

Captain Sulu walked up to the bar and sat next to a young officer who was staring intently into his coffee mug. It was the middle of the lunch rush at the Café. Most of the tables were full and several customers were eating at the bar. Jimmi had programmed some of her favorite 20<sup>th</sup> century music into the sound system. She was playing the blues today. Ella Fitzgerald was singing when Sulu sat down.

Jimmi was humming along when she came out of the kitchen with a plate in her hand. She placed it on the bar in front of the officer sitting next to Sulu. “Here you are, Mr. Reed. One ‘I’m too chicken to go to sickbay with a hang over’ special.”

Mr Reed moved his coffee cup to make room for the plate and said, “Thanks Boss.”

Sulu laughed. She grabbed a coffee mug and poured him a cup. She put it on the bar in front of her husband, then filled Mr. Reed’s cup as well. “I wouldn’t laugh if I was you. I recall the first year I opened and what you looked like that next morning.”

“I made it to work.” Sulu said and sipped his coffee.

“Only because you were not about to go to sick bay with a hangover either.” Jimmi said with a wink. “The fact that my dad was the doctor you would have had to see had absolutely nothing to do with it.”

“Absolutely nothing.” Hikaru agreed with a grin.

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“It’s almost expected.” The young ensign was explaining to Jimmi across the bar when Captain Sulu sat down next to him. “I don’t think I seriously considered anything else.”

“An uncle, both your parents, and all your sibs?” Jimmi asked. He nodded. As she spoke, she pulled a beer out of the cooler and set it on the bar in front of her husband. “Well, I am sure you will make them all proud, Mr. Parisi.”

“I hope so.” The young man blushed and picked up his drink.

As the ensign went to join his friends, Jimmi turned to her husband “I just don’t understand how someone can join up after knowing what it was like to be the one left behind.”

“Is that why you never even considered it?”

“Me?” Jimmi laughed. “No, it was more my total inability to comprehend anything scientific that stopped me.”

“Total inability to comprehend?” He laughed.

“Ok, so I just did not like my science classes.” She laughed too.

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A Human woman with short black hair came into the Café and took a seat at the bar. Jimmi walked down to greet the stranger. She was wearing a pale pink business suit. Her jewelry was pink and brushed steel. A very attractive and understated combination.

“Good afternoon.” Jimmi smiled. “Welcome to the No Ranks Café. I’m Jimmi. What can I get you today?”

“Hello Jimmi.” The woman said with a smile. “I’m Carly Lightfoot and I could really

use a strong cup of coffee to start. Do you have any Brazilian?"

"I have Peruvian in the pot right now." Jimmi said. "I can certainly make some Brazilian for you."

"Peruvian will be fine." She said. While Jimmi poured the coffee, Carly said. "A friend of mine told me to ask what kind of mood your chef is in today."

Jimmi laughed. At the No Ranks Café, George had free reign as the chief chef. What ever he felt like cooking became the specials of the day. Jimmi had explained this system to more than one person as just giving in to George's moods. To Carly, Jimmi said, "George is in an Asian mood today. He just got a shipment of fresh vegetables from Risa that he says will make an excellent stir fry. He is in the process of coming up with today's specials as we speak. Of course, all the standards on the menu are available if Asian cuisine is not to your taste."

"Asian is great." Carly said and sipped the coffee.

"Ok, I'm curious." Jimmi said. "Who told you about George's moods?"

"A starfleet admiral."

"Ah." Jimmi said with a smile. "Any friend of James T's is a friend of mine."

"James T." Carly laughed "I've never heard anyone call him that before, besides himself, of course."

"Oh, I can see you know him well." Jimmi said with a grin. She could not remember James T. or her father mentioning anyone named Carly.

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It was easy to tell when the last shuttle of the evening came into StarBase 12 in July. The ensigns seemed to waste no time in checking in at the barracks and heading over to the Café. Jimmi watched two young men she had never seen before walk up to the bar.

"Evening Gentlemen." She smiled. "I'm Jimmi. What can I get you?"

"Hello beautiful Jimmi." The taller one smiled widely at her. "How about a Andorian rum splash."

"Coming up." Jimmi nodded and reached for a glass. She looked to the shorter of the two, "And you, Ensign?"

