

After the change of shift, Captain Sulu retired to his ready room. He was working at his desk when the call he had been expecting came from Star Base 12. He stopped what he was doing and accessed the sub space call. "Hi George."

"Morning Hikaru." George nodded. He was sitting on the lavender couch in his living room. He put the coffee mug he had been drinking from down on the end table when the Captain appeared on his screen .

"So?" Hikaru asked. "How's it going?"

"Better." George said. "She is letting us help a little bit more. And we are making sure she gets more time to sleep."

"No more screaming fits?"

"She only lost it the one time." George said. "It sounds worse than it was. It was just one of those days and the mood swings made it worse."

"George, I can not tell you how much I appreciate you and Randy helping her and keeping me up to date on things there."

"What's family for?"

"How's the baby?"

"She's beautiful." George smiled. "Harry is a little jealous of the attention she gets. When Harry was a baby, Jimmi would sleep when he did. Now, she spends time with Harry when Dee sleeps during the day and she's in the bar when Dee sleeps at night. We keep kicking her out of the bar but you know how she is."

"Yes, I know." Hikaru said with a smile. "I've got some leave time saved up. I think I will try to take a week."

"If possible, come alone." George advised. "If the ship comes in, she'll stay in the bar until closing."

"Understood."

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Captain Sulu came to the park of Star Base 12. He stopped and smiled when he saw his wife sitting on one of the park benches. She had the baby in a safety chair next to her and Harry was showing off on the jungle gym. He circled behind her and approached the jungle gym.

"Daddy!" Harry squealed and jumped off the jungle gym at his father with no warning. Laughing, Hikaru managed to catch the 4-year-old boy. He hugged Harry tightly. With the boy still in his arms, he turned and smiled at his wife.

She had stood up and was smiling at her husband and son. But as the Captain came closer, he saw the tear in her eye as well. "Harry, I am so glad to see you. What are you doing here?"

Hikaru put Harry down and took his wife in his arms. He whispered in her ear, "I've missed you so much."

"Daddy." Harry called from the top of the jungle gym. "Daddy, watch me!"

Still holding his wife, he glanced over his shoulder and answered. "I'm watching, Harry."

The baby started to fuss a bit. Jimmi turned and picked her up. She sat down on the bench with Demora in her arms. Hikaru watched Harry go down the slide before he moved the safety seat off the bench so he could sit next to his wife and daughter. Jimmi handed the baby

to him.

"She's grown so much in three months." He said. She smiled up at her Dad.

Harry came running up to the rest of his family and reported to his father, "Dee spit up all her breakfast today."

Hikaru nodded and smiled. "I remember when you used to do that."

"I did?"

"Sure." Hikaru said. "All babies do that sometimes."

Jimmi looked around the playground. She knew everyone there. Children of various ages ran and played. They all lived on the base. She looked over her shoulder, but no Excelsior officers were coming from the transporter room. Harry saw a couple of boys just a year or two older than him and ran across the playground to see what they were doing.

"So, how long are you here?" Jimmi asked.

"Four or five days." He said with a smile.

"Where is Excelsior?"

"Routine patrol." Hikaru shrugged off her questions and made silly faces at the baby.

"Nothing Pavel can't handle with his eyes closed."

"So you are here by yourself?"

"Yep."

"Why?"

He stopped playing with the baby and looked at her. "What do you mean, why?"

"Don't get me wrong. I am thrilled you are home." Jimmi said. He had never left the ship on patrol before Pavel Chekov had become his first officer. There was always a reason when he came home. "But the ship is still on patrol. No upgrades, no repairs, no new personnel or supplies to pick up. And we hadn't planned any leave time."

"I miss you." He said. "I miss them. Is that so hard to understand?"

"No." She leaned against his shoulder. "Not hard at all."

"If you want, we can take a couple of days to go the Earth and see the families." Hikaru said. "Or we can just stay here. Your choice."

Jimmi thought about what she would need to pack to take the two kids for a visit to Earth. She thought about the six-hour shuttle ride with a four year old and an infant. She smiled at her husband and said, "If you don't mind, I'd rather stay here and have some family time with just the four of us."

"That sounds great to me."

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Hikaru read Harry a bedtime story while Jimmi nursed Dee and got her settled for the night. When he was done, Hikaru went down to the Café to check on things. They had a small dinner crowd that was just starting to clear out. No big ships were at the base. A few of the regulars sat at the bar. Randy assured Hikaru that they would not need Jimmi's help that evening.

He came back up to the apartment to find Jimmi was in the shower. He opened the bathroom door and smiled when he said, "Mind if I join you?"

"Come on in, that water's fine." Jimmi said with a grin.

He quickly got out of his clothes, tossing them on the bed, and joined her. The water was

pleasantly hot. He pulled her to him, wrapping his arms around her as the water flowed over them both. "My god, you are beautiful."

Jimmi smiled at the compliment but did not really believe him. She sighed and said, "I wish I could get back to where I was before the babies."

Cupping one breast in his hand he grinned and said, "I like the way you look when you are nursing."

"Men!" Jimmi laughed. She pulled back from him a bit and ran her hand over her tummy somewhat self-consciously. She liked to wear sexy clothes in the bar. She liked when the young men flirted with her. Now she just felt like an exhausted Mom and not at all sexy. "I know I am being picky, but I can feel it in my clothes. There are some things I just can't wear any more."

He pulled her close to him again. "Would it be such a tragedy if you never wore a top that showed off your tummy again?"

"You make me sound so shallow." Jimmi said sighing. She had been working hard to get back into shape since Demora was born and she was getting frustrated with the slow progress. She laid her head on his shoulder as she thought how else she could explain it to him. After a minute she said sadly, "I just want to feel like me again."

Hikaru pushed a strand of wet hair off her face and asked, "So I guess there is nothing I can say that would make you feel better?"

"Nope." She said even though she should have told him that just talking to him about it was making her feel a bit better. "I am going to continue being depressed about it."

Hikaru smiled. She wasn't crying. Her statement had sounded almost like a challenge to him. She was just being stubborn about being depressed. So he said, "Ok, you go on being depressed and I am going to go on loving you. Deal?"

Jimmi looked up at him and could not help but laugh a bit. "Deal."

When they got out of the shower, Hikaru put on his silk robe. Jimmi started to get dressed. He held up her robe to her, "No need to get dressed. We are staying in this evening."

"I have to go at least check on the Café." Jimmi said.

"I already did that." He said. She just stared at him. "When you were getting Dee settled, I went down and talked to Randy. No big ships in port. You have the night off."

"You can't just tell me I have a night off." Jimmi objected. "You are not in command here."

"Baby, you need the break." Hikaru said softly. "Take the night off. Let me pamper you a bit."

"I should at least check." Jimmi said.

"Call the kitchen." Hikaru suggested.

"It's silly to call when I could walk down there just as quickly."

"But if you call, you do not have to get dressed." Hikaru said. "And if you don't get dressed it will be all that much easier for me to give you a massage."

"You were going to give me a massage?" Jimmi asked with a smile. She took the robe he still held out towards her and put it on.

"That was my plan."

“Why don’t you tell me these things?”

“Why do you make it so hard to surprise you?” He asked. He went to his bag that sat on the bedroom chair and took out two small bottles. “I thought we’d light all your candles in here. I brought 2 massage oils with me. Sweet almond from Earth and aves from Valos III.”

“Aves?” Jimmi asked.

“A spice.” Hikaru said. “I am told that the almond is good for fatigue and that the aves is suppose to be more sensual.”

“Oh, so we had more than just a massage in mind.” Jimmi laughed.

“Well.” He grinned. “Yeah.”