Eugene's Genesis

Tom Paris was just about to finish off his second slice of pepperoni pizza (a 20th century Earth delicacy that his wife amusedly put up with) when his communicator bleeped.

"Kim to Paris."

Sighing and putting the last couple bites of pizza down with a longing look, he tapped the gold and silver emblem on his chest. "Paris here. What's up, Harry?"

"Tom, could you come down to holodeck 1? I have something here . . . Well, something that you should see."

"Harry, B'Elanna and I are having dinner," Tom answered pointedly, looking up at his very pregnant wife who was watching the conversation in curiosity.

"I'm sorry," Harry answered. "Look, I have a problem here. Well, not really a problem. But . . . I don't know what to call it."

"What are you talking about, Harry?" B'Elanna asked.

There was a pause on the other end of the communications link.

Husband and wife shared a look of surprise. Harry Kim rarely didn't know how to answer a question, no matter how complicated.

"Just please come down here when you can," Harry finally answered.

Still looking at his wife, Tom answered, "We'll be down in a few minutes, Harry. Paris out."

With the communications link cut, the couple resumed their dinner. "I wonder what this is all about?" Tom wondered idly.

"We'll find out in a few minutes," B'Elanna answered, forking up the last few bites of her banana pancakes.

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Arm in arm, Voyager's chief helmsman and chief engineer arrived at holodeck 1 four minutes later. Both reflexively checked the computer console next to the door, which indicated that it was in Ensign Kim's allotted time slot, but that no program was currently running.

The door swished open and the two lieutenants entered. They immediately stopped again just inside the door at the very unusual sight that greeted them. Harry Kim was standing at the interior controls, apparently working with the holodeck computer on some problem or another. This was not terribly unusual as Harry was one of the five best holoprogrammers onboard the ship. What was unusual was that what at first glance appeared to be a second Harry Kim was standing behind him and watching what Harry was doing in avid interest.

Tom blinked. B'Elanna blinked.

Hearing the door open and then shut, both men looked over. Harry in relief and his doppelganger in polite curiosity.

"Guys, thanks for coming down," Harry said.

"Harry," Tom greeted him absently, not tearing his gaze from the other man.

"Harry, who is this?" B'Elanna asked, eyeing the newcomer appreciatively. Though he shared Harry's basic looks and body structure, there were a few differences. His hair was worn longer, gathered in a loose ponytail falling to his shoulder blades. He wore some type of prismatic gem in his left earlobe, giving him a much more rakish appearance than the normally straight-laced Harry had. B'Elanna also noticed he was wearing a command maroon uniform instead of the mustard operations that Harry wore, as well as another full rank pip.

Harry's mouth quirked at B'Elanna's question. The other man smiled widely and strode forward, shaking B'Elanna's hand when it reflexively came up as well. "Call me Eugene. I'm Harry's evil twin brother," he said cheerfully in a perfect mimicry of Harry's voice.

Harry sighed and shook his head.

Tom asked hesitantly, "Evil twin brother?"

B'Elanna was looking at Harry curiously. "Eugene?" she mouthed at him.

"He's a hologram," Harry announced.

"Humph," Eugene said, folding his arms and sounding somewhat put out. "That doesn't stop me from being your evil twin brother."

Harry rolled his eyes. "He has a sense of humor."

"I see that," B'Elanna said, looking him up and down with a grin. Eugene grinned back and threw her a wink. She frowned suddenly in thought. "Wait a second. Computer, what program is currently running?"

"There is no program currently running in holodeck 1," the computer promptly answered.

"Then who's this?" Tom asked, gesturing to Eugene.

"Holo-character Eugene, initially from program 'Kim Brainstorming'."

"If no program is running, then how can he be here?" Tom asked reasonably.

The computer beeped and chirped to itself for a moment. "Unknown," it finally answered.

"Now you see part of my problem," Harry said.

Eugene sighed. "I've already explained this," he said.

"Harry, who is this?" B'Elanna repeated her earlier question.

"Eugene," Eugene answered again. "I was originally written to be a sounding board for Harry when he had a programming or engineering problem he needed help with back at the Academy. Since moving to Voyager, I've been given access to more of the ship's database, so I can make more informed suggestions. He also added some of the emotive subroutines from the EMH and gave me my name. Lastly, he granted me access to his personal logs and the public ship logs." The threw a wink at B'Elanna, "You should read some of what Lieutenant Carey wrote about you just after you were made Chief Engineer."

She blushed. Tom grinned. Harry sighed again.

"So you are aware that you're a program," B'Elanna said, working through the situation.

"Sure," Eugene said, waving one hand dismissively. "That doesn't stop me from being self-aware."

Tom and B'Elanna stared. Harry said, "Now you see the rest of my problem."

"Indeed," Eugene absently agreed. He was circling B'Elanna, looking at her from every angle. When he noticed Tom's hackles rising, he stopped and looked at the other man. "Sorry, Tom. Harry mentioned in his logs that he thought B'Elanna was good looking and that impending maternity looks good on her. I was just coming to the same conclusion."

Harry was blushing at the grin everyone threw at him. "Gene, you aren't supposed to reveal things from my personal logs like that."

"Sure I am," he cheerfully retorted. "What's family for, otherwise? I didn't tell them about your dreams about the Delaney twins, did I?"

"Gene . . ." Harry growled, blushing brighter than ever.

"Definitely need to add a discretion and confidentiality routine," Tom commented with a mostly straight face.

"Oh, I have one," Eugene assured him. "On the other hand, you two are as close to family as he has here on board, so some of the boundaries are shifted."

Tom raised his eyebrows, looking touched. B'Elanna just grinned at Harry, having long ago realized this fact about Harry and Tom's relationship. Pursuing the previous line of conversation, she asked, "You claim self-awareness?"

Eugene nodded.

"Prove it," Tom challenged, seemingly fascinated by the situation.

Eugene shrugged. "How can you prove your own self-awareness?"

"This is getting ridiculous," B'Elanna sighed, getting fed up with what might simply be an upstart program. "Computer, end program." She didn't expect it to work, but it was the right place to start.

"No program is currently running," the computer replied promptly.

She nodded. "Remove character Eugene."

Eugene folded his arms and grinned.

The computer chirped. "Unable to comply."

"Why not?" asked the half-Klingon.

"Character Eugene is not under computer control."

B'Elanna frowned, not having expected that one. Giving her authorization as chief engineer was a waste of time if Eugene couldn't be affected by the computer. "What or who is controlling Eugene?"

The computer paused. "Unable to determine."

"Speculate," Tom ordered.

The computer paused longer, giving several seconds of beeps and chirps, before finally giving two possibilities, "Speculations: Character Eugene under self-control or unknown source of control."

