

"You want that neat? Or with a little water?" Jimmi asked.

"As my great grandfather, who never left the holy soil of Ireland, would say." Matthew Brady smiled at her and said. "When I drink whiskey, I drink whiskey. And when I drink water, I drink water."

"Neat, it is." Jimmi smiled back and poured the drink.

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Jim Kirk sighed when he heard the communications signal coming from his kitchen. He was on his deck behind his mountain retreat. He had a book and a drink, but he was really just enjoying the view of the Rocky Mountains. He never tired of it. Jim considered ignoring the signal, but he had never been able to ignore technology. He put down his book and went inside to see who was calling. He switched on the view screen to see Jimmi.

"Ok, James T." Jimmi smiled at him and did not even wait for him to say hello. "What do you know? And when did you know it?"

"You caught me." He laughed. "I'd be happy to explain all if I had the remotest idea of what you are talking about. Just a hint, Jean Marie. A tiny hint."

"Her name would be Calandra Piracci."

"Ah." Kirk smiled. "You've been talking to your father."

"I've been talking to Spock and Calandra." Jimmi said. "They were here at the Cafe. Some diplomatic mission with Excelsior. Didn't you know?"

"I haven't talked to Spock in awhile." Kirk shrugged. "He's been busy."

"So I'm not the only one you've been avoiding." Jimmi said. Kirk just raised both eyebrows and gave her a half smile. "Do you realize it's been almost a year since I've heard from you."

"It can't be that long. Can it?" Kirk asked. "I must be getting old."

"I get that kind of crap from Dad too." Jimmi smiled at him. "You know what he says about you, don't you?"

"I'm afraid to ask."

"He says you've turned into, and I quote, a god damn hermit." Jimmi said. "He says you are either on that mountain or your uncle's farm and you never go any place civilized any more."

Kirk laughed out loud. "He's just angry because I missed the one woman show of that artist he likes so much. He should be ashamed of himself. She's not much older than you."

"I don't like her stuff. Too sentimental for me." Jimmi dismissed the woman with a shake of her head. "So you think Dad's interested in more than her art?"

"Your father has always been a patron of the arts." Kirk said very seriously. "And I don't want to spread any rumors, Jean Marie."

"Right! And we know Bones would never do anything remotely improper." Jimmi laughed. "It's so good to talk to you, James T.! I've missed you! So are you going to tell me about Spock? Is he in love?"

"Love?" Kirk smiled. "You know Spock's life is based entirely on logic."

"Yeah, yeah, yeah." Jimmi said. "And he's never had an emotional outburst in his life. But is he in love?"

"Could be." Kirk smiled. "He has made it a point to introduce her to you and to Tassra. But he has not admitted anything. What did you think of her? Of them?"

"Of course we don't want to gossip, James T." Jimmi said. "And I only talked to her for a couple of minutes, but she seemed nice. I liked her. And they looked to me like they were on the same frequency. What else can you ask for?"

"Not much." Kirk sighed. "I'm glad you called, Jean Marie. You've made my day."

"I'm bringing the kids to visit Dad tomorrow." Jimmi said. "Why don't you join us for dinner one night this week?"

"That sounds nice, Jean Marie."

"We can talk about the wedding!"

"Wedding?" Jim asked with a smile. "Are you serious? Pavel and Cathy?"

"Yes Sir." Jimmi laughed. "They have actually officially agreed to do it."

"And you will have all the details?"

"Everything from the time and place to the wedding party to the fight that got them there." Jimmi promised. "Cathy is giving me a ride back to Earth, so anything I don't know now I'll pump her for on the ride."

"Jean Marie, this is an evening I look forward to." Kirk smiled. "I will call Bones to arrange it."

"I'll see you soon, James T."

"Kirk out."

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Captain Sulu walked through the ensigns and civilians that crowded Star Base 12 in July. He had just come out the transporter room and was walking through the park when he saw her. The five year old girl ran between the uniformed knees towards her father.

"Daddy." She called as she ran towards him.

Sulu scooped her up in her arms. "There's my girl. How are you, Dee?"

"Fine." She said as she hugged him. "Did you bring me a present?"

"Present?" Sulu grinned as he walked through the crowd towards the café with her balanced in one arm. "Did I say I would bring you a present?"

"Daddy, you promised." Dee said with the same pout that her father had seen on her mother many times.

He reached into his pocket and pulled out a small package. Demora's eyes lit up and her pout turned to a grin. "There is a planet called Shareil Three." Sulu explained as he held up the small package. "The mountain villages are famous for their candy. They claim it's the best candy in the alpha quadrant."

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"Hello Rosita." L.J. smiled at her. He leaned against the bar with a drink in his hand. He was wearing a soft navy blue cashmere sweater with light grey slacks. His light brown hair was shorter these days. Rosita wondered if he had cut off the ponytail for the wedding.