"Tesmet. Please." He said. Two more ensigns walked up to the bar next to the ones that Jimmi was serving. Mike Woo stepped up the bar and took their order. The fact that one of the ensigns was a very attractive blonde woman could have been one of the reasons Mike was so quick.

"There you are, gentlemen." Jimmi said when she served the drinks. She turned the payment padd towards them so they could see the price. The taller one pressed his thumb to the padd. "Let me know if you need anything else."

A couple hours later, Jimmi served the tall ensign another drink. He leaned on the bar and lowered his voice to ask, "So, have you worked here long?"

"Since the place opened." She said with a smile and turned the payment padd towards him.

"The word is that Captain Sulu's wife owns this place. True?"

"True." Jimmi leaned on the bar and lowered her voice. "Is that important to you?"

He shrugged. "I will be reporting to Excelsior in a couple of days. Just want to know what is what. Ya know?"

"Sure." Jimmi smiled. Before she could say any more, C.J. Vasco walking into the bar caught her eye. "Excuse me a minute, Mr. Barroso."

Jimmi turned and ran around the bar and across the room to C.J. The two best friends hugged. Jimmi giggled and said, "I am so glad you are here. I am having such evil thoughts about one of these ensigns."

"Really? That cute?" C.J. said.

"No!" Jimmi laughed. "That full of himself."

Cathy laughed out loud. "I have found that most of them are like that the first July. Then you see them again the next year and they've settled down."

"I know." Jimmi laughed as they started walking slowly towards the bar together.

"So which game were you thinking of playing with him?" C.J. asked.

"I can't. He's assigned to Excelsior." Jimmi said. "But he asked me if it was true that Captain Sulu's wife owned this place."

C.J. laughed. "And you didn't tell him?"

"Didn't get a chance." Jimmi shrugged. "You walked in."

With a wicked grin on her face, C.J. asked "Which one?"

"Tall one." Jimmi said. "Leaning on the bar watching us."

C.J. studied him openly. He was tall with short dark hair and an olive complexion. Nice enough looking, she thought, but nothing outstanding. Jimmi was just laughing to herself as she left C.J.'s side to return to her post behind the bar. C.J. slowly walked up to the bar and sat down next to Ensign Barroso.

Jimmi took two glasses, filled with ice and added vodka. C.J. held hers up. Jimmi picked hers up and clicked the rim of her glass with her best friend's glass. They each took a drink. L.J. walked up to his sister.

"Hey." He said. "About time you got here."

"Someone had to hold down the fort at home." C.J. said. Jimmi poured L.J. a drink and handed it to him.

"All work and no play." L.J. said with a grin.

"Speaking of work." Jimmi said to L.J. "What are you doing on that side of the bar?"

"Picking up women, of course." L.J. said with a laugh.

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Captain Sulu walked up to the bar. Jimmi was getting payment from a couple of ensigns when he said, "Hello Beautiful."

"Captain Sulu." Jimmi grinned. "What would your wife say if she heard you talking like that?"

"She hears me say things like that all the time." Sulu laughed and shrugged. "I was under the impression that she liked hearing such things."

Jimmi laughed. "She does."

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“Ok boys.” Jimmi walked up to a group of ensigns that seemed to be having trouble leaving. It was late and she was tired. She put her hand on Ensign Kulayev’s shoulder and leaned into the group. “Time to go.”

“Why close, Boss?” Kulayev asked. “If the Café stayed open all 3 shifts, think of all the money you would make.”

“I need to sleep sometime.” Jimmi grinned. He was not the first to suggest it. “And if you need another drink that bad, the Officer’s Club never closes. It is across the park and two decks up.”

“But the Officer’s Club is not nearly as much fun as the Café.” Ensign Barak said.

“You have good taste, Mr. Barak.” Jimmi said with a grin. “But it is still closing time. Good night guys.”

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Lt. Commander Lamar Dole walked up to the bar with his arm around a pretty young civilian woman that Jimmi had never seen before. He was not a tall man but Jimmi certainly thought he filled out his uniform nicely. Jimmi had no trouble believing that he was the Excelsior’s kick boxing champion. He had recently taken to wearing a neatly trimmed mustache.

“Mr. Dole.” Jimmi grinned when they reached the bar. “Only one woman on your arm tonight? You must be slipping.”

The woman with him gave him a quizzical look but said nothing. He just laughed. “Thanks a lot, Boss. You’re a big help.”

