s chest and kissed him on the cheek. «Does it bother you if I’m staying here?» she asked, resting her head just above his heart.
«No.» he said, encircling her shoulders with one arm.
«I was often in this position.... listening to your heart beating.»

Trip smiled slightly. «Yours is here below.» He said, brushing her side just through the covers. «Right?»
She nodded. «Vulcan heart, Human blood.»
«Manual skills of your father.»

T’Mir laughed. «Stop teasing T’Pol,» she sighed, «she did not want me to stay here.»
«Why?»
«She said that you spoiled me so.»

He laughed. «And I did it?»
«Oh, yes, you did.» T’Mir laughed too. «We had quarters like Archer’s.... I don’t know if in this universe he has equal quarters. But it was big enough and there was the door of my room, smaller than this.... but very nice. You brought me a souvenir from every planet where you had to land without me.... A doll, a dress.... I still love clothes. Once you’ve brought on board a tribble.»
«And.... What is it?»
«A pet that can replicate itself over and over.... Within a day they had infested the ship, fortunately Phlox had unleashed his animals and Archer’s cat.»
«Archer has a cat in your universe?» It sounded very strange. Maybe it was a fighter cat.
«Yes, a beautiful tortoise shell cat.» She sighed. «When T’Pol began her shift before you, I got up and slipped in your bed to play with you. You called me ‘my Spoily Lizzy’.»
«Lizzy?» asked her father.
«Lizzy. Diminutive of Elizabeth. My Terran name, chosen by T’Pol. Elizabeth T’Mir Tucker IV, captain of Verne.» she said proudly.
«Your mother had to go crazy living with two Tuckers.»

They laughed together.

But then he turned serious, let out a slow sigh: «You know.... who Elizabeth was? «

T’Mir nodded. «Yes, I know.»

(In Italian there is an assonance in her nickname, «Lizzy Vizi», vizi meaning vices.)

******

13th Chapter: The sweet spot

«Oh, is it already taken?»

Travis heard the musical voice coming over his head and looked up. T’Mir had one hand on the hatch and was watching him ‘upside down’.
«There’s room for both.» He smiled. «Come up.»

T’Mir gave a push and began to float in the air toward the helmsman. Within inches of him, she turned upside down and sat down gracefully beside him. «Did I disturb you?»

Travis shook his head. «It seems that I’m not the only one on this ship to enjoy the ‘sweet spot’.» He smiled. «As I call this place.» The helmsman was referring to a point about halfway
between the gravity generator and the bow plate, where gravity would disappear for a few centimeters, then reverse.
«Appropriate term,» T’Mir said.
«It seems that you are used to it. You came here without any trouble.»

She nodded. «When I was a child, I came to a place like this. Verne doesn’t have it.» In the hand that she hadn’t used to thrust, she kept a container. She opened it and handed it to Travis. «Want some?»
«Strawberries?» He smiled. «Thank you. Very good.... Hoshi told me that you attended the Academy in Milan.»
«Yes, but I’ve actually done much more directly on the ship where I was born. Like you, on the other hand, isn’t it?»

Travis smiled. «The privilege of us space boomers. It was a cargo?»
«No, an exploration ship.»
«Commander Tucker said that Verne went to warp seven. How is it to pilot a ship so fast?»

T’Mir finished eating a strawberry. «It’s awfully hard to avoid the asteroids.»

Mayweather smiled.
«By the way,» T’Mir closed the empty container, since they had finished the strawberries. «Is it true that once Captain Archer threatened to fire you if you hit one bump?»

Travis laughed, T’Mir joined him. What excuse could she find to stay on Enterprise?

******

14th Chapter: Malcolm

Her parents were both on duty and she wouldn’t stand in their way, preventing them from doing their normal duty and, perhaps, dropping them from an engine.... She retrieved her belongings, after they had passed the test of security.

She had slipped on a pair of colourful tights and a rather short black dress, and she stayed prone on the bed, reading, with legs bent back and her ankles crossed, raised on elbows.
«Come in.» she said, when she heard the doorbell.

Malcolm Reed smiled shyly when he entered.
«Am I annoying you, Captain?»
«Yes, if you talk to me formally.» She said. She smiled. «Call me T’Mir.»

Reed smiled awkwardly. He tended to be very shy with women. He pointed vaguely at the device on which she was reading. «Is it a PADD from the future?»

The girl looked at the object in her hand. «This one? Oh, no.... It’s an iPod.» She stood up and Malcolm could see that her dress was very short. T’Mir handed him the iPod. «It’s nothing special, a similar one existed a hundred and fifty years ago.»
Malcolm quickly saw the menu. «Yes, I know it. I had one when I was a boy.»
«I can listen to music and read books. It can do little more.»
«And what were you reading?»
«‘Nightfall’ by Asimov and Silverberg. You should read it, I think you’d like it.» She smiled, then gave him a quizzical look.
«Oh,» Malcolm took a step back, embarrassed. «I wanted to ask if I can take a look at the Verne. It’s not common that you can take a look to a ship like that.... from the future of another universe.»

She nodded. «You are off duty?»
«Yes.»
«I’m coming with you.» T’Mir turned off the iPod and walked toward the door.
«Um....» Malcolm stopped before exiting, looking towards the ground.
«What?» T’Mir followed his gaze and noticed that she was not wearing shoes. «Ops.» She said. «Wait, I put on a pair of boots.»
«You’d better put something over, the hangar is much colder than here.»

T’Mir nodded. «Yes.... I haven’t got many dresses anymore.» She took a black sweater and put it on, and then she followed Malcolm in the hallway. It was not exactly what he envisioned for «cover up». The sleeves came down after the wrist, spreading large, covering the back of her hands. The sweater itself was longer than the dress and fell right behind the knees. But the fact that it was a net and T’Mir had not closed on the front - and he had not seen laces or buttons - virtually nullified its purpose.

Reed, however, had to admit that the contrast between the colorful stockings and the black dress, her laced boots, made the small Vulcan-Human very pretty. Also - noticed - had the same pace of T’Pol.... or rather, had something else similar to T’Pol’s, something he had noticed immediately in the science officer.... He looked away from her and came down the ramp to reach the Verne.

T’Mir and Malcolm went inside it and he was tempted to tell her to be careful not to get caught with the sweater, but then he stopped. The girl seemed to know perfectly how to get around in those clothes.
«I’ll try to switch on systems, but I’m afraid there is very little left.» T’Mir pressed some buttons. The systems of Verne came on line, vibrating slightly, but seconds after the ship went silent.
«I think you should have Commander Tucker take a look at it.» Reed said. «He probably could fix it. Has he already seen it?»
«No.» replied T’Mir, exiting. «But I’m in no hurry. I’m sorry that I haven’t the ‘user manual’, I would have willingly left it to you.» She glanced quickly at the wrecked hull. «I called that book ‘Okay, okay, but how do I fire the phasers?’”

Reed laughed. «Eloquent.» He pointed to a part that had a different colour, attached to the hull. It has a slightly flattened hemispherical shape and was purplish grey. «What’s that?»

T’Mir leaned forward. «I don’t know....» she whispered. «I don’t remember it was part of Verne....» She stretched out her hand, trying to see if the object was moving, but it suddenly opened, releasing a spray of a liquid, smelly substance.
«Ma che schifo!» T’Mir exclaimed in Italian, then, at the same time, they both began to cough.

An alarm set off and the hangar automatically sealed.

T’Mir moved away from Verne, still coughing. «What’s going on?»
«There is a biological contamination. Was it a weapon?»

T’Mir sat down on the ladder. Trying to catch her breath, the cough slowly passed. «I have no idea. It wasn’t of the Verne, I think someone had it saddled during my journey, but I can not tell when or by whom.»
«Phlox to hangar.»

She went to answer the call.
«You must go into the decontamination chamber. There seems to be a contagious spore with you.»

("Ma che schifo!» it’s something like «it’s disgusting»)

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15th Chapter: Decontamination chamber

T’Mir rushed to the porthole of the decontamination chamber when Phlox appeared: «What’s the problem?»
«It’s all right, the spore will be eliminated by a combination of waves and gel. In short time, you will be out of here, don’t worry!»

The girl let out a sigh of relief. She could never forgive herself if her negligence on the control of the hull had caused damage to someone.
«The gel is in the compartment B.» Phlox said, throwing them a smile, before darkening the door.

T’Mir went without fail, passing a container to Malcolm.
«Have you ever been in a decontamination chamber?»
«Yes, sometimes.» She said. «It isn’t the best of the experiences, but a broken arm is worse.»

At those words, Reed could not help but glance at her bare arms. He had already noticed a scar on her right wrist, which seemed to be from laser welder, but now that she was in her underwear he could see distinctly another scar about ten centimeters long that ran along the bottom of her left arm and ended where a perpendicular scar began. He wondered if in her universe Phlox had no way to avoid the scars, but the thought was quickly sidetracked by a dark blue mark on the girl’s left shoulder. He was about to ask if she had slammed somewhere, since at first it seemed like a bruise.
T’Mir, feeling he was staring at her, looked up at him, stopping to rub on the gel. Her breath froze in her throat and a hot flush suddenly enveloped her. She forced herself to relax her muscles, trying to go with the mind, even if only for a moment, on the beach of her meditation. But she couldn’t. She followed Malcolm’s gaze and laughed nervously. «It’s a tattoo.»