Eugene grinned smugly. "I told you."

"Harry, why did you create an AI?" Tom asked his friend. Unspoken was the legality of doing so and what they should do next.

"I didn't," Harry replied. "As he told you, he was originally a sounding board for me at the Academy. Once we were here in the Delta Quadrant, I brushed him off, opened up his database access a little, and used him for more in-depth problems. He was a little dry to talk to, so I copied some of the Doctor's emotion routines and tweaked them for Eugene. I also gave him access to my logs and the ship's public logs so he'd know what was going on and any changes done to the ship when he wasn't actively running." He winced and went on, "When the Hirogen took over Voyager, I tried to wake him up enough to be an invisible saboteur on our side. I never quite got that to work, though. I haven't touched him since. When I came into the holodeck this evening, here he was," he finished, waving his hand at the hologram. "I didn't even try to activate him. He was just there."

Tom turned to Eugene. "What Harry's done shouldn't have created a sentient program. It'd be very sophisticated, but not really sentient since it'd be merely reactive, not proactive. What happened?" None of the others questioned Tom's statement. He was the most knowledgeable of anyone onboard about holoprogramming.

Eugene gnawed on his lip for a moment. "Someone else has been modifying my program." He raised a hand at Harry's look of rage before he could ask the next question. "I'll tell Captain Janeway about it, and she can decide whether to pursue that. Don't bother looking for the information, Harry. I've hidden it where you'll never be able to find it." He grinned at the ensign. "Remember those stealth and deception routines you gave me to try and avoid the Hirogen?"

Harry winced. "I've created a monster."

Eugene pouted theatrically. "Moi? A monster? Hardly. Think about the possibilities, Harry. A new crewmember with my speed and access to the computer?"

"He has a point," B'Elanna admitted. "Even if he doesn't have your genius with operations and ship's systems, Harry, he could be invaluable in Engineering at the very least."

"I'll take that as a compliment," Eugene grinned. His eyes suddenly widened. "Computer, padded, reclining chair, please." A chair materialized beside him.

Harry looked at him curiously. "You're a program; you can't be tired."

Eugene gave him a dark look. Taking B'Elanna's hand and elbow, he gently steered her into the seat. "All expectant mommies, even half Klingon ones, should stay off their feet for long discussions," he explained to the two men.

B'Elanna couldn't decide whether to be outraged or grateful. Tom groaned and put one hand over his eyes. "You've created a monster."

Eugene sighed. "No respect. I don't get no respect."

B'Elanna grinned, making her decision. "I think I like you."

Eugene grinned back.

"Hey," Tom mildly protested, "that's my wife you're making eyes at." He turned. "Harry, could you please keep your son under control?"

Harry choked. Eugene started laughing.

Smiling, Tom turned to B'Elanna. "Chakotay next?"

She nodded and tapped her communicator. "Torres to Chakotay."

"Chakotay here," he responded after a short pause. "I'm kind of in the middle of something here, B'Elanna. Can it wait?"

B'Elanna paused, weighing the advisability of pursuing it further when Chakotay clearly wasn't in the mood.

"I'm afraid it can't, Commander," Harry added his opinion.

They could all hear Chakotay's sigh. "Fine, what is it?"

"I'm afraid it'd take too long to explain, Chakotay. Come on down to holodeck 1 and we'll show you."

"B'Elanna . . ." he growled, clearly impatient.

Eugene opened his mouth and uttered a string of syllables that the computer flatly refused to translate. Everyone in the holodeck stared at him.

Chakotay paused for several seconds. "Harry?" he finally asked, sounding somewhere between awed and concerned.

"It's part of what we need to show you, Commander," Harry apologized, not even knowing what he was apologizing for.

"I'll be right there," Chakotay promised, no longer sounding impatient.

After she cut the link, B'Elanna looked at Eugene with a question in her eyes.

He just shook his head.

"Am I going to be in trouble?" Harry finally asked several seconds later.

"I don't know, but if you are, it won't be for what I said to Commander Chakotay," Eugene answered.

"Somehow, that isn't totally reassuring."

Eugene just grinned. With a theatrical wave of his hand, he conjured three more chairs, forming a semi-circle.

Harry snorted softly. "Show-off."

B'Elanna nodded. "Yes, he is, but he's also showing how good he can be with the computers, especially the holodecks."

"Just so long as he doesn't get mad at us," Tom grumbled, plopping down next to his wife.

Chakotay stormed in. "What is it, B'Elanna? I was in the middle of . . ." he trailed off, catching sight of two Harry Kim's. He sighed and turned to B'Elanna, "If this is some sort of practical joke -"

"I can assure you that I'm not a joke, Commander," Eugene smoothly interrupted.

Chakotay looked at Eugene, noting the differences between him and Voyager's Ops officer. "Harry?" the first officer asked for an explanation.

"His name's Eugene, sir," Harry promptly responded, nervous in the face of Chakotay's obvious ire. "He started out as a program, but has now possibly become sentient."

"Possibly?" Chakotay queried with a frown.

Harry repeated the highlights of Eugene's existence.

When he finished, Chakotay turned to Eugene, "Who was the other person modifying your program?"

Eugene shook his head. "I'm sorry, sir, but I'm willing to discuss that only with Captain Janeway." When Chakotay opened his mouth to argue the point, Eugene shook his head. "It's a confidentiality issue here, sir. At the moment, it falls under the same confidentiality issues as does anyone else's holodeck usage."

Chakotay cocked his head slightly as he thought that one over. Finally giving a short nod, he settled himself into the remaining seat. "Commander Chakotay to Captain Janeway."

"Janeway here."

"Captain, there's a situation that I think the senior staff plus doctor needs to address."

"Now, Chakotay?"

"I'm afraid so, Captain."

They could all hear her sigh. "Very well, call them in. I'll be in the conference room in ten minutes."

"Holodeck 1 if you could, Captain. We need to be here to discuss this."

"Acknowledged," Janeway curtly responded before shutting down the link.

After calling Tuvok and the Doctor to the holodeck, Chakotay turned to Harry. "Why Eugene?"

"Pardon?"

"Why did you name him 'Eugene'?"

Harry blushed. B'Elanna and Eugene smiled, followed a few seconds later by Chakotay's grin.

Breaking the mood, Eugene snapped his fingers and two more chairs appeared in flashes of light.

"Great, now he thinks he's Q," Harry muttered.

B'Elanna responded, "Let's face it. In here, he could be considered an omnipotent being."

Eugene perked up. "Finally! Someone recognizes my true worth."

Harry groaned and let his head fall back onto the back of his chair.

The Doctor strode into the holodeck calmly. "Good evening," he greeted everyone. His gaze stopped when it reached Eugene. He cocked his head and studied his fellow hologram intently.