“Sorry.” Jimmi laughed with him. “What can I get you tonight?”

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The Café was crowded, as usual, for a July evening. Newly commissioned ensigns, Excelsior crew, and civilian families crowded the bar. Jimmi was behind the bar when her husband came up to her. He carried eight month old Demora in his arms. She was wide awake and chewing frantically on a brightly colored teething ring.

“She is just not going back to sleep.” Hikaru said across the bar.

Jimmi nodded. “She has done this almost every night this week. Just a party girl, I guess.”

“Like her mother.” Sulu grinned.

Lt. Gonzoles joined Captain Sulu. She reached her hands out to the baby. “Hi Demora.” She smiled “Want to come see me?”

The baby reached for Rosita Gonzoles. Being an aunt many times over, Gonzoles was an old hand at babies. Demora was used to be handled by many different people and as the evening wore on she found herself in several different officers’s arms.

Hikaru sat at the bar with a beer, but kept a watchful eye on the baby and who had her. One of the newly commissioned ensigns walked up to the bar and sat on the empty bar stool next

to the Excelsior's captain.

Jimmi smiled at him. "Evening Mr. Quraishi. What can I get you tonight?"

"How about an Andorian rum splash?" Quraishi asked with a smile.

Jimmi mixed the drink and put it on the bar in front of him. Turning the payment padd towards him, she smiled. "There you are."

He pressed his thumb to the padd to authorize payment and said "I see little D.J. is the life of the party again tonight."

"Yes." Jimmi laughed. "I really have to break her of this bad habit."

Dee was fussing when Dr. Patrick walked up to the bar with her. "I don't know what I said." Pat said. "But she did not like it."

"You have such luck with women, Pat." Jimmi said with a laugh and a smile.

Hikaru took his daughter from Dr. Patrick's arms. "Come on Dee. Let's try again." He looked at his wife, and said. "If you don't see me in an hour, send in reinforcements."

Jimmi laughed. "Good luck."

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It was early in the evening in the Café. The Excelsior had arrived that afternoon to pick up their new ensigns. The poker game would start as soon as Captain Uhura arrived. The Potemkin was also in port. Captain Sulu, Commander Chekov and their wives were talking together when Dr. Boosie walked in.

"Good evening Captain, Commander." She said as she passed.

"Doctor." Both men responded.

Cathy and Jimmi exchanged looks. Cathy said. "It seems to be chilly in here."

"I'll say." Jimmi laughed. "What gives guys?"

"Nothing." Hikaru said.

"Yeah, right." Jimmi laughed. She leaned close to her husband and whispered, "You will tell me before this night is over."

"Later." He whispered back.

Dr. Boosie saw an empty bar stool next to Dr. Patrick and sat down. "Hi Pat."

"Hi Stella." Pat smiled. "How are things on the Potemkin?"

"Great." She returned his smile. "Best duty I ever had. Quite a challenge. How are things on Excelsior? Is Sulu still an arrogant twit?"

Pat laughed. "That is not my experience at all."

"Well, he's your captain." Boosie shrugged. "I suppose you are required to say nice things about him."

"Evening doctor." Mike said to the new medical officer. "Welcome to the No Ranks. What can I get you tonight?"

"Aldebran whiskey on the rocks." Boosie ordered and turned back to Dr. Patrick. "I do like being on a starship better than a base. You just never know what is going to happen next."

"So true." Pat agreed.

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“So this is it.” A blonde woman in a brand new ensigns uniform said to her friend as they sat down at the bar.

“This is it.” Mike answered from behind the bar. “Welcome to the No Ranks Café, Ladies. My name is Mike. What can I get you?”

“Andorian rum splash for me.” The ensign with the short dark curly hair and olive skin tones said with a smile.

“That sounds good.” The blonde agreed. She smiled at Mike as he mixed their drinks and asked, “So, have you been working here long Mike?”

“A couple of years.” Mike shrugged and put the drinks on the bar. He turned the payment padd towards them. “Let me guess, you’ve heard some rumors about the place and want to know if they are true.”

“Is it that obvious?” The dark haired woman asked with a laugh.

“It’s typical.” Mike said with a smile. They were both pretty and since it was early, he had a little time to talk. “The first thing I learned about Star Fleet from working in here is that there are rumors about everything. And the second thing is that you have to give information to get information.”