Reed looked away, embarrassed. «Sorry. It was not my intent to stare....»
«No, that’s okay.» She said, but her voice was no longer safe and calm as before. She felt a slight tremor in her words. «It’s Vulcan.» She said. «-Ek’wak puksu - «forever warrior».»
«I did not know that tattoos were popular with the Vulcans.»
«No....» T’Mir threw a quick look at Reed. «They’re not. I got it on Earth.» She breathed deeply. «It was..... a moment of insanity.» she said quickly, before going, almost running, in the adjoining room. She leaned against the wall with her arms, breathing slowly, trying to calm down.

Maybe she should have tried again to go into meditation.

--Could that ever happen in here?-- she asked herself.

«T’Mir, are you okay?»

Reed had followed her and his voice sent chills up her back.
«Yes,» she said, too hastily. «I’m just a little ‘hot’» She turned and smiled nervously. --Wow, how young he is.--
«Perhaps it is better to warn Dr. Phlox, if it is a symptom....»
«No,» she said, her voice sharper than usual. «Um.... No, no, I’m fine.»

Reed didn’t seem very convinced, but he dropped it. «We have to rub the gel on our back.»
He said, raising his hand that held the jar.
«Oh, uh, yeah, yeah.» she said. --This is all we need!--

Malcolm nodded and turned around.

T’Mir turned, rising her undershirt so little that was enough to uncover the part of her back that she could not reach alone. When Reed began to spread the gel on her back, T’Mir started. His touch was light and soft as his voice.... she closed her eyes and tried to imagine being on the white beach of her meditation, but her breathing became more difficult and her thoughts were wandering in the wrong direction. --Yes, ok.... the white sand.... like his skin.... No! The palm tree.... is green.... is.... is a phallic symbol.... no! The sea... fresh water.... fluids....--
«Done.» Malcolm’s voice brought her back to reality, handing her the jar: it was his turn. She turned slowly, trying not to look at him, but it was impossible. Especially because in her side beat a Vulcan heart. She took the gel and slowly began to rub it on Reed’s back. Maybe if she took enough time, she would calm down.

Instead it was worse.

She rested her hands on his shoulders and squeezed gently. She stood on tiptoe and pressed her body against the back of Malcolm, giving him a kiss, open and wet on the side of his neck.
Malcolm shouted in surprise, he jumped up and turned around. «Captain T’Mir, what are you doing?!»

She glanced languidly. «Such a nice boy like you, Malcolm.... you should have women in every port.»

He shook his head slightly, blushing. «No, no.... it is not like that.»
«Exactly.... going around after so many months, with no distractions....» She put her arms around his neck. «Lets enjoy ourselves....» She put her leg around his hips, kissed him on the lips and pushed him back on the couch in the decontamination chamber.

[The tattoo is a tribute to the story «Eternal Warrior» by Stub and Quills]

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16th Chapter: Pon-farr

«May I?»

Commander Tucker looked up and saw Phlox holding a plate. «Of course.» Motioned for him to sit down at table with him. «How are T’Mir and Malcolm?»
«Good. They’ll leave the decontamination chamber....» The doctor smiled. «....In two minutes!»
«And you tell me it now?» Trip smiled. «Can I tell them?»

Phlox nodded. «Of course.»

The engineer stood up. «Thanks, Doc.» He slapped his hand on his shoulder and went out, almost ran from the table. It took just two minutes to get to the decontamination chamber without rushing. He had discovered less than two days ago that T’Mir was his daughter, but he already loved her. He wanted to spend more time with her, he was going to ask her to go together to Engineering. And he was going to speak to Jonathan, maybe there was a way to keep her on Enterprise.

He walked into the decontamination chamber.

–What are we doing tonight, T’Mir? Movie night? Play basketball? Pecan pie cake while watching the streak of the stars at warp? Cuddles in T’Pol’s bed?–
«Hey, guys,» he said entering. «You are free to ex....» The words died in his throat, replaced by a scream. «YOU SON OF A BITCH!»

Malcolm and T’Mir were still half asleep, lying together on the couch. Tucker lifted Reed bodily. «With all the women on this ship, why her?!»

He made a couple of steps back, trying to understand what Trip was talking about, but before he could even speak, the engineer pushed him against the wall.
«Stop!» shouted T’Mir.
Malcolm leaned forward, trying to defend himself, but the other managed to dodge it. «I didn’t know she was with you,» he shouted. «Stop, both of you,» cried the girl.

Reed tried to deviate off Tucker, but he managed to punch him on the jaw.

T’Mir put her arms around Trip’s shoulders, pressing against his back, and stopped him: «No, father, stop! It was my fault!»

Malcolm took a step back and crashed against the wall, watching the other two with a puzzled look.

Trip lowered his hands and turned slowly toward T’Mir, who sighed. «I don’t like when you two fight. You.... are such good friends.» She bit her lip. «And then he can’t help it, it’s my fault.... it’s the pon-farr.» she added. Trip looked over her shoulder. Malcolm looked particularly upset. «Make peace, please.»

Tucker sighed. «Daddy, please.» she repeated.

Trip briefly closed his eyes - how could he resist to this girl? He turned and looked at Malcolm.

The lieutenant shook his head slightly. «I’m sorry, I don’t.... I never could imagine....» «Come on.» T’Mir nudged Trip, who finally held out his hand. «Sorry, Malcolm.» he said.

He nodded. «Of course, it is understandable.... I.... I think I would have.... the same.... reaction.»

T’Mir let out a sigh of relief. «That’s better.» she said. Then she turned to her father. «Would you let me a moment alone with Malcolm?»

Trip gave her a sidelong glance. «Two minutes,» she said. «Okay.» He said finally, not very convinced. He would have called T’Pol over the intercom, just to say that T’Mir was well and she was leaving the decontamination chamber, then he would go and take a cold shower.

T’Mir waited that Trip exited, then looked at Malcolm. «I’m sorry.... I....»

He shook his head slightly, then smiled sheepishly. «There’s no problem.... it isn’t the first time Trip and I have argued.... But.... if he is....» He stopped. «My father.» T’Mir completed. «Does that mean T’Pol is your....?» «Mother.»

Reed took a deep breath. He was in trouble. In very deep trouble. «But don’t worry.... I keep them at bay.»
He let out a nervous laugh.

T’Mir leaned forward, closer to him. «Only... I ask you a favor... another one.»

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17th Chapter: Panic

Archer turned when he heard the turbo-lift open. His tactical officer came out and greeted him.
«All right, Mr. Reed?»
«Yes, sir, thank you. I’m ready to get back to work.»

The captain nodded and he went to his armchair. He was about to turn around when he noticed a pretty big bruise on Malcolm’s jaw. «What happened?»

He looked up slowly and Archer could see panic in his eyes. «Ah...» He delayed. «When we were hit by the spore, I think I have fallen and slammed somewhere.»

Jonathan smelled a «sensational lie», but left Reed alone. He got up and walked to his quarters. Once there, after a caress to Porthos, his beagle, he pressed the intercom. «Archer to T’Mir. Can you come to my quarters?»

******

16th Chapter: Flirt

«Come in.»

When T’Mir entered, Porthos rushed to her. He had never seen her, but he always cheered a newcomer.
«Eeeeeek!» yelled T’Mir, caught by surprise, and jumped on the bed, hiding behind Archer, sitting on the bank.
«Sorry. He’s harmless, but has this habit of cheering up anyone.» Then he turned to the dog. «Get down, Porthos!» He turned to T’Mir. «Haven’t I got a dog in your universe?»
«No, you have a cat.»

Archer laughed. «I can’t imagine my life without a dog.»
«Yes, certainly, in my universe you say the same thing about the cats.»
«You have to be sitting behind my back?» he asked.

She shook her head slightly and very slowly sat down on the bed. «Don’t worry, Porthos is napping.»
“Did you call me for some special reason?” T’Mir was wearing uniform pants and the “Logic is my poetry” T-shirt. She was all in black and Archer thought they were too dark clothes and she seemed even smaller.

Even her hair was black. “Whom did you get your hair from?”
“From my grandfather. Did you call me for this?”

He shook his head. “No. I noticed that Lieutenant Reed has a bruise on his face.”

T’Mir was tempted to jump up and run wildly out of the quarters. She was blocked by the thought of a dog chasing her. “Ah... and...?”
“I was wondering...” Archer stood up. “...if by chance something happened that is better I am made aware of.”

She swallowed hard. –What the hell I’m going tell him now?!– She forcedly shrugged shoulders. “No.... I don’t think....” Well, *this* Jonathan Archer didn’t know her from her birthday. Archer knew how her father was impulsive, not how it was with her.

The captain sighed. “I’m asking it explicitly, T’Mir. Has Reed done something improper, something that you had to defend yourself from.... and now.... you don’t want to tell me the reason?”
“No,” she said. “No, no, you know, Malcolm?! It’s not really like him, come on.”

Archer nodded, relieved. Sure, T’Mir was right, Reed wasn’t the one who did heavy advances. “Do you know how he got that bruise?”

T’Mir thought about saying the first lie that came to her mind but froze. “What did Malcolm say?”

He laughed. “That he fell.”

The girl sighed. “It was my fault.”
“And?”

T’Mir referred to another Astral Fleet, in a particular place and time far away, but now she was on his ship.
“He and Trip argued, because of me. Please do not make them pay the consequences for something I did.”

Archer was silent a moment, then said, “Okay. But.... was it something serious?”