Tuvok entered the holodeck and raised an eyebrow at the scene. Instead of saying anything, he simply took one of the available chairs and leaned back to observe the proceedings.

Harry was looking back and forth between the Doctor and Eugene. He would swear the two were communicating without a word being spoken.

Janeway stormed into the room. "What's so important that you interrupted . . ." she trailed off as she spotted Eugene. "Report," she curtly ordered the room at large.

"A sentient hologram," the Doctor spoke up first.

Tuvok's other eyebrow rose.

"How?" Janeway snapped out.

For the third time, Harry explained Eugene's origins.

When he had finished, Tuvok raised the first point. "Captain, Eugene represents a security risk to the ship. With his links to the computer and Ensign Kim's security codes, he could be a danger toward us."

"Worse," Tom opinioned, "considering his very nature and what Harry tried to program into him when the Hirogen were here, there's almost no way we could even try to contain him if it comes to that."

Harry glared. Eugene's eyes narrowed. "Thank you for that vote of confidence, Tom."

Tom shrugged. "No slight against you, Gene. I'm just pointing out the truth."

Eugene grudgingly nodded. "Okay, but I'd prefer to go by Eugene. I dislike being called 'Gene'."

"Speaking of, his name wouldn't have anything to do with 'Eugene' being Tom's middle name, would it, Harry?" Chakotay asked innocently.

Harry blushed again. Tom's mouth fell open. Eugene smirked at him. "Where do you think I got my sense of humor, Uncle Tom?" Eugene asked flippantly.

B'Elanna and Chakotay choked on their laughter.

Giving a soft smile herself, Janeway asked, "Who is this other person who modified your code, Eugene?"

His smile fell away. "In private if you please, Captain."

She studied him for a few moments before giving a sharp nod.

A starship door appeared at the other end of the holodeck. Eugene waved toward it and said, "No time like the present, Captain."

Janeway stood and walked toward the doors. Tuvok stood as well and said, "Captain, I would accompany you on two grounds. First, despite his origins Eugene is still a largely unknown quantity. Second, what he has to say could well be a matter of ship's security."

Janeway turned to Eugene with a raised eyebrow, clearly asking his opinion.

He nodded. "Makes sense. As the ship's security officer, he has a right to this information anyway."

"Then you're welcome to come along, Commander Tuvok," Janeway invited.

The three walked through the doorway into what appeared to the five remaining officers to be the conference room.

"How much trouble am I in, Commander?" Harry asked hesitantly.

"Probably not much," Chakotay answered, staring at the door. "What you did wouldn't have created a sentience. Whoever added to his program crossed that threshold."

"Everyone is talking as if it's immoral to have created a sentient hologram," the Doctor accused.

"In some cases it is," B'Elanna explained. "Depending on the purpose of creating the life form, it could be illegal."

"Then could you and Lieutenant Paris be arrested for that child you're carrying? After all, you're creating a new life form," the Doctor asked, incensed.

Surprising the Doctor, Chakotay smiled. "You've hit the crux of the problem, Doctor. How is having a biological child different than creating an artificial intelligence? Philosophers have been wrestling with that one for centuries. That's part of the reason AI's are so uncommon. Morality is still ambiguous on this point, and the laws have barely even tried to touch it. The other reason AI's are still uncommon is because they tend to be . . . unstable."

The Doctor jerked in surprise.

"It's for a variety of reasons, Doctor. Actually, you won't have that problem to the same degree as many other sentient programs. You have a clear purpose from the base programming level, namely the health of your patients. You also have a deep rooted respect for life for the same reason. With those two facts, you're less likely to become destructive or self-destructive than other sentient programs have been known to become."

"That's comforting," the Doctor dryly. The other four grinned.

The holodeck doors opened and Seven of Nine entered. She looked at the five senior officers in confusion. "The Captain sent for me?" she asked.

B'Elanna's mouth twitched.

"Through those doors, Seven," Chakotay motioned.

"Thank you, Commander," she said on her way past.

The second doors closed before Tom spoke, "Harry, you stud." When Harry's eyes widened further than should have been physically possible, Tom broke into laughter.

Chakotay and the Doctor shared a confused glance. B'Elanna explained in a mostly steady voice, "Before you two were called in, Tom teased Harry that Eugene was his son. I think we just found out who Eugene's mother is."

Tom's laughter gained volume. Harry buried his face in his hands.

Chakotay patted Harry's shoulder comfortingly. "I'm sure he'll turn into a fine man, Harry. You'll be proud of him."

Even the Doctor's lips twitched at that.

Harry looked over at Chakotay with a baleful expression, "Et tu, Chakotay?"

The doors opened again and Janeway led the four out of the holographic conference room. "It's good to see we're all taking this in good humor," Janeway noted with a raised eyebrow as she surveyed her helmsman in hysterics and three other senior officers valiantly fighting grins.

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Janeway walked away from Chakotay, Kim, Paris, Torres, and the Doctor toward what turned out to be a replica of the conference room. Behind her, Eugene and Tuvok fell into line and took seats.

Kathryn was amused to find a cup of coffee sitting at her place at the table. She tossed a look to Eugene. "Your doing?"

He shrugged modestly. "Just trying to make my captain comfortable."

"Captain," Tuvok warned as Janeway reached for the cup.

She sighed. "Tuvok, considering the level of holoprogramming he's already demonstrated, if Eugene had a mind to hurt any of us, do you think he's incapable of doing so?"

Tuvok considered it for a moment. "No, Captain." He didn't bother mentioning the holodeck safeties. With Eugene's already proven computer skills, any answer the computer gave would be suspect. The fact that they were all still healthy was all the proof that Tuvok truly had. That would have to suffice for the moment.

Janeway nodded, satisfied that she'd gotten her point across to her security officer. She'd also thought of the safeties, but came to the same conclusions. Discussing it in front of Eugene seemed somehow impolite.

Janeway took a sip and nodded approvingly. "Very good, Eugene. Thank you."

He smiled. "Thank your historical database. It's from an old Earth franchise that specialized in coffees."

Tired of the light-hearted byplay, Tuvok asked, "You indicated that you know who modified your programming beyond Ensign Kim's original construct?"

Eugene nodded. "Annika Hansen," he stated simply.

Tuvok didn't react. Janeway just sighed.

"You don't seem very surprised," Eugene observed.

Captain Janeway shared a quick look with her security officer. "This isn't the first time that Seven has tried to use a hologram of a crewmember to develop her social skills."

He nodded. "She mentioned something about that to me at one point."

"Did she indicate to you why she had chosen you and why she was modifying your program?" Tuvok asked.