“Fair enough.” The blond said as she pressed her thumb to the payment padd. “But I doubt there is much we can tell you.”

“How about names and assignments as a start.” Mike grinned.

“Jane Spencer, Lexington.” The blonde said.

“Daria Meir, Intrepid.” Her friend volunteered. “Ok, now for our questions. Is it true that Captain Sulu owns this place?”

“Close.” Mike said. “His wife owns it.”

“Same thing.” Jane said.

“I would not say that to the Boss if I was you.” Mike laughed. “She opened the Café before they were married and I have never seen him step behind the bar while the Café was open.”

“Ok.” Jane said. “What about the big poker game? Is it captains only?”

“Commanders and up, I would say.” Mike said. “But there are no hard and fast rules about it. It’s just Captain Sulu and Commander Chekov and their friends.”

“Chekov is first officer of Excelsior, right?” Daria asked.

“Right.” Mike said. He looked up to see Pavel Chekov coming towards that bar. “And that’s him now. Hi Pavel.”

“Hi Mike.” Pavel shook Mike’s hand across the bar. “Have you seen my wife? I can’t find her anywhere.”

“She’s upstairs with the Boss and the kids.” Mike said.

“I should have known.” Pavel smiled. “I hear the new baby is a red head.”

“If you want to call that little bit of fuzz on Brian’s head hair.” Mike laughed.

“I suppose I should go have a look.” Pavel said and headed for the door marked office at the end of the bar.

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Captain Sulu was sitting at the bar when Captain Piazza walked up and sat down next to

him. She smiled and said, "Hikaru, I hear congratulations are in order. Again! Just how many children are you planning to have?"

"Plan? I am suppose to be planning these things?" Sulu laughed. He pulled a cigar out of a box that sat on the bar in front of him. "Have a cigar."

"Captain Piazza." Randy smiled at Piazza as she twirled the cigar in her fingers. "What can I get you tonight?"

"Give me a mayday, Randy." She said. "With Vulcan gin, please."

"Coming up." Randy nodded and mixed the drink. He placed the drink on the bar and turned the payment padd towards her.

Captain Sulu took the padd and pressed his thumb to it. "On me."

"Thanks." Piazza said and sipped the drink. "Where's Chekov? When does this game get underway?"

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"I've always wanted to see New Freedom." Jimmi said. "It's such a romantic image."

"Romantic?" Hikaru asked. "That's not the word I would have chosen for it."

"What I have heard of it reminds me of a 19<sup>th</sup> century boom town in America's wild west." Jimmi explained. "Rowdy, bawdy and somewhat dangerous."

"I think a better analogy would be to go back another couple of hundred years to the pirate towns in the Carribean." Sulu said. "Where the outlaws ran the towns by their own rules. Definitely not a place for you."

"Why not me?"

Her husband grinned at her. "Because as the stories of these places go, the beautiful women were kidnaped by the pirates and held for ransom if their father's or husband's could pay. And if there was no one to pay a ransom, they were used by the pirates for their pleasure."

Jimmi laughed and asked, "So you want to play pirate and captive tonight?"

Hikaru just laughed and sipped his beer.

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"Here you are, gentlemen." Jimmi said as she put the drinks on their table. "Sake for two, hot. Can I get you anything else?"

"Not right now." the Human man said. "Thank you."

Jimmi nodded and returned to the bar. Faris Jettou sat at the bar. He was a civilian who was working as a consultant for Star Fleet and had become a regular at the No Ranks Café. His specialty was maintaining space station environments. He was older than Jimmi, in his fifties maybe, with just a hint of grey in his dark hair. Faris said to her, "I haven't had sake in god knows how long."

"It always makes me think of trips home to Japan." Jimmi said

"You are from Japan, Boss?" Faris asked

"My husband has family there." Jimmi said. "His grandmother, cousins. So we usually visit when we get back to Earth."

"What about your family?"

Jimmi smiled at the thought. Trips to Earth were always hectic. Hikaru never had the

time necessary to really visit and she hated to do the trip without him. But she treasured the time they managed to spend with family. To Faris, she said, “Most of our immediate family is in the California area. Plus I have a sister in Atlanta. Cousins, etc are in Japan and Ireland. I don’t get home often, but you know how it is. When I do go, I have to see everyone to catch up on the weddings, births, funerals.”

The man nodded, “Family stuff.”

“Exactly.”