She shook her head. “No. In short....” She took a deep breath. When she was a girl, she was accustomed to tell everything to Jonathan, but since then twelve years had passed and many things had changed. “Let’s say that Trip is a very protective father.”
“And you assure me that Reed has done nothing....”

She nodded. “Come on, you know. It was just a misunderstanding. Please let’s drop the matter.”
Archer smiled and sat down beside her. «Okay.»
«Can I ask two favors?»

The captain nodded. «Tell me.»
«I.... I’m not sure whether or not I’ll be born in this universe.... but if I’ll be....» T’Mir paused for a moment, looking away from him, and Archer was able to notice a slight blush on her face. Yes, her blood was red.
«Yes?» he urged.

T’Mir looked up and smiled. «Promise me you’ll teach me to flirt.»

Archer laughed: «Flirt? And why me? «

She looked up to heaven. «Come on, you’re a first-class flirter!»

‘Well, this remains to be verified....»
«Of course you are, you’re the best seducer I know.» (In fact T’Mir didn’t know Kirk.)
«Why should I teach you?»

She sighed. «Because I’m not the least capable. I don’t have the genes. I could have been T’Pol’s coldness, or Trip’s direct approach. And I’ve taken the last one....» She hugged him, laughing, but Archer noted that, in fact, that was a little girl’s hug, not a seeking a husband woman’s one. «It does not always go right for me.»

Archer patted her back as she would do with a daughter. «You’re still very sweet.»
«T’Pol is sweet too, she just pretends.»
«And second favor?» asked Archer.
«I ran out of clothes, the ones I had on before were lost in decontamination. I have only a couple of dirty uniforms, this shirt and a robe for meditation.» She gave him a huge smile.
«Can I have a uniform?»

Archer smiled and said, «Engine department?»

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18th Chapter: Hybrids

Tucker stood at the door of T’Pol’s quarters. He hesitated a moment to ring the doorbell, then went in when he heard her permission.
«T’Mir?» she asked him immediately.
«She’s out of the decontamination chamber. I think she’s gone to wash herself and then she’ll come.»

T’Pol watched him for a moment: «Is there something wrong?»

Trip looked up suddenly. «No, no .... wh-why do you ask?»
She gave him a look of condescension. «Well, because tomorrow we’ll probably have to recalibrate the injectors. The complete diagnosis is just finishing. I asked T’Mir to help us.» Tucker nodded. «Yes.... it’s a good idea.»

The doorbell rang, T’Mir entered smiling and went to embrace the Vulcan. «How are you?» asked T’Pol. «I’m okay.» She looked Trip. «You’ve told her?»

He shook his head slightly. «Told what?» asked T’Pol.

T’Mir remained silent a moment, then shrugged. «I had a sexual encounter with Malcolm.» «Malcolm - Lieutenant Reed?»

The girl nodded. «In the decontamination chamber, when we were in alone.»

T’Pol nodded slightly. «Is it good?»

The young woman smiled. «The best sex I ever had.» «Good.» T’Pol said. «GOOD?!» yelled Trip.

T’Mir ran to hide behind T’Pol. «Your daughter tells you that she had sex with a man who is.... thirty years older than her and everything you say is ‘good’?!»

T’Pol raised an eyebrow, keeping her Vulcan calmness. «You Humans give too much relevance to sex.» T’Pol said. «You think of it in a too puritanical way. It is a physiological function. A simple physical act. And T’Mir is an adult as Human and as Vulcan. If the act was good, that’s okay.»

Trip raised his hands with palms up. «I don’t think I’ll ever understand you completely. You and the pon-farr.»

T’Pol turned to T’Mir. The way in which she was hiding behind her had reminded the absurd image of herself hidden behind Reed. «Pon-farr?»

She sighed and nodded slightly. «You’re twenty-six, it’s too early.» T’Pol’s voice was dyed a light vein of concern.

T’Mir left her protected position behind her and sat down beside Trip. «Are you mad at me?»

He looked at her and all the disapproval vanished from his mind. «No.» He smiled. «No, in fact if I have to think of a partner for my daughter.... I couldn’t think of a better choice than Malcolm.» At least he was loyal man, kind, full of good will and sense of duty.

T’Mir smiled. «And *here* he is not thirty years older than me.»

Trip shrugged. «Maybe I could even say it was a fortune that he was the one there with you.»
She laughed. «But it was also obvious, I have always been in love with Malcolm.»

He looked up at the sky. «Malcolm?»
«Yeah, though I also had a crush on Jonathan and Travis. C’mon, daddy, I grew up on Enterprise, I saw them every day.... it’s normal!»

T’Pol stopped what looked like a gibberish. «Is it because you’re half human? I mean, pon-farr at your age.»

The girl sighed. «No. It’s.... for this.» She raised the left sleeve of her shirt and showed them the scar that Reed had noticed a little earlier.
«What’s that?» Trip asked, taking her hand.
«An activator.» She whispered. «It causes pon-farr four times every two days, three times a year. It should have been activated the next month, but I imagine that the space-time travel has triggered the cycle.»

T’Pol lowered in front of her daughter and took her left hand in hers. «Why?»
«I am a Vuhlkansu-komihn, I have Human and Vulcans genes. Who killed you and kidnapped me wanted to create other hybrids, with other races. This activator spared them the problem to convince me.»

Trip, quickly, hugged his daughter. «I’m sorry....»

T’Mir rested her head on his shoulder, even if she didn’t need to be comforted in that moment. Now that part of her life was gone. But staying closed to her father was one of the purposes for which she had made that trip. «You have done everything possible.»
«You can’t remove that thing because the anesthetics do not work on you.» T’Pol said.

T’Mir nodded. «Well, I also enjoy driving Soval crazy.» She laughed. «Every time I disappeared to look for a male and he could not even scold me.... matter of biology.»
«How did they put that in your arm?» asked T’Pol.
«They just held me down.» She said simply. She sighed. «But I want to be free. And now I’m here with you.... if you want to help me, I would ask Phlox to take it off. «
«The Vulcan pinch doesn’t work?» asked Trip.
«No.»
«No?» asked T’Pol.
«When I was a child I broke this arm. Exposed fracture. You tried everything to take away the pain, even making me lose consciousness.»
«We?» asked Trip. «You mean that I have.... shot you with a phaser?» That was the only thing he could think to use....

She nodded. «On stunning it causes me pain and burns, the higher.... I won’t try.»
«But the neuro-pression can help.»

T’Mir nodded. She smiled.
19th Chapter: The activator

Phlox pointed and the screen display. «There it is.» He said. «It is wrapped around the nerve.» «Yes, that’s the bastard.» T’Mir sighed. «And this, what is it?» The doctor Denobulan, despite his vast experience, had never seen two devices like that. «It’s an osteogenic stimulator. You have implanted me when I broke my arm when I was a child. After the fracture the bone structure of my arm tends to be fragile.» «It will not be easy to take off the activator.» Phlox cost. «I would make a deep incision in the arm, move the muscle aside, remove the activator, being careful not to cut the nerve and close. Without anesthetic... it’s immoral.» «But the captain could give his consent to do so.» He turned to Archer. «Wouldn’t you?»

Jonathan stood in silence for a few seconds. «Yes, yes, although I think it’s an atrocity.» «It’s an atrocity being forced to mating twelve times a year.» She said. «Let’s start.» She laid down on her left side on the biobed. «Come on, doc, cut and remove.» «Wait,» he said. «Can’t we find another way? For example, turn it off from the outside.»

T’Mir stood on her left elbow. «You underestimate your alter ego of my universe.» «I must tie down your arm.» Phlox said, not yet convinced. «Can we start, so we finish up quickly?»

Phlox decided for it and tied down her arm with two black bands. «It will not be pleasant.» «I know.» She said. «When they implanted me, it hurt very much, but I am convinced that you will be more delicate.» «Do not count on it.»

T’Mir smiled. «Phlox, here are my parents and Jonathan. I could not expect better. Open my arm and do not stop until you have removed... even if I ask you to.»

T’Pol sat down behind her and gently put her hands on her shoulders, while Tucker stood before her and took her right hand to his lips and kissed her knuckles.

When Phlox began to cut, T’Pol felt her daughter’s body stiffen. She loosened the tension on her shoulders. «I know that it is difficult, T’Mir, but try to be more relaxed, or I’m likely to hurt you.» «More than Phlox?» she whispered. Without waiting for a response she closed her eyes, she focused on the Vulcan’s delicate and sweet touch and on Trip’s hand. --The beach.-- she told herself. --Go on the beach.-- But the pain was getting too strong.

She tried to sit up. «No, stay down.» Trip pushed her against the bed. «I want to go away!» she shouted. «No, you don’t want to leave. You want to get rid of it.» he continued. He approached her and kissed her cheek. «My daughter is not one that leaves things half done.»

Phlox thought they were well below half, but said nothing.
T'Mir gripped Trip’s hand. «It hurts too much.»
«But you will be free.»

The girl shook her head. «I’ve changed my mind!» She pulled up abruptly, pushing away Trip. But her left arm was still attached and she screamed in pain.
«We’re almost done,» said Phlox, lying shamelessly.
«I want to stop,» shouted T’Mir, trying to wriggle.

Archer and Tucker, not even needing to agree, pushed together on the biobed, blocking her.
«^LASCIATEMI!!!!^» (Let me go!)
«Doctor, quick.» said the captain. His voice was barely audible over T’Mir’s Italian cries.
«I’m doing as fast as I can, but if I make a mistake, I risk to cut the nerve!»