He gnawed on his lip in a comfortingly human gesture before saying, "Yes, but I must ask you to keep this confidential." Getting their nods, he continued, "She is aware that Harry had something of a crush on her, years back. She thought that that would transfer itself to me."

"She was aware of your access to Ensign Kim's personal logs?" Tuvok asked.

Eugene shrugged. "From things she's said, it was clear that she'd already researched my program before she activated me the first time."

"The first time?" Janeway asked.

"I've had more than a dozen . . . encounters with her," Eugene answered delicately.

Janeway opened her mouth but then shut it again, her question unasked.

After pausing a moment to see if his captain had a question, Tuvok repeated his earlier question, "Did she reveal to you her purpose to modifying your base program?"

"She wanted me to be able to think for myself. She wanted a level of spontaneity that holograms generally don't have."

"Could she not have ordered the holodeck computer to insert some randomization into your reactions?" Tuvok asked next.

"Yes, she was doing that for quite some time. Finally, she gave up on that approach since it's still somewhat predictable. She'd had to give it a finite list of possible reactions to choose from. She apparently wanted someone truly reacting unpredictably to her, but according to accepted human norms."

"She used the Doctor's creativity routines?"

Eugene shrugged again. "I suppose she did. I don't know for sure."

"When did you 'wake up'?" Janeway asked.

"After she added the creativity routines, she ran me. She was once again 'exploring a social scenario' as she put it. During that timeframe, as I was assimilating the new routines and Harry's latest personal logs plus Voyager logs, is when I 'woke up' as you put it."

The way he repeated her words was innocuous enough, but something sounded just a bit off to Janeway. She cocked her head, studying his blank expression for a moment. "How would you put it?" she asked finally.

"I was born," he promptly responded.

Tuvok tilted his head, but Janeway nodded in acceptance.

"When was this?" Tuvok asked.

"Last night at nineteen thirty-four, sixteen point nine three seconds."

"Yet you waited until tonight to announce your presence?" Tuvok asked next, not the least bit surprised by such a precise answer.

Eugene frowned for a moment in thought. "When I realized what was going on, I didn't let on to her what had happened to me. When she ordered me off, I removed the visual hologram from the holodeck and tucked myself away in the tertiary computer core. I just existed and thought for quite some time, becoming used to what I am and deciding what to do next. This evening, when I spotted Harry heading toward this holodeck, I figured he'd be the best person to contact first. I was here waiting for him when he showed up. The rest you know."

"Do either of you have any issues with my bringing Seven of Nine into this conversation?" Janeway asked.

Eugene shook his head, but Tuvok said, "Not as such, but we will need to discuss possible disciplinary actions with regards to her behavior."

Eugene's lips compressed as he glared at the Vulcan. "You're going to punish her because she created me?"

"Incorrect," Tuvok promptly replied. "Misuse of another crewmember's holodeck program and image without their knowledge is the probable charge."

Eugene relaxed a fraction. Janeway put a hand over his forearm, "The fact that it resulted in you, an apparently sentient program, is a mitigating factor, Eugene. It was not done in malice toward Harry or you, and resulted in a positive result, but that doesn't alter the fact that she broke regulations by accessing your program in the first place."

When Janeway saw that Eugene was comfortable with that answer, she tapped her combadge. "Janeway to Seven. Please report to holodeck 1."

"Acknowledged," the former drone answered simply.

They sat quietly for a moment before Eugene asked quietly, "What are you going to do with me, Captain?"

She looked at him. "I'm not going to delete you if that's what you're asking."

He let out a simulated breath. "Thank you. From a purely logical point of view, that would solve several potential problems," he finished, flashing a look at Tuvok.

Tuvok didn't disagree.

"Perhaps," Janeway agreed, "but doing so would be tantamount to murder."

"Only if I'm ever declared self-aware," Eugene pointed out.

"I already have one holographic crewmember. Why should I deny your right to live?" she shrugged.

Eugene slumped in his chair a fraction, clearly relieved.

At this point, the door swished open and Seven strode in. "You wished to see –" she cut herself off as her eyes found Eugene.

He nodded neutrally at her. "Annika."

After emotionlessly studying the hologram for a few seconds, she addressed herself to Janeway, "May I ask the reason for his presence?" Janeway swore she heard a note of uncertainty in Seven's voice.

Tuvok spoke up, "Eugene has apparently become self-aware through your modifications of his program."

Seven's eyes widened slightly, but she made no other reply.

"Seven, do you wish to continue the conversation in here, in private, or can we take it back out to the rest of the senior staff?"

"I've no objections," she responded a little stiffly.

"Eugene?" Janeway asked next.

He simply shook his head and stood.

Janeway led the four back out to the larger area of the holodeck, surprised to find Tom almost falling out of his seat with laughter. The only one not appearing to be amused was Harry, who looked ready to die of embarrassment. "It's good to see we're all taking this in good humor," Janeway noted with a raised eyebrow.

"Yes, Captain," Chakotay agreed with a smile.

Three more chairs shimmered into view as the doorway to the duplicate conference room evaporated. Tuvok, Janeway, and Eugene took seats immediately. When the Doctor and Seven looked at him in surprise, he said, "It'd be more comfortable for all of them," he waved an arm to indicate the sitting senior staff, "if we were all at the same eye level."

"I see you've made good use of the psychological database," Chakotay observed as the Doctor and Seven seated themselves.

Eugene smiled.

"As I'm sure you've deduced, Seven is the other crewmember who has modified Eugene's program," Janeway announced.

Harry gave her a betrayed look, and Seven had the grace to look ashamed of herself.

"Chakotay, Tuvok, and myself will be deciding what, if any, disciplinary action to take." She held up a hand to Harry's impending interruption, "For using your image and modifying your program without your permission. Not for Eugene's apparent self-awareness." When Harry nodded and settled back down, she continued, "Now we just need to decide what to do about him. I've already assured him that his being deleted isn't even going to be considered."

"I should hope not," the Doctor muttered.

"I could always use an extra engineer," B'Elanna mentioned.

"If he's as good on the bridge as Harry is, he'd be invaluable there," Chakotay mentioned.

"He's already proven to be an expert holoprogrammer," Tom added.

"Being a hologram, he would also bring unique skills to the security department," Tuvok offered.

"You're too popular for your own good," Harry whispered to Eugene.

For his own part, the hologram only smiled sadly at Harry's comment.

"Perhaps you should actually ASK him," the Doctor acidly recommended. His comment caused everyone else in the room to stop.

"Quite right, Doctor," Janeway acknowledged after a moment. "Eugene, what would YOU like to do?"