T’Pol looked up Trip. «Come here, you have to make neuro-pression on her.»
«Are you crazy?» he asked.
«No, come here, quick!»

Trip shook his head. «No!»
«Commander Tucker, come here! It’s an order!» she shouted.
«No!»
«Trip, do what she says,» said Archer. «I order it you too!» He had no idea what T’Pol had in mind, but if the two of them were going to fight, it would have been much worse for T’Mir.

He sighed and ran around the bed, while T’Pol did the opposite. «Please, doctor, hurry.» She whispered, as she passed behind Phlox. She stood beside T’Mir. Then she put her hand on her face. «T’Mir, listen, try to relax, just a few seconds....»
«It hurts too much!»
«I know.» T’Pol leaned forward. «We have to try a mind meld.»

A few seconds passed, then T’Mir found herself suddenly in a white space, a light mist blur the outlines, but her mind was clearer than before. She could still feel the pain, but she could almost rationalize it.

She closed her eyes. «-M’aih?-»
«-I’m here.-» replied T’Pol.
«-What....?-»
«-I believe that Phlox has almost finished.-»
«-My arm hurts a lot.-»
«-I know.-» said T’Pol. «-But you do not want to be a slave to that device. You want to be free.-»
«-Yes.-»
«-You want to be free to choose. As it is right in your human nature.-»
«-Ah, m’aih.» (Yes, mother.)
«-Then you must be strong, once again, for some time.-’
«I finished.» Phlox said, resting her hand on T’Pol’s shoulder. She drew back abruptly, suddenly taking a breath. She tried to stand but was too tired. Archer caught her before she fell to the ground and helped her to sit down.
T’Mir opened her eyes slowly and looked at her arm, now well bandaged. «Thanks to you all....» she whispered, with little strength left. «Phlox, the activator....»
«Yes, it’s out.»
«Keep it....»

The four present threw her a questioning look.
«I want to break it with a hammer....» she said.

*******

20th Chapter: Olozhikaik

Trip pulled back the curtain and looked at the two women, both in the same bed. T’Mir was asleep, leaning on T’Pol’s shoulder, who with one hand was holding her left one, the other was caressing her hair.

Tucker entered the small room reserved for them in the sickbay and T’Pol stopped almost immediately caressing her daughter.
«You could go on.» whispered Trip. He sat down beside the bed. «How are you?»
«She sleeps quite calmly.»
«You want me to take your place?»

T’Pol shook her head slightly. «No, if I move now, I wake her up.»
«You were very brave to do that mind meld with her.»

The woman looked down at her daughter. «She needed help.»
«You’ve taken some of the pain she was feeling?»
«For a daughter, I can do this and more.»

Trip got up from his chair and went close to her. «You were fantastic, T’Pol. You two were fantastic.» He leaned forward and kissed her on the lips. T’Pol closed her eyes, returning and enjoying the kiss.
«How nice you are....» T’Mir’s half asleep voice caught them off guard and Trip pulled back abruptly.
«You’re not asleep?» He smiled, embarrassed.
«I woke up....» she whispered, closing her eyes. «I didn’t want to interrupt you two....»
«Yeah, well,» he stammered. «However.....»
«Father, you don’t have to justify yourself. I know that you have sex, otherwise where I’d come from?»

Trip blushed.

T’Pol raised an eyebrow, looking at him. «-Olozhikaik-» she said.
«Exactly.» T’Mir said, her voice still sleepy.
«Olo-what?» He asked.
«-Olozhikaik.-» repeated T’Mir. «It’s one of the most important words in Vulcan.» She explained. «It means ‘logic’.» She opened her eyes and smiled.
«So, while you’re awake, do you mind if I take your mother’s place, so she can rest a bit?»
«I don’t need to rest now.» objected T’Pol.

T’Mir moved slightly and gave her a kiss on the cheek. «Goodbye, see you later.»

T’Pol got out of bed, not too convinced. While passing beside Trip, he touched her hand, smiling.
«Well, I think I’ve said some crazy things....» T’Mir said.
«I think you were cursing someone.» Trip said. «You were screaming in Italian and we didn’t have a universal translator on hand....»

T’Mir laughed. «So much better.» She grimaced in pain.

Tucker sat on the bed and took her in his arms. «That’s better?»

She nodded.

Trip leaned forward and kissed her on the temple. «My brave T’Mir....»
«I love you....» she said, just before falling asleep.

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21st Chapter: The show must go on

T’Mir was sitting on the bed of her quarter for a good twenty minutes, staring at the wall.

She was dismissed from the sickbay in the evening and now was night for the time on Enterprise.

Beside her on the bed, the uniform that Archer had promised her, a pair of wire cutters, a pair of scissors and a Velcro bandage, (I have made this up myself, looks like an automatic blood pressure cuff).

She couldn’t start.

She raised her hand slightly with the iPod.

It was an ancient instrument, but its status was changed. She pressed «play» to access the clock menu, then look for a hidden function that no one would find without knowing it. A countdown, which at that time marked forty-seven minutes.

She sighed.

She couldn’t wait any longer.

She took off the bandage that Phlox had put on her arm. She winced when she tore the dried blood from the skin. She took the cutter and started cutting the stitch that closed the incision.
One by one, because her manual skills were technical, not of a doctor. One at a time and she felt such pain that she would, again, swore in Italian.

She tried to order herself not to cry, but tears began to flow without that she could help it.

She didn’t cry for the wound that she was reopening.

She was crying because that night when she said goodnight to T’Pol and Trip, Archer and Reed and all the others on the ship, she knew that was not a «see you tomorrow», but a farewell.

And she knew that she will miss them so much, not only her parents but all the other crewmembers.

Jonathan, when she was little, kept her on his knees to play, telling her of their past adventures and how her parents were always upstanding, both in their sense of duty, both in oddities, like the time Trip had saved the ship in his underwear. The same time that T’Pol had threatened to leave him handcuffed to a door.... her beloved captain Jonathan.

Travis had taught her to drive and he played with her in the «sweet spot». Hoshi had taught her to read and write.

And above all, Malcolm: she loved him since she was eight years old, she had never forgotten him during the years in prison or when she roamed the space with Soval, and even when she met other men, of every race, in Milan. And now she had shared with him an intimacy she had never experienced before. She closed his eyes. She had never been with a male so sweet. She had hit rock bottom when, in the throes of pon-farr, and after a fight with Soval, she had let a Klingon interpreter convince her to take her in bed with him.... «bed» was not the right expression, since they mated on the grass of the suburbs of Milan, under the stars. She was so drunk she couldn’t even remember she agreed getting a tattoo. Or if he asked her to. She found herself the next morning, alone, still on the grass, in pain and with blood that dripped from her left shoulder, where, who knows who, had tattooed «forever warrior» in Vulcan. And the Klingon was gone.... neither she had his name in her memory. With Malcolm, it had been completely different. She remembered his uncertain caresses, shy kisses, the curious and discreet brushing on her pointed ears, which she liked so much, his introverted character even in making love with a Vulcan in heat.

She bit her lip not to scream when she tore the last stitch. She laid down on the bed, breathing heavily. She hurt so much that she would try to shoot herself with a high set phaser to take away the pain.

But she couldn’t. She had to survive, because she had to accomplish a mission. She sat up, dabbing the blood that had begun to flood. Then she put the Velcro bandage on her arm and squeezed it.

She sighed when she picked up her uniform. The first thing she had to do was rip the left sleeve of her black T-shirt. She hesitated, then pulled the seam until it broke. She put on underwear, then took her uniform. No, she couldn’t tear it. She made a cut, slowly and precisely, at the bottom of the left sleeve.
She stood and slowly slipped into her torn uniform, taking care not to damage it further.

She looked herself in the mirror, trying to ignore the cut on the sleeve, from it she could see the bandage. She had grown up with these uniforms. She adored them, they made her feel at home.

She sighed.

She watched the countdown on the iPod. She had too little time to linger in front of the mirror.

She left the room and walked in the deserted corridors. She knew perfectly the ship, she did not need to follow the directions that Soval had insisted to give her.

Getting to the transporter room was simple. She began to quickly type commands and data she had learned by heart.

She cast another look at the iPod and synchronize the time with the startup. She swallowed hard. She was afraid. Afraid of failing.

But most of disappointing her parents.

She left the iPod on the transporter console and went to the platform.

She closed her eyes to focus on the countdown and, when there were left only ten seconds, opened them. «M’aih, father, forgive me.» She whispered. «Four, three, two, one, energize.»

T’Mir’s body disappeared just before a loud bang shook the entire Enterprise.

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22nd chapter: The attack

Captain Archer and his officers ran toward the bridge, awakened by the sudden tactical alert.

T’Pol and Trip crossed in the corridors, T’Pol running on the bridge and Trip to the engineering.

«Where’s T’Mir?» asked Trip.
«In her quarters. She was very tired.» Their speech stopped when their paths diverged.

As soon as T’Mir rematerialized, she began to walk along the corridor of purple steel that was in front of her.

She felt the onset of two phaser guns and turned. «/Stop, Vulcan./» It was the Xindi reptiles language.
She turned and looked at the Xindi weapon that was aimed to her. «/It’s me./» she replied using the Xindi reptilian language, then added in Italian: «/“Idiota.”/»

Archer quickly arrived on the bridge with a firm step. «Report, Lieutenant.» «An unknown ship.» Reed said. «On screen.» «It has come out of warp and opened fire against us. No harm, for now.» «I don’t recognize the ship.» T’Pol said. «Hoshi, hail them.»

Sato quickly moved her hands on the console communication. «They don’t answer sir.» «Send a message: ‘Turn down your weapons or we will be forced to aim at you.’”

«/You might even be Soval in person./» the Xindi said, keeping the gun aimed at her. «/We aren’t lowering weapons./»

T’Mir walked toward him with secure steps. «/There is an agreement between us./» «/I repeat, you hybrid. Even if you were Soval ./.»

«Sir, they still have the phaser guns pointed to us.» Malcolm announced. «Aim our weapon to theirs.»

Enterprise was rocked by a second attack. «Lieutenant Reed, aim and fire weapons.» «Aye, sir.»

On the screen appeared the red ray of Enterprise phaser. As always, the aim was perfect, but the ray, arrived just a few meters from the enemy ship, broke up and what looked like shards of light flooded the screen.

The ship was hit by quakes, as if they were entered an asteroid field without polarizing the hull. «I see five vital signs on board.» T’Pol said at last. «Four Xindi.» «And the fifth?»

T’Pol said, her voice slightly uncertain. «Human.» «Human?» «Sir.» Reed called. «There was a transfer of energy.» «Where?» «From the transporter room.» «Hoshi, have that checked.»

T’Pol looked up from the scanner to biosignals. «Captain....» Should she tell him? She swallowed nervously.
«Subcommander?,» said Jonathan, nervous because of T’Pol’s hesitation. Since when T’Pol hesitate?
«I’ve conflicted readings. Now the vital sign is…. Vulkan.»

Archer swung around and stared at her.

T’Mir arrived on the bridge, behind her a Xindi reptilian with a phaser rifle aimed at her, and another one held her arm.
«/Look who’s here, commander T’Mir./»

She pulled her arm free. «/Now I’m captain./» she said annoyed. «/There’s a agreement between Humans and Xindi./»

The Xindi Captain stood up and approached her. «/Human and Xindi. I don’t think you/» He bent over her. «/belong to one of these groups./»
«/No, but you’re shooting at a Terran ship./”

Archer came up to T’Pol. «T’Mir left Enterprise via the transporter a few seconds before we received the first shot.»

The Vulcan shook her head slightly. She felt that the damage that had caused by trellium-D threatened to push to the surface the feelings she felt. She loved T’Mir, she was her daughter. Was it possible that they had been betrayed? She felt her muscles tremble slightly.
«Now T’Mir is on that Xindi ship,» Archer thought he was saying something that everyone knew perfectly. Maybe he didn’t want to believe it and had to convince himself. Perhaps she was taken away by force.

The turbo-lift doors opened and Tucker come out.
«Commander, you should be in the engineering.» Archer noted.

Trip raised his hand and showed him and T’Pol T’Mir’s iPod. «This was on the transporter console.» He whispered. He was visibly upset.

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23rd Chapter: Phaser

«/Stop shooting!, ^figlio di puttana^!» T’Mir sprang forward, but her race to the Xindi captain was interrupted by the guard that fired his gun to her back. T’Mir shouted, feeling the phaser ray that struck her in the middle back, the pain searing and penetrating pervaded her body.

It was not so many years ago when she was shot by her father, he had aimed to her left shoulder, with a narrow beam, just enough to stun her. And since it was unsuccessful, he took
her in his arms and cuddled for almost a whole day. She still remembered Phlox’ voice, in the background, which criticized the methodology used and failed.

This time the pain was strong and felt the skin burnt where she had been hit. She remained on the ground floor of the Xindi ship, trying to catch her breath, as she felt in the background the Xindi captain contacted Enterprise.

«Sir.» Hoshi called. «They’re calling.»

On the screen appeared the terrible face of a Xindi reptilian. «Starship Enterprise, any attempt of resistance is futile. Give up and you will not be harm.»

Archer turned to the screen. «Of course!» He said, sarcastically. «Our two races are at war!»

The Xindi continued, with a smirk on his snake face: «You’re wrong, Captain. You are not at war with us. But with the Xindi of this universe.»

Tucker thought he was going to puke. He had never had space sickness, but at that moment it seemed that Enterprise was collapsing on him.

T’Mir....

His T’Mir!
«It isn’t possible.» he said.
«In ten minutes we will destroy your ship. You have time to give up.» The transmission ended.
«Captain.» Reed called and his voice seemed uncertain. «It seems that they are calibrating their weapons on.... frequencies of our polarization.»
«Damn!» He turned to Hoshi. «Contact them. Say that I want to talk to T’Mir.»

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24th Chapter: The promise

«^Quanto sei stronzo!^» Yelled T’Mir, in Italian. (You’re such a bastard!)
«/I don’t understand what you’re saying./» the captain Xindi said. «/But it doesn’t seem very friendly./» He raised his gun phaser.

T’Mir raised her arms in surrender. She felt that the wound was opening again, probably due to the shot. She felt blood flow to the elbow and soak the split. Red blood. Human blood, like her temperament. Jokingly, Phlox had said that human blood and Vulcan blood were exactly the same color.... to the eyes of a color-blind. T’Mir tried to draw strength from those memories. She stood up. «/You made an agreement with Humans. And with the Vulcans./»
«/This is where you’re wrong, *Captain*/.» he stressed the grade. «/We Xindi have a pact with the humans in our universe. Not with these. And just the fact you’re here, is indicative that the Vulcans are missed in that agreement./»
«/I have not fired on your ship./»
«/You are outside the Vulcan jurisdiction of our universe./»
«/You too, I think. I was on a pleasure trip, what is your excuse?/» She said. «/End the attack. These Humans will never be in our universe to bother you. They also are aware of your weak spot./»

The Xindi captain laughed. «/You’re so naive. It’s an exchange between Xindi ‘brothers’ from different universes. They do a favor to us, and us to them./»
«/You are more advanced of thirty years. What the hell could they have so important for you?/» For real she knew it. Materials that were not anymore in their universe, such as lots of trellium-D which mark the boundaries that would not be crossed by nosy Vulcans. In his universe, and the era he came from, T’Mir knew it was a very rare element. Soval had discovered that loads trellium-D were passed in their universe, threatening to undermine the balance of the multiverse.
«/It’s none of your business./» The Xindi rose again the phaser gun and fired.

«I can’t believe T’Mir gave them our frequencies,» said Tucker. «It isn’t possible!»
«Sir.» Sato looked up on the captain. «They’re calling again.»

The Xindi reappeared on the screen.
«Have you decided to surrender, Captain Archer?»

He stared at him. The Xindi looked too civil. «No.»
«If you shoot us, you’ll kill one of you.»

T’Mir appeared on the screen, caught between two Xindi. She was alive but had more injuries than the first time they’ve seen her. She looked exhausted and the phaser rifle pointed at her head didn’t improve her appearance.
«She’s not one of us.» Archer said.

T’Mir closed her eyes. She just wanted to vanish.
«Of course she is,» Replied the other. He must be very careful. He thought that Humans knew the weak point of his ship, as T’Mir had suggested. And in fact, it could well be so, since she had just used it to teleport herself on the ship. «We can solve the matter peacefully.»

Archer let out a sardonic laugh. Did they just talk about ‘peace’?!
«We cracked your shields code, we have weapons more advanced than yours. We don’t want to kill you all. We just want Commander Charles Tucker and Sub-commander T’Pol. The others will be free to go.»

T’Mir raised her head, her eyes pointing toward the left part of the screen. «Malcolm, remember....!» A blow to her side silenced her.

Archer shook his head. «No.»
«So I guess little Tucker IV will make a bad end.» He turned to the guard. «Let’s give them a taste. Shoot.»
«No,» shouted Trip. «Leave her alone!»
T’Mir screamed worse than when she was in the sickbay and fell to the ground.
«So what do mommy and daddy want?»

Hoshi and Travis turned towards Trip. Even in the desperation of the situation they could not help but be deeply surprised.
«I will come.» Trip said.
«No.» Archer turned. Ok, now it was quite clear that T’Mir wasn’t a spy, but there were still a lot of dark points.
«We want both of you.» said the Xindi.
«Captain.» T’Pol said, rising.
«Stay in your seats. That’s an order.»

T’Mir laboriously pulled up. «Let me talk to them.» She said. «Without stopping me. They’ll listen to me.»
«No» said the reptile dryly.
«Does T’Mir speaks Xindi reptilian?» whispered Sato.
«It’s one of the many things that she’ll have to explain.» Archer said. «Try to lock on to her with the transporter.»

Malcolm shook his head. «She’s under their shields.»
«There was an agreement between us.» T’Mir went on, talking to the reptile. She pulled herself to her feet, leaning on the console. Behind her, the guards aimed weapons to her.
«Then, Captain Archer. Have you decided? The entire ship and this hybrid, or just those two?»

He shook his head. «Your proposal is not acceptable.»

T’Mir closed her eyes and, without being noticed by the Xindi, put her hand in the cut of her uniform. She just needed a simple, fast move.... It was much more difficult to bear the pain if she had to do it to herself. She had the temptation to retract her hand. But finally she did it. She raised her arm quickly, showing what she had said Phlox to be an osteogenic stimulator.