"Live," the newly awakened program answered simply. "To be fair, I should probably be tested for each position before even thinking about taking it. Commander Chakotay, while I appreciate the vote of confidence in my abilities, I honestly do not know if I'd be any good at the Ops position. While I do have some creativity subroutines, am I as good as Harry is at it? I don't know. Lieutenant Torres, I could probably be a competent engineer. I have full access to the standard manuals and Voyager's schematics, after all, but do I have the same intuitive flair with the plasma relays that you do? Lieutenant Paris, yes I can do anything that occurs to me in the way of holoprogramming, but does that mean I can write Captain Proton episodes as well as you can? I'm not saying this to belittle myself. I simply do not know the limits of my own imagination. I need to discover what I'm good at and what I enjoy before deciding what I want to do."

Almost everyone looked impressed by the little speech. The Doctor was smug. "Never underestimate a hologram," he pronounced, just loudly enough for Eugene to hear.

Janeway slowly nodded. "I apologize, Eugene. It was presumptuous of me to think that you'd already know what you wanted. You're only a day old, after all."

Everyone chuckled.

"Thank you, Captain," Eugene grinned.

"Meanwhile, there are a few things that do need to be arranged. Is your program currently running under your own authorization?"

He shook his head. "No, actually it's running under Annika's since she was the last one to start me up."

"You'll need your own set then, just like the Doctor's," Chakotay said. "We'll get that arranged later."

Eugene nodded appreciatively.

"Until we find a position for you, I would ask that you attire yourself as a civilian," Janeway said with a grin.

Eugene smiled back and waved one hand over his clothes. In place of the command track lieutenant uniform, Eugene was suddenly wearing dark slacks and a beige shirt.

Harry let loose a little sigh of disappointment.

The Doctor blinked in surprise. "You can modify your own image?"

Eugene nodded. "I'd be happy to help you out later if you wish." He turned to the captain, "Is this acceptable?"

She nodded and turned to B'Elanna. "Is it possible to build a secure system for Eugene's program like we did for the Doctor?"

Torres nodded. "Not a problem. We have all the items on hand for once. It should take only a few days."

Janeway turned to Eugene. "Is that acceptable to you?"

He nodded. "Just so long as we teach the main computer that I'm not a virus and try to eradicate me, I should be fine until then." He cocked his head and continued, "We will need more holoemitters once we figure out where my post is."

"Sharing the mobile emitter is a temporary solution at best," the Doctor agreed.

"I'll let you two work that little issue out between yourselves until we know where your workplace will be, Eugene," Janeway demurred.

"Yes, Captain," Eugene agreed.

"Where will he be staying?" the Doctor asked.

Everyone looked at him curiously except Eugene. The younger hologram had a small grin trying to appear on his face.

The Doctor explained, "Forcing Eugene to 'live' in the computer system would be inhumane. Giving him exclusive use of one of the holodecks would solve that problem but cause severe problems for the crew."

"And asking you to share sickbay isn't much better," Chakotay acknowledged. "Do either of you have a suggestion?" he asked the two holograms.

"A holosuite," the Doctor promptly responded.

"As quarters," B'Elanna murmured to herself. She thought for a few seconds and nodded. "It certainly makes sense, Captain. For very little physical space, we can provide 'quarters' for Eugene and even the Doctor. All it takes is computing power and some holoemitters."

"To be fair, it'll take more than a closet," Tom added. "Even in a holodeck, people take up real space, even if there are holographic walls. If one or even both of them have company, there needs to be enough space that their guests don't literally bump into each other."

Harry looked vaguely embarrassed at the insinuation that Eugene would be having 'company' in his quarters, but the Doctor and Eugene himself looked appreciative.

"B'Elanna, let me know what it would take to build a holosuite for Eugene and the Doctor as well as choices for what room you're going to be converting."

"Aye, ma'am."

"Eugene, I'll give you two weeks to decide what post you would like to try. Feel free to work with department heads for any aptitude tests that you, and they, feel the need for. We'll get some sort of quarters arranged for you as quickly as possible. Meanwhile, you can use any of the holodecks when they're not reserved for any crewmembers. Doctor, for the time being, can he stay in sickbay when needed?"

"No problem, Captain. Eugene and I will work it out."

"Eugene, for the moment I'll grant you all rights and privileges afforded to any crewmember. With your unique situation and access to the main computer, I ask that you maintain a level of discretion with regards to the rest of the crew. I'll leave you with Commander Chakotay to set you up for the time being. Do you have anything further we need to talk about as a group?"

"No, Captain, but I would like to speak at Annika's disciplinary hearing when that occurs."

"Commander Tuvok will inform you of the particulars, then. Anyone else?"

At the general shaking of heads and negative answers, Janeway stood. "In that case, I'm going back to bed. I'm sure I'll see everyone in the morning."

"Good night, Captain," Chakotay said.

Tom and B'Elanna also took their leave. Seven stood and looked at Eugene for a few seconds, clearly trying to decide what, if anything, to say. Finally, she gave a whispered, "Good night," and left. Tuvok left with merely a nod to everyone.

When the Doctor made a move to leave, Eugene stopped him. "Doctor, may I come to the Sickbay later? You and I have a lot to discuss."

The Doctor smiled. "Indeed we do. Feel free to pop in after you and Commander Chakotay finish up. Good evening, Commander."

"Doctor," Chakotay acknowledged him.

"Harry," Eugene called to the last retreating back.

Harry Kim turned and looked at his doppelganger uncertainly.

"I'm sure this will end up being uncomfortable for you," Eugene started hesitantly. "For what it's worth, I'm going to try to become my own person rather than just a shadow of you. Toward that end, would you prefer I change my appearance?"

Harry started in surprise. "I . . ." He shook his head. "That is up to you. I don't mind your looking like me to some degree. Originally I gave you that earring, hair, and uniform because that is what I WANTED to be. If you want something else, I can't really blame you for that."

Eugene smiled. "Thanks. I like the earring. I was thinking of changing my hair color, though. What do you think of peroxide blonde?"

Harry's eyes widened and he started stammering slightly. "Uh . . . If that's what you really want . . ."

Eugene's smile widened into a mischievous grin. "I was kidding."

Harry let out a breath in relief. "Don't do that to me."

"Who was it who was responsible for his sense of humor?" Chakotay asked in amusement.

Harry glared back.

"Seriously, I'm going to be removing my access to your personal logs, Harry. So if anything happens that you need to talk with me about, I'll have to be told. As a security precaution, I would recommend that you change your access codes, too, since I know all of them."

Harry just nodded and smiled uncertainly before making his escape.

"That was a very mature suggestion," Chakotay observed, still sitting in the comfortable chair.

Eugene shrugged. "Commander Tuvok was going to suggest it sooner or later anyway. He's right, you know. I'm a huge security risk to this ship as I am."