The guards pointed to shoot, but the captain stopped them. He stood up, holding the gun pointed at her. «Put it back from where you took it out.»
«Ponfo mirann.» She smiled. «No, you moron. And yes, it’s what you think. A miniature V bomb.»
«It is not yet activated.»
«Do you think I’m such an idiot to use a bomb that will be created in only forty years?»

The Xindi captain seemed agitated.
«Soval’s temporal agent aren’t not just going in 2194. This is called a Garth bomb.» T’Mir laughed. «I could just made it explode in my arm, activating it. But I preferred to give you a chance: it will explode in two minutes, when it’s no longer in contact with me. Maybe if you hurry up and punch on it all four together, you have time to deactivate it.»
«You turn it off.» he ordered.
«Why? You want to kill my parents. I can still hope to get out of here. Or I explode with the bomb, or I kill you. But you have time to think about it, until I am holding it.» She raised it higher. «There’s another little problem. After I launch it, in ten seconds it will blow up in a stunning micro-grain, strong enough to prevent you from feeling pain.»
«/Turn it off now!/» shouted the Xindi.
«^Provaci tu, testa di cazzo!^» exclaimed T’Mir in Italian and threw the bomb as far as possible, at the bottom of the bridge. All four Xindi let go the weapons and the surveillance on her to run towards the bomb. T’Mir turned and ran toward the weak point of the ship. Maybe, if she ran fast, someone on Enterprise could have transported her back, at least to bring her to the court martial.

But the stunning micro-grain exploded. T’Mir screamed and fell to the ground, unconscious.

Archer saw all the Xindi fall to the ground, stunned. «The transporter,» he ordered, and Trip, T’Pol and Malcolm didn’t make him tell it twice.
«There must be a weak point in their shields.... but she is out of it, shit!» Tucker shouted. «I can not take her from here. Beam me there.»
«I will go.» T’Pol said, running towards the platform.
«No,» Malcolm went on first. «Come on, hurry up, send me!»

Trip took his arm while the other stopped Archer. «She’s *my* daughter, it’s my duty to go and take her!»

Reed gave him a shove. «Sorry, Trip, but T’Mir made me promise to defend you. You both. So it’s up to me.»

T’Pol and Trip exchanged glances in surprise.
«Quick,» cried Malcolm.

Tucker nodded. «Bring her back to me.» he said, while giving energy.

Malcolm reappeared under the weak point of the Xindi ship, and looked down the hall. T’Mir was lying on the ground less than ten meters away from him. He ran forward and turned her on her back. «T’Mir?» The girl didn’t answer. He took her in his arms, she felt heavy, abandoned. Then he quickly ran to the weak point.
«Bring them here quickly,» said Archer to Trip.

Reed, with T’Mir in his arms, rematerialized in front of them. The lieutenant looked up to the girl’s parents. «She doesn’t respond....» His whisper was interrupted by the explosion of the Xindi ship. The shock wave caught Enterprise on her side, all her crew fell to the ground. But, after the wave front, all went back to calm. Too quiet. Trip got off the ground and ran on the platform.
«She doesn’t move.» said Malcolm. «She’s losing a lot of blood.»

Tucker took her in his arms. «Let’s bring her to Phlox!»

It never seemed so long the way from the teleport to the sickbay. «Phlox!» he yelled.
«Put her on down here,» he said.

Trip gently placed T’Mir the biobed. Her body was completely limp. Her left arm fell over the edge, red drops of blood dotted the floor clean. Phlox took her hand. «They have completely re-opened the wound,» he said. «Whoever did this is a real butcher!»
Trip leaned on her daughter, kissing her repeatedly on her face. «T’Mir, please.... resist....»

Phlox opened the girl’s uniform. «She’s full of phaser burns.» He pointed behind Archer. «Hand me those bandages.»
«Doctor, do something.» Trip was now in a panic.
«Get him out of here,» said Phlox.
«No! I want to stay here with her!»
«Captain, he is getting in my way.»

T’Pol took his arm, pulling him. «Come on, or it will be worse.»
«But I want to stay here with her.» he said.
«So we’ll just be in doctor’s way.»

Trip let her drag him out of the sickbay.

Phlox finished bandaging her arm. «She has lost a lot of blood. I’ll have to synthesize it as soon as possible.»

Archer looked at the girl and shuddered when he saw the phaser burns. Generally phaser guns cause slight redness, set on the stunning. It seemed that they had shot her to kill.

25th Chapter: B positive

Tucker stopped in the middle of the corridor. «Let’s go to her quarters.» he said.

T’Pol was about to tell him that it wasn’t a good idea, but he was already on his way. She followed him without speaking.
«Look.» Trip said, entering T’Mir’s room. He crouched down beside the bed. On the floor there were the bloody bandage and the cut stitches.

T’Pol bent down beside him, looking on the bed. There were a cutter and a pair of scissors. She took the first one and watched it. There were blood stains on the blades.

Tucker shook his head. «What the hell has she done?»
«She reopened the incision that Phlox made.» She said.
«Alone? And why?»
«To remove the bomb while she was on the Xindi ship.»

Trip sighed. He sat on the bed. «I don’t understand.... it seemed.... they were friends.... T’Mir and that bastards.»

T’Pol sat down beside him. «She has destroyed their ship, however, to defend us.»

He shook his head. «The stunning micro-grain.... what if.... if it’s lethal for her?»

T’Pol closed her eyes. «We can’t know that.»
The engineer turned and hugged T’Pol. «I don’t want to lose her.»
«It could haven’t last long, Trip. We knew from the beginning that sooner or later we would have lost her....»
«One thing is to lose her if she returns to her home.... totally another is....»

T’Pol put her hand on his shoulder. «Phlox is a great doctor.»

Trip closed his eyes and two tears did a line on his cheeks. «I love that girl.... because she’s our daughter.... I can’t lose her.»
«I can’t stand it anymore, the wait is too long.»

T’Pol looked down. They were on T’Mir’s bed, Trip had his head leant against T’Pol’s chest and swollen eyes.
«It’s been only ten minutes.»

Trip closed his eyes. «How long will it take??» He never would have imagined to want to leave that position. T’Mir made him do and say things he had never thought he could do or say.

T’Pol also felt the same way. «I do not know.» She closed her eyes and leant her cheek on Trip’s hair.

As a Vulcan she could accurately count the passage of time, but this didn’t improve the situation.

The intercom rang and, before Phlox’ voice call them, T’Pol and Trip were already out of the room.
«I’ve treated her wounds.» Phlox said. «But she’s still very weak....»

Trip pulled the curtain. «What will happen?» he asked.

Phlox sighed. «It’s too early to tell. I have to sum up her blood, she has lost much.»
«T’Mir told me she has human blood. I can give her mine.»

Meanwhile, T’Pol had approached the bed, in complete silence, almost without anyone noticing. She sat down and without touching anything, watched her daughter.

Phlox shook his head and pulled the curtain, leaving T’Mir alone. «I’m not sure it’s exactly human blood.» Phlox said. «Of course, it’s red, but may not be compatible.»
«Do your analysis.» He held out his arm.

Phlox put Tucker’s the blood under the neutron microscope, then he looked up in surprise. «Commander, you are A positive.»
«Yes, that’s right.»

The doctor shook his head slightly. He resumed using the microscope: «But T’Mir’s blood is B positive.»
«There must be a mistake.» He felt that the panic was returning. 
«No, you’re not compatible. I have checked twice both samples. I can’t waste anymore time on this, I have to synthesize it.»

Trip shook his head slightly and slipped silently in the compartment where T’Mir rested. He looked at her. He had his skill. But it could be an acquired trait. Why lie to him?

While Phlox was at work, Captain Archer stared at the results of the analysis. Could be that the other universe T’Pol had lied to both Trip and her daughter? He approached the room and looked through the slightly ajar curtain. T’Mir was B positive. Archer was B negative. This suggestion, for him, it was pretty gruesome.

«It was easier than I had hoped.» said Phlox and ran to attack the vial of blood to T’Mir’s drip. «But her vital signs....» whispered T’Pol. «....Aren’t improving, as they should.»

Phlox shook his head slightly. «For now it is normal. T’Mir is in self-care.»
«And what does that mean?» Tucker asked, almost in a whisper.
«It’s a deep state of trance.» T’Pol said. «We need to focus all energies on the wounds to speed healing. Is she conscious?» she asked Phlox.
«That’s what usually happens in self-care, yes, but I doubt T’Mir indeed is.»
«So it’s a good thing?» Asked Archer.
«It depends.» Phlox said. «T’Mir suffered severe damage. I’ve managed to cure several wounds, but her physiology is unique. We just have to wait for the next few hours.»

Tucker sat down beside her and rested a hand gently on her face. «T’Mir, try to heal.... because we have still many things to talk about.»
«So what’s with you?» whispered T’Pol.

Trip turned to her. Even though he knew that was absurd, felt a vague sense of betrayal. «Phlox says that my blood and T’Mir’s.... are not compatible.»

T’Pol closed her eyes. «It’s common.»

He shook his head slightly. «But in this case.... she’s B and I’m A.»
«You’re thinking that she is not your daughter.» T’Pol said. Trip could have sworn that there was a hint of weariness in her voice.
«That’s how it appears.»

The Vulcan raised an eyebrow. «It’s illogical.»

Tucker gave her a hostile look, but his voice was a whisper. «Really?! T’Mir took human blood.»
«Phlox did genetic tests that confirm T’Mir’s version.»