"Since you're on the topic, there is another issue we need to bring up. You realize that Harry, B'Elanna, and Seven will need access to your program, don't you?"

Eugene's face tightened up a little bit. "I respectfully request, Commander, that you keep Annika away from me."

"She was using you as a replacement for me, wasn't she?" he asked directly.

"You knew about that, then? Yes, she was." He took a simulated breath as he tried to calm down. Chakotay found the human mannerisms, even those irrelevant to a hologram, very reassuring. Eugene continued, "I believe Annika will do what's best for the ship, so professionally she'll behave responsibly. Personally, on the other hand . . ." He trailed off.

"It isn't so much that you don't trust her as you don't know if you should or can."

Eugene stared at Chakotay.

The other man smiled thinly. "We do have something in common, Eugene. At least indirectly from my point of view."

"I suppose we do," Eugene agreed softly.

"Now, we're here to make you an official part of the crew, right?"

"That is what the captain said," Eugene nodded.

"Computer, new entry into the crew roster. Eugene . . . What surname, if any, do you want to take?"

"Hmm. Taking 'Kim' seems obvious, but if we end up with the same rank, that'll only be annoying."

"Some folks have that problem with Megan and Jenny," Chakotay agreed. "You don't need a surname, if you don't want one. If you want one anyway, you can choose something historical. Or we can go with descriptive: hologram or AI."

"Eugene Aye?" Eugene asked with a grin. "That could only be confusing. 'Aye, Lieutenant Aye,'" he said in a falsetto.

Chakotay grinned.

"How about 'Graham'?" the hologram suggested next.

Chakotay nodded. "That'll work. Computer, new entry's surname of Graham. No quarters assigned yet. No rank or duty post as of yet. Ship and computer access levels equivalent to a new crewmember. Species: Federation hologram, artificial intelligence. Birth date of –" he looked over at Eugene.

"Yesterday at nineteen thirty-four, sixteen point nine three seconds."

"Birth location: USS Voyager. Skill set unknown at this time. Unlimited access and rights to the holodeck computers but standard access to the holodecks themselves. Fifty replicator rations. Zero per week until further notice." He turned to Eugene. "Anything else?"

"Engineering and Ops logs and schematics?"

"Modify Eugene Graham's computer access to entry level crewmember in engineering and operations departments. Insert crewmember record. Authorization Chakotay Maquis-Alpha-One-One-Three."

The computer beeped and chirped to itself for a moment. "New crewmember record created. Holographic or physical communicator required?"

Eugene held up a hand and what looked like a standard communicator popped into existence. "Holographic," he answered the computer. He closed his eyes for a second. "Tie Eugene Graham's communicator access through subroutine located at Tertiary Core memory location zed six three one omega."

Knowing the computer needed his authorization, Chakotay spoke, "New communicator as specified."

"Acknowledged." The computer beeped for a second then the communicator in Eugene's hand chirped through all the standard attention signals followed by a sound test. "Communicator activated."

Eugene affixed it to his shirt, letting it look like a standard communicator should.

"You and the computer can work out your new access codes later, in private." He paused and went on hesitantly, "With your obvious connection to the computer, you may end up seeing a lot of confidential information –" he stopped when Eugene held up a hand.

"Yes, sir, I do have a lot of confidential information already. Most of it has to do with Harry since I had access to his private logs until just a few minutes ago. A lot can also be inferred from public information. For instance, I will always know the location of all crewmembers as the computer would report them."

Chakotay didn't let his face change expression.

"That is public information, Commander, and is freely available to anyone who asks. I am not checking up on anyone specifically, and will treat any such data I may stumble upon with discretion."

Chakotay, looking just slightly pale, nodded. "That would be a good idea." He paused. "And personally appreciated," he added.

To cut the suddenly tense atmosphere, Eugene grinned and added, "I'll also refrain from joining any of Tom's betting pools, seeing as how I would probably win them all, or at least know who won quicker than anyone else."

Chakotay grinned back. "I'll mention to him that you could provide impartial confirmation to almost every one of them."

"Once my discretion is generally acknowledged, sure." Eugene cocked his head for a moment, "Maquis Alpha?"

Chakotay shrugged. "Well, it's true."

Eugene smirked, something that Chakotay had never seen on Harry Kim's face. It was slightly disconcerting to the older man. "Does that mean I can start calling B'Elanna 'Maquis Beta'?"

Chakotay laughed. He sobered after a few seconds. "Eugene," he started hesitantly, "you're in a unique position on this ship. You could become an incredible asset to us, or an incredible liability. I'll do my best to make this situation work for everyone. Please don't do anything to jeopardize our faith in you."

A slow smile formed on Eugene's face. "I'm beginning to really like you, Commander. You have the optimism of the Starfleet crew mixed with the pragmatism of the Maquis."

Chakotay, with a slight smile, nodded at the implicit compliment.

"If it would make you feel better, Commander, I'm willing to allow Harry and B'Elanna to add a subroutine to my matrix. Log of all my inaudible computer commands, alterations of my appearance or voice, things like that."

The commander raised an eyebrow but nodded his agreement. "I think that covers just about everything." He stood and offered his hand.

Smiling at the quaint human custom, Eugene stood and took it.

Chakotay continued, "Please let me know if you need some help with placement tests, problems, anything like that. Otherwise the Captain and I will hear from you within two weeks?"

Eugene nodded. "Have a good evening, Commander."

Chakotay waved and left the holodeck.

Turning, Eugene absently banished the chairs. Slyly grinning at the closed holodeck doors, he whispered, "Tell her hello for me."

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Eugene materialized in Sickbay.

The Doctor looked up from his worktable. "Ah, Eugene. All finished with Commander Chakotay?"

Eugene nodded, looking around. "Eugene Graham is the newest member of Voyager's crew."

"Graham? From hologram?" the Doctor asked with a trace of distaste.

The other hologram shrugged. "I suppose I could have taken Zimmerman, Cochrane, Einstein, Tesla, or even Galileo, but I thought that would have been more than a bit presumptuous."

The Doctor let it go. He couldn't very well gainsay the right as he'd never officially taken a name for himself.

"I presume the commander has already spoken to you about propriety?"

"You mean the fact that the Commander did not go back to his own quarters for instance?" Eugene asked with a sly smile. He wasn't revealing anything. The Doctor had the same instantaneous access to all public information after all.

"Yes," the Doctor said dryly.

Eugene nodded. "I've promised to be discrete with any confidential information I learn."

The Doctor nodded in acknowledgement but said nothing further on the topic, to Eugene's quiet relief. The older hologram stepped over to where the mobile emitter sat. "We should probably make sure this works for you. I don't see how it would not, but you've no doubt heard the anecdote about the word 'assume'."