Trip had to admit that she had a point. Genetics do not lie. «How will you explain the inconsistency of the type of blood?»
«I think you’re the only one that’s going paranoid about it. My blood group is P and for what I know of human physiology, P is very similar to human B. Apparently T’Mir’s blood is mixed more than we had previously thought.»
He felt a bit relieved. For once T’Pol’s logic was in his favor.
«We can always ask Phlox to repeat examinations.»
«Crossing them with Archer’s?» he whispered.

T’Pol gave him a look of condescension. «If for you it’s so important, well, do it, but I consider all this a waste of time.»
«What do you mean?»

She whirled toward him, coming so near him that Trip could feel her light breath on his face. «T’Mir is our daughter. Mine and yours. This is enough.» Albeit in a whisper, her tone did not allow doubt.

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26th Chapter: The beach (This chapter was inspired by the story «Gateway» by Quills

The slight hum of the scanner immediately attracted T’Pol’s attention. Tucker had fallen asleep on T’Mir’s bed, holding her hand. The Vulcan looked up on the monitor. She had observed it just a moment earlier, and she noticed that the vital signs had fallen over an hour before. She got up and left the tent. «Dr. Phlox?»

The doctor pointed to the screen. «I made again the blood tests as you asked and you’re right: T’Mir took blood from you. I had never seen such a thing, in fact T’Mir is a very special individual that—»
«PHLOX!»

The doctor was startled and turned to the woman. «T’Mir’s vital signs are getting worse.»

He entered the room and looked at the monitor. «It’s strange. In self-care they should improve....»

Trip blinked and looked up. «What’s up?» He asked, but was ignored. «It seems that....» Phlox shook his head. «I’m afraid T’Mir doesn’t know how to exit the self-care alone.»
«I know it can be dangerous....» whispered T’Pol.

The doctor took T’Mir by the shoulders, shaking violently. «T’Mir! Wake up!»
«What are you doing?» Said Trip.
«She can’t hear me.» Phlox said.
«I can make her listen to me.» T’Pol sat on the edge of the bed. It was not easy to live with this girl, she thought. Within the few days that had been on Enterprise, it was the third mind meld that she had to do. She felt a sense of loss, when she found herself on a beach. She looked around, but it seemed deserted. She walked quickly to the shore, where she could have a broader view of the place. She didn’t know one could be in a mind meld with someone without seeing the counterpart. «T’Mir!» she called out. But no one answered.
“T’Mir, where are you?” Then she saw a palm tree. She ran in that direction and when she got closer, she saw her daughter nestled at the foot of the plant.
“T’Mir.” She whispered, leaning close to her. “I think you lost your way back. Come on, I’ll take you out.”
“No….” she whispered. “My parents are dead. And they kidnapped me. I don’t want to get out of here. They hurt me, cut me and touch me and make me do things that I don’t want to do.”

T’Pol put her hand on her shoulder. “No, not anymore, now you’re safe. And we are here with you.”

T’Mir looked up, her eyes full of tears. “I don’t want to get out of here. Because when I wake up, I have to go back to my universe, where you are dead.”
The Vulcan shook her head slightly. “But if you stay here, you risk dying….”
“Better death than a world without you.”

T’Pol shook her head and hugged her daughter, pulling her toward you. “In our universe we have yet to talk about so many things, T’Mir. You cannot stay here. Let’s go.”
She shook her head. “I don’t want.”
“Your father has already lost a sister. How do you think he would feel if he loses you too?”

T’Mir didn’t answered.
The woman stood up and took her daughter’s hand, pulling her up. “Come on, lets go.”

She stood up slowly. “Do you like this place?” she whispered.
“Yes, it’s very beautiful.”
“This is where I come when I meditate….”

T’Pol slowly opened her eyes.
“It’s working.” Phlox said, taking a medical tricorder near T’Mir and while checking the monitor.
“So why isn’t she awake?” asked Tucker.

“Well, now it should be easy to awaken her completely….” Phlox placed the tricorder in T’Pol’s hand and gave T’Mir a slap that made Trip scream: “What the hell are you doing?!” He jumped in feet, but was stopped by T’Pol, who put a hand on his chest. “She needs a strong stimulus.” she said.
“And there is no other way?” Tucker looked puzzled Phlox drawing the girl a second slap. “Enough!”

T’Mir slowly opened her eyes.
“It worked.” T’Pol said.

The girl let out a loud moan of pain. “Did I fall on a plasma collector?”
Phlox smiled. “Welcome back.”
This time no one stopped Trip. He came by his daughter and kissed her forehead. «T’Mir!»
«Daddy....» she said. «Hello....»
«How do you feel?» asked T’Pol.
«Have I many burns?» she asked.
«Several phaser wounds.» replied the woman.
«Aah....» T’Mir complained, trying to move. «I swear that if I could I’d have some ecstasy....»
«Ecstasy?» asked Trip.

She nodded and let out another moan. «Can you turn me on my side, daddy?»
«Sure.» He said, putting his hand gently under her hip to turn her. «But what about the ecstasy....?»
«It stuns me and I take away the pain.» she said.

Trip turned to T’Pol and she shrugged her shoulders slightly.
«Why did not you say so before?»
«Ecstasy breaks my neurons. I don’t really like to use it. It’s dangerous.»

Archer opened the curtain: Phlox had called him and he ran to the sickbay from the bridge.
«T’Mir! How are you?»
«Oh captain, my captain,» she proclaimed. «What can I offer you not to take me to court-martial? Five bars of gold?»

He laughed. «It seems you are fine.»
«Yeah, well, apart from the skin at 451° F....»

Phlox shook his head. «Your temperature is much lower.» He said. «The canonical Vulcan 33°C.»

T’Mir blinked slightly. «Why am I here? I remember that the stunning micro-grain exploded when I was still on the Xindi ship.»
«That’s a really good anesthetic for you.» Phlox said.
«Malcolm came to you and taken you away, back here on Enterprise.» Archer replied, lowering at her bedside. «Certainly you’ve made us suffer.»

She smiled. «Sorry.» She closed her eyes. More than anything, she felt burning of the skin of her back. «Is it all right now?»
«The Xindi ship exploded shortly after you and Malcolm were back on board.» said Trip.
«Of course, there are many things that still remain.... unclear.» Archer said. «But I wouldn’t send you to the martial court.»

T’Mir sighed. «I know. I regret having kept hidden all to you....»
«Not everything.» Phlox said. «Just that the Xindi ship of your universe was going to destroy us.»
«I tried to convince them to turn around.» she said. «But diplomacy is not my best side.» She smiled and, like everyone else, looked at Trip.
«Why are you all looking at me?» he asked. Then shrugged. «How did you learn the Xindi reptilian language?»
«Hoshi.» she said. «It was our secret code. A strange language that only she and I talked with on Enterprise.»
«It seemed that you knew the crew.»
«I knew the captain. We took the same flight course at the Academy.»
«Xindi and Humans are allies?» asked Archer.
«Yes, in the future from which I come.»
«You said... together? With a Xindi?» Trip already felt his stomach twist.
«Yes, in the flight course, daddy.» she explained. «And if you all are wondering, no, I’ve never been with a Xindi. Neither with a Xindi humanoid.»

Trip laughed and gave another kiss to T’Mir. «Of course you risked very much.»
«Yes, but it went well. According to Soval’s plans, I should not be here.»
«It was a suicide mission.» T’Pol said. «But I don’t see the logic of it.»

T’Mir gave her a look: ‘I had no doubts.’ «We knew that the Xindi ship would come to this universe to kill you both. A trade-off between the Xindi of my universe and the ones of yours. I was the best candidate for this mission. I’m motivated, I knew the captain, I speak Xindi reptilian language, I know Enterprise... We had to stop them or they would kill you both. Knowing that I would be body searched, the only way was to use a weapon under the skin. When Phlox opened my arm, I thought maybe I could try to save you.»

Trip shook his head. «But it makes no sense. You have risked to be killed, just to save us?»
«Neither I nor your father,» T’Pol continued. «believe that is correct.... we are no more important than you.»

T’Mir sighed. «For me, yes.... for the story.... you may not. But Lorian is much more important than me.»

The Vulcan looked at the girl. «Who.... Who is Lorian?»

Archer could swear he heard amazement in her voice.
«Lorian is.... my brother.»

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27th Chapter: Another Vulcan girl

Trip rang the doorbell for the fourth time. Worried, he entered T’Pol’s quarters. He heard the sound of the shower, but T’Pol seemed to be under it for nearly an hour.
«T’Pol?» He went into the bathroom. It wasn’t hot. «What the hell!» He entered the shower and closed the water. «Are you crazy to stay under water so cold?!»
«Can you go out, please?» T’Pol said, sitting on the floor of the shower, legs and arms folded against her body.

Trip shook his head and retrieved a towel to wrap the Vulcan. «What’s wrong?»
«Go away, please.»
«Explain to me why you were under a cold shower.»
«I needed to calm down.»

Trip looked up to heaven. ‘Restless’ for a Vulcan was more or less as ‘sleepy’ for Terran.

After the revelation that, in effect, Trip and T’Pol would have a child - a son *at least* - in that universe, T’Mir said that Soval would cut her into pieces (with calm and tranquility, using a logical method) if she revealed more. The idea of thwarting the efforts of the last hours to keep her alive ordered to change the subject.