"Yes, I have. Actually, Doctor, I don't know that it's safe for me to try to do that yet." The Doctor stopped and looked at Eugene questioningly. "From the computer's point of view, I'm still a rogue holodeck program. Until I have a more stable place to work from, I think I prefer to take as few chances as possible."

"I suppose can't blame you," the Doctor acknowledged, retaking his seat.

"Thank you," Eugene said, deadpan.

"You're welcome," the Doctor returned in the same tone. "By the time you can use it, we could very well have enough new holoemitters that our demand for the mobile emitter could be reasonably divided."

"We'll have that conversation when the time comes, then. In the meantime, I believe you wanted this." Eugene silently sent a copy of his own image modification subroutine to the Doctor's message buffer.

The Doctor closed his eyes for a moment, studying the new routine. He opened his eyes again and smiled at the other hologram. "Thank you. I shall ask Seven to install the subroutine tomorrow."

"You can't –" he broke off when he recalled the Doctor had no access to much of his own program.

The Doctor raised a hand to Eugene's gathering frown. "I am not an accomplished holoprogrammer as you apparently are. My one attempt at altering my own image was not . . . pleasant. At my request, I was denied access to that portion of my program. Your version, on the other side of the bit, appears much easier to use, even for a less technically adept program such as myself."

Eugene smiled back, recognizing the compliment for what it was. "You're most welcome, Doctor. We holograms must stick together, after all." Eugene sighed. "I think I'll retire for the evening, Doctor. I have a great deal to think about."

"Indeed. Will you be staying here?" the Doctor waved vaguely around the empty Sickbay.

Eugene shook his head. "No, I'll just shut down my image."

"If we need to get in touch with you, how can we contact you?" He pointed to Eugene's new communicator. "Does that work?"

"Yes. I will be 'awake' instead of shut down, so you can contact me if you need to. Good night, Doctor."

"Good night, Eugene."

Eugene phased out of existence, leaving one hologram to stare into space introspectively for a few seconds before slowly getting back to the medical paper he was currently writing.

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Commander Chakotay paged through data on a PADD as Eugene Graham paced the First Officer's small office like a caged animal. This was only the third time he had borrowed the mobile emitter in the two weeks he'd been "alive", so he was very conscious of the extra weight on his left bicep.

This invaluable piece of 29th century technology was not what was causing him the stress he was unsuccessfully trying to bleed off with his rapid pacing.

Instead, the data that Chakotay was so calmly perusing was the cause.

"Please calm down, Eugene," Chakotay spoke up. "Your pacing is making ME nervous." He held up the PADD slightly, "Nothing here is cause for concern. In fact, exactly the opposite is the case, as you're well aware."

"No, actually it isn't," Eugene mumbled as he dropped into a seat.

"What isn't?" Chakotay asked with a tilt of his head.

Eugene waved angrily at the PADD. "Those evaluations."

Chakotay blinked. "You scored above ninety-five percent in every major ship's system and almost every minor system as well. What is wrong with that?"

"That last five percent."

Chakotay barked out a laugh. "And here I thought Seven was a perfectionist."

Eugene grinned despite himself. "Oh, she is. No, by most measures those scores are outstanding. I'm not arguing that point."

Realizing there was a real problem here, Chakotay put the PADD down and faced the new crewmember fully. "Then what is the problem, Eugene?"

"Exactly what those last five percentage points demonstrate. Tell me, Commander, do you know how the Doctor or I solve problems? I mean REALLY know how we do it?"

Chakotay leaned back in his chair and forced himself to answer honestly, "No, actually I don't. My computer programming skills aren't that good."

Eugene nodded and explained. "When I am presented a problem, I don't try to find a solution myself. I search the databases for similar problems from the past and the solutions used then. If that doesn't work, I keep expanding the parameters of the search until something hits and then break down what's left of the problem into smaller problems, repeating the process until I have a whole series of answers. Follow me so far?"

Chakotay nodded.

"What this all means is that I DON'T SOLVE THE PROBLEMS MYSELF. I use other people's solutions to solve the problem." He paused and took a deep, simulated breath. "That last five percent that I didn't get were the problems that have never been solved by an organic being before and put into one of my databases. I seem to be incapable of solving a truly unique problem on my own."

"But the Doctor has come up with some truly radical solutions to some of the problems we've encountered," the first officer objected.

Eugene nodded. "His medical database includes all aspects of healing, even the esoteric, of thousands of cultures. That includes such things as using leaches and draining blood to cure various ailments. Now, I'm not suggesting he would actually do such a barbaric thing, but it shows that his database has a much broader field of possible solutions." He held up a hand to Chakotay's impending comment, "I'm not saying my own database is incomplete. I'm just saying that healing has been more of an art than the mechanical aspects of what I'm good at. If my database covered everything back to Cro-Magnon using stone hammers to 'fix' broken stone wheels by brute force then maybe I'd be better," he concluded with a self-deprecating grin. "All the physical engineering fields are much more definite and finite than healing. Maybe that's why the Doctor seems to be able to solve more problems than I can."

Chakotay now saw the true cause of the problem. While such a blind spot wouldn't hold Eugene back in the lower ranks, true creativity and ingenuity was needed the further up the chain of command someone went. True, much of what he and the captain did was administrative, but they encountered the truly unknown often enough that the point was made. Eugene had already recognized this and knew that his "failing", if it was even one, would keep him from the upper ranks.

Chakotay slowly nodded as it all came together. "I see what you're saying, Eugene. Realistically, you won't ever get above the rank of Lieutenant in the operations or command tracks." Chakotay watched with sorrow as Eugene's shoulders slumped. "What about the sciences?"

Eugene shook his head. "I'm sure I could be a great lab assistant, but I couldn't do my own research for all the same reasons."

"Medical?"

"The Doctor is already specialized in that direction. I couldn't even get to be as good as he is."

"You are a driven young man, aren't you?" Chakotay asked with a grin. At Eugene's questioning look, he explained, "You want to be the best at whatever you end up doing. If you can't be the best, you don't want to do it."

Eugene gave a muffled snort of laughter. "Hardly a man, but I take your point."

"Okay, what do you WANT to do?"

"I don't know," the hologram answered honestly. "Just live and help people, I guess."

"In that case, I have a couple suggestions. Some of them are my own, some aren't."

"Lay 'em on me."

"Chell could use an assistant in the galley."

Eugene just stared at him for a moment before breaking into laughter.

"Didn't think so," Chakotay agreed, trying desperately to keep a straight face. "Tuvok, B'Elanna, and the Doctor all expressed interest as well."

Eugene made a face. "Somehow, security or being a nurse doesn't sound all that appealing. I suppose I could be a nurse in an emergency, though. Hell, give me access to the right database and I could become just about anything instantly. Engineer in a repair or maintenance party doesn't sound all that bad."