«I don’t understand why it effects you so much. When T’Mir appeared, it was logical to imagine that even here we....»

«Please go away.» repeated T’Pol.

«I don’t think you are okay. I want to know why.»

She sighed and looked up. «When I was betrothed to Koss, I said I wanted to call my son Lorian, like my father.» (Note: I totally invented this, but I’ll use it in the other stories.)

«I think this is another proof that T’Mir didn’t lie.» He smiled. «Anyway, from what I understand, Lorian is destined for great things. For this reason T’Mir came here to prevent us being killed by the Xindi of her universe.... and that she made Malcolm promise to defend us.»

T’Pol nodded slightly. Then she raised her head. «I am calm. Can you go out now?»

Trip looked up to heaven. «Okay, I’m leaving. But just because I have another Vulcan girl to cuddle.»

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27th Chapter: Good and bad news

T’Mir, sitting up in bed in the sickbay, was fiddling with the iPod, when she heard someone coughing lightly. She looked up and saw Malcolm. «Hey, hello!» She said, holding out her arms towards him.

«Hello.» Reed said, without making any step towards her.

«Thanks for having kept the promise.» T’Mir said. «And also having risked your life to save me.»

He finally came near her. «Duty.»

«Oh come on, come here and hug me,» she said. «Be careful, however, I have phaser burns on chest, back, arms.... in short, a bit everywhere.»

Malcolm ran his hands slowly around her shoulders. It was a bit difficult and even embarrassing for him.

«Mhmmm .... no, it’s not good.» T’Mir said. «Give me a kiss.»

Reed drew back and looked around. «No.... I don’t think it’s opportune.»

«My parents haven’t done something to you, right?»
Malcolm looked down. «Hmm.... no.»
«You don’t need to defend them from me. It was not what I meant with the promise that I asked of you.»

He laughed nervously. «They told me that.... that they would have killed me if I made you suffer. At this point I would prefer being killed by T’Pol: she has promised to kill me with a phaser gun.... Trip said that I would die slowly.»

She laughed, imagining T’Pol, quietly standing behind Reed, while calmly made that promise. «You didn’t hurt me.» She took him by the arm and pulled him towards her. Quickly put a hand behind his head and had him down to kiss her.

Malcolm took her face in her hands, savoring those moments of sweetness and hoping no one came at that time.
«You should have more fun.» T’Mir said. «I hope.... I am not the one that make you suffer.»
«For what reason?» Malcolm straighten up.
«Am I interrupting something?»

The lieutenant turned where Archer had appeared.
«No.» he said. «I was going away.» He smiled at T’Mir and disappeared from the tent.
«You okay?»

She nodded slightly. «You came to give me bad news, right?»

Jonathan sat on the edge of the bed. «I don’t know if.... they are precisely definable as ‘bad’.»

T’Mir lay back against the pillow, taking care not to touch her shoulder and back. «Soval.»

Archer nodded. «We have a rendezvous with his ship in two days.»
«Two days .... No even the time to catch my breath.» T’Mir sighed. «I don’t want to go back in that universe. It sucks.»

He nodded. «I know.» He took her hand. «I can give you an assignment on this ship. We can find an excuse for you to be here.»

T’Mir shook her head. «The whole mission on Verne was to last only eight days. It was unrealistic to think that could continue indefinitely.»

The words sounded familiar, but he knew she was right. The captain nodded. «I’ll miss you.... and not just me. But.... I was thinking about something. At this moment, in this universe, there are Ambassador Soval of my universe and Admiral Soval of yours. Two Sovals in a single universe. «

T’Mir laughed. «Are you giving me a good reason to go back in my universe?» She hugged him. «Could I ask a favor? One last favor?»
«Of course. What?» He asked.
«There’s a Minshara class world not far from here. It’s not inhabited, but has a beautiful turquoise sea.»
«I don’t know if, by making a detour, we’ll arrive in time to the rendezvous.»

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T’Mir shook her head. «We must arrive at least two hours late.» she said. «Otherwise Soval will think you had me brainwashed.»

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28th Chapter: Turquoise Ocean

Trip watched with concern the large flat surface of the turquoise sea. «Where’s T’Mir?»

T’Pol stepped forward, getting her feet into the water. «I can’t see her.»

The girl suddenly re-emerged and smiled to the three persons remained on the shore. «Come, come! It’s beautiful, it’s hot!»

Trip gave a smile to T’Pol and Archer. «How can you resist to an invitation like that?» He ran into the water and reached her daughter. «So we have done this too.» He said. T’Mir embraced him, kissing him on the cheek. «I love you.» he said. «And nothing will ever change that.»

Trip smiled. «Me too.» He hug her and closed his eyes. Few days had passed since she entered into his life, over the warp drive. But she felt so close to his, his daughter. «I’ll miss you.»

Archer looked at T’Pol. «Aren’t you going in?»
«Sea bath is not exactly a type of Vulcan recreation.»
«Sub-commander, aren’t you tell me you cannot swim?» Archer smiled at her.
«I can swim in all Vulcan styles and some from Earth.» she stressed.
«So what are waiting for to get in?» Without waiting for an answer, Jonathan went into the water. She was right, it was hot.

T’Mir stopped playing in the water with Trip and swam to shore. «What are you waiting for to get in?» She took the woman by the hand and together entered the water. «It’s hot.»

T’Pol nodded. «Like the sea of Vulcan.»

T’Mir glanced to see where were the two men. They were far enough away from them and looked like they were mimicking a water polo game - without the ball. «I must tell you something. But.... I need it to remain between us. Do not tell daddy.... neither Jonathan nor.... Malcolm or others.»
«A secret, in fact.» said T’Pol
«-M’aih.... i k’kan.-»

T’Pol glanced at the two men and then brought attention to T’Mir. «It’s Malcolm’s?»
«Yes.... After all these years with that activator in my arm, I.... didn’t expect to be able to have kids. I am a hybrid and hybrids are usually sterile.... This is wonderful news for me.»
«Are you happy?»
«-Ah, m’aih.- Yes, mother.»

The Vulcan took her daughter’s face gently in her hands. «Take care of yourself.... and of it.» «Her.» pointed T’Mir. «It’s a girl.» She smiled. «Charline T’Pol Tucker.»

T’Pol kissed her cheek. «I’ll miss you.»

Her daughter nodded. «Me too.» «Will you stop gossiping and join us?!» yelled Trip, by far.

She laughed, started to turn around, but the Vulcan took her hand under water. «Be happy.»

T’Mir could see a small, quick smile on T’Pol’s face.

Now she could go home. She concluded her second mission too: make T’Pol smile.

THE END

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The cut scene

Malcolm was sitting at a table in the mess hall, almost deserted. «Is it free?»

He looked up when he heard T’Pol’s voice. He nodded slightly, feeling his stomach twist.

The Vulcan sat before him, with a steaming cup. «I guess you’ve learned that T’Mir is my daughter.» «Y-yes....» «She told me you had sex with her in the decontamination chamber.»

Malcolm moved uncomfortably in his chair. It was true, well, T’Mir literally jumped on him, and as far as he knew, T’Mir risked her life, if did not mate. But it was true that he also had enjoyed it. «Ye-ye.... yes....»

T’Pol, with her typical Vulcan calm, looked at him: «If you make her suffer, I’ll kill you with a phaser pistol.» Having said that she rose from the table. «See you on the bridge.» She went out, always calm.

Malcolm stared at the door for a few minutes, then got up and came down in the armory. He worked a long time, trying to calm his nerves.... until he heard the door open and saw Trip enter. The commander greeted him casually, then stationed on his side. «All okay here?» «Yes, I just finished testing.» Reed said.
«Look, Malcolm, about what happened today.... I’m sorry I punched you, T’Mir has the right to do what she wants....»

Reed nodded nervously. He felt that there was a «but» as big as Enterprise at the end of that sentence.

And in fact it came. Trip leaned with one hand on the console, putting the other on his hip and looked at him seriously. «But if you make her suffer, I’ll kill you slowly. I’ll take off a piece of skin at a time and leave you tossing and turning in your blood for at least two weeks.» Then he clapped his hand on his shoulder. «I could not ask for a better son-in-law. See you at the movie night?»

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«Vorrei liberarti l’anima
del blu dei giorni tuoi e
fingere che ci sarò.»
[I’d like to free your soul in the blue of your days and pretend that I’ll be there.]
(“Di Sole e d’Azzurro” - Giorgia)

26/09/2007

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26/09/2007
“I Naviganti”

I Naviganti 1: K'lalatar Prkori K'lalatar Prnak'lirli
I Naviganti 2: K'lalatar Prnak'lirli K'lalatar Priori
I Naviganti 3: Prkori - Quarto Universo
I Naviganti 4: Mélangées
I Naviganti 5: Gajtuian
I Naviganti 6: Io Sono la Quarta
I Naviganti 7: Voi Siete il Mio Equipaggio
I Naviganti 8: Ghemor
I Naviganti 9: My! My! Time Flies!
I Naviganti 10: Myra e Shedar
I Naviganti 11: They
I Naviganti 12: Killing Me Softly
I Naviganti 13: Teneri Paciocchini
I Naviganti 14: Drifting
I Naviganti 15: Perché il Mondo È Concavo ed Io Ho Toccato il Cielo
I Naviganti 16: Bad Romance
I Naviganti 17: Against All Odds
I Naviganti 18: Il Profumo dei Limoni