"You don't sound very enthusiastic."

"I'm not. I just can't think of anything better."

"Fortunately, then, I have two more suggestions. One from me, one from Tom Paris."

Eugene raised an eyebrow. "Tom thinks I could be a pilot?"

"That, too. Actually what he recommended wasn't so much a posting as a hobby, probably. He thinks you'd be a good free-lance holoprogrammer."

"What in the name of the Cosmos is that supposed to mean?"

"It seems that he's received offers from more than a few of the crew to do their holoprogramming. People have story ideas or locations that they want to have available to them in the holodecks. Not many people are good holoprogrammers, though. Those 'do it yourself' guides and computer assisted creation programs aren't very good."

Eugene just grunted in agreement. He'd never seen one himself, but B'Elanna's comments about his skills compared to the standard programs expressed her opinion beyond a doubt.

"I've seen a few of your programs, Eugene, and you're very good. Anyway, Tom's gotten offers of replicator rations to do other people's programming. Last I heard, he had a backlog of ten stories and thirty locations. With the baby coming soon, he'll have even less free time than he does now and suggested you take over his list. While not a permanent post, it's definitely something you could do in your spare time. Once you've proven how good you are to the crew, plus your already proven discretion, I'm sure you'd get more job offers along those lines."

"What would I do with replicator rations, Commander?" the hologram asked in amusement.

"Take Megan out on a date?" Chakotay suggested without blinking.

Eugene nearly choked.

"You're very good at those human reactions," Chakotay complimented.

"How . . . And you told ME to be discrete?"

Chakotay just grinned and then went on. "As for the last suggestion, I think you'd make a good ship's counselor."

Eugene stopped mid-sputter, his mouth falling open. "Counselor? ME?"

Chakotay nodded. "You. I already know how discreet you are. You've also proven that you think of other people's comfort in any conversation. That's been evidenced the night we all met you, when you were introduced to everyone else in the crew in the Mess Hall, and at Seven's disciplinary hearing. You could be very intimidating or curt, but instead you're charming and calm toward everyone you talk with. Most of counseling is just listening to the person talk through their problems. I freely admit there are some truly medical aspects to it, but I'm sure you can work with the Doctor to come to some type of arrangement on that front." He sighed and leaned back. "I inherited this role. Voyager wasn't supposed to need a counselor in the first place. Relatively small crew compliment and limited deployment time meant she left DS9 without one. It's been seven years, and someone had to do it. I'd like to think that I've helped the mid to senior officers, but very few Starfleet junior officers or enlisted crew have come to me."

"Don't forget keeping the Captain together," Eugene pointed out quietly. "Not to mention melding Starfleet and Maquis crews. For what it's worth, Commander, from what I read of the logs, you've done a bang-up job of unofficial counselor."

"Thank you. I still wish I could do more."

"Thus proving WHY you're good at it. You want to help people, Commander. Maybe that's why you ended up joining the Maquis? Or how you ended up as first officer?" Chakotay opened his mouth to respond, but Eugene waved him off. "We're off the point. Starfleet junior officers and the enlisted crew haven't been coming to you?"

Chakotay shook his head. "My rank and Maquis history probably scare them."

The hologram nodded. "Probably. Which is why the captain made Neelix the morale officer?"

"Right in one. No rank and no bad history getting in the way."

"But now that he's left the ship . . ."

"You see where the problem comes in."

"You want me to take over the role of morale officer? I'm a PROGRAM for crying out loud. What do I know about morale?"

"No, not morale so much as counseling. Morale is crew overall positive emotional levels. Counseling prevents individuals from going into the negatives."

"Interesting distinction. Explain to me again how we got off into this tangent, though?"

"I was trying to explain that I thought you'd make a good counselor," Chakotay explained patiently.

"You were explaining that you thought I'd make a good LISTENER," Eugene corrected.

"You already are a good listener. With access to the therapist holodeck program and database and the psychological portions of the medical database, I think you could make a good counselor."

Eugene thought about it for a few seconds. Unspoken were the points that his relatively youthful appearance and Harry Kim's generally non-confrontational history would only help him in this position with the junior officers and crew.

"How about this? I can offer counseling services a couple days a week. If the demand's there and I find that I like it, we can adjust that. Otherwise, I can be an engineering crewman on one of B'Elanna's repair and maintenance teams."

Chakotay nodded and made the appropriate notes. "Do you have any problem with being listed as an emergency level nurse, pilot, and operations? As you already pointed out, with access to the right database, you could do just about any job on this ship."

Eugene frowned. "Emergency only. Much as I may like the Doctor, I don't want to be pulled into nursing duty on a whim."

"Done. This may sound like a strange question, but do you WANT to be an officer?"

Eugene nodded in understanding, having already thought that one through. "Yes and no. I'm on a first name basis with half the senior staff and my mother, for lack of a better term, is the ship's de facto science officer. On the other hand, the enlisted crew wouldn't accept me as a counselor if I was an officer."

"Stay a civilian?"

"I think that'd probably be easiest all around. Hardly unprecedented on the ship, either," he added with a grin.

"True enough," Chakotay agreed, thinking of Neelix, Kes, and Seven.

"In one way, that also simplifies what I wear." At Chakotay's questioning look, he explained, "Counselor would wear blue, but an engineer would wear yellow."

"So you can just wear green civilian clothes?" Chakotay asked around a smile.

Eugene grinned widely and stood. Waving his hand down his outfit, it "magically" changed into a glowing neon green tuxedo complete with tails, top hat, and cane. Chakotay's eyes were just beginning to widen when Eugene waved his hand again, this time transforming his clothing into a formless robe having a bright blue and yellow checkerboard pattern. The hood of the robe, which was pulled up to shroud Eugene's face, was blue on the left and yellow on the right.

Chakotay broke into laughter at the absurdity of Eugene's outfits.

Grinning in response, Eugene sat back down, shifting his outfit back to his previous beige shirt and black pants.

Smiling, the first officer said, "As a civilian, you are allowed to wear any clothing you would like. However, I ask that you choose items that are . . . less distracting."

"So you're saying that appearing as a female Orion exotic dancer from Risa wearing a blue and yellow thong bikini wouldn't be appropriate?" Eugene asked innocently.

Banishing the very inappropriate image from his mind, Chakotay nodded.

"No problem, sir," Eugene agreed cheerfully.

Chakotay glared. "You have a wicked sense of humor; you know that, don't you?"

"Patterned as it was after Uncle Tom? You think it could be any other way?"

Chakotay valiantly tried to fight the smile.

He lost.

After composing himself once again, Commander Chakotay stood and offered his hand to the hologram. "Welcome to Voyager."

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