"Hello L.J." Rosita smiled at him but stood back from him. "How's your wife?"

"She's fine. Right now she's in Manhattan working on a project." He put the drink down on the bar. "Would you like to dance?"

"What would your wife say?"

"Is dancing with a married man immoral, Rosey?" L.J. asked. He reached up to brush her coal black hair back off her shoulder.

"Of course not." Rosita did not pull away from his touch. Even though he had married in the year since Rosita had seen him last, she still had found herself looking forward to seeing him. "And you know I love to dance. I just want us to be honest about where we stand."

"We stand on the dance floor." He took her hand and led her out on the floor. They held each other lightly as they danced. "Haven't you ever considered wearing something other than your uniform in here?"

"Commander officers are always on duty." She smiled up at him. Rosita enjoyed dancing with him even though he was at least eight inches taller than her. "If there is an emergency I don't want to be on the bridge in a party dress."

L.J. laughed at the image. "Do you think it would interfere with your authority?"

"Could be." She smiled.

"Well, I've never seen anyone wear that uniform more beautifully than you." He held her just a little tighter. "I was beginning to think you would never dance with me again."

"Really, Lenny." She teased him. "You were the one who ran off and got married."

"And why should that change our relationship?"

"Are you serious?" Rosita stared at him.

"I can't help it if I want you." He spoke quietly into her ear, drawing her closer still. "You are so beautiful and we have been so good together."

"L.J." She pulled back just a bit. "You've been married less than a year. Is your attention span that short?"

Lenny laughed then asked. "Why does marriage have to mean monogamy?"

"Check your library database." Rosita said. "I believe you will find it is a part of the definition."

"What do computers know!" He laughed. He was not daunted by her calm resistance to his advances. "I prefer to make my own rules."

"Yes, I know." Rosita winked at him. "Let me guess. Your wife doesn't understand you."

"No." L.J. shrugged. "We simply have different priorities. She is immersed in her art to get ready for a show. I am here taking care of a business that she doesn't care about. Does that sound too egotistical and self serving?"

"Sounds like you are annoyed with her." Rosita said. The song ended and they slowly walked back to the bar together. "Maybe you are just trying to get back at her or to get her attention. That's generally not the reason I make love to someone."

"You are over thinking the whole thing." L.J. draped his arm over her shoulder. "We've been friends and lovers since the first year we opened the Cafe. Never exclusive. And that's been the beauty of it."

"Yes. And it's been great." Rosita smiled. "But now you are exclusive with India. Unless you have her permission to play around."

"Rosey, I have never met any woman, other than you, that understood the concept of an open relationship." Lenny laughed. "You are one of a kind."

"I doubt that." They had returned to the bar and found two bar stools. "Hi, Randy. How about a Trillian?"

"Coming up." Randy served the beer. "Refill L.J.?"

"Sure." He waited until Randy had moved on to serve another customer. "This marriage thing may have been a mistake. I have never been a one woman man."

"Never?"

"Well." He sipped his drink. "Not for a long, long time."

"I take it that it ended badly."

"It was her choice." He sighed. "But she married the guy she dumped me for. So maybe I should feel sorry for him. Any way, that has nothing to do with you and me."

"Wow." Rosita leaned her elbow on the bar and her chin in her hand. She smiled at him. "That's the most you've ever told me about HER. Whoever she is."

"Maybe it's too much." L.J. shrugged. "But we haven't talked in a long time. What's new in your life?"

"Same old thing." She shrugged. "But I have gotten more command assignments this year than ever before. And I am now at the very top level of the lieutenant ranks."

"So what's next, Lt. commander?"

"Yes." She nodded. "And I am now fourth officer."

"What does that mean?"

"Fourth in the chain of command." Rosita explained. She ticked off the officers above her on her fingers. "After the captain it is Commander Chekov then Lt. Commander Dole, Lt. Lee, then me."

"So if they are all dead, you are in command of Excelsior."

"Lenny!" She laughed. "If they were all dead Excelsior would be in real trouble. Not a situation I want to be in. Besides they are all my friends."

"No they're not." L.J. laughed. "You think Dole is a pompous ass."

"Granted. But he's a good command officer." She laughed. "I am not required to like everyone on the ship. I simply have to be able to work with them."

"Starfleet propaganda." L.J. shook his head, grinning at her. "You really believe that stuff. Don't you?"

"L.J., the day I can't believe in Starfleet, is the day I resign." Rosita picked up her beer and took a long drink. "And I don't plan to resign."

"No." Lenny smiled. "You are going to be a captain. But that's all business. What about you? No new men in your life?"

"No." She said slowly. "It's not that there aren't attractive men on the ship. There are. But dating on ship is so messy. I'd rather just come here and see you."

"Watch out Rosey." He winked at her. "I'm a married man."

"Your marriage is safe with me, Lenny." She winked back. "Do you know what I like best about being here with you? I can say what ever I think without censoring myself."

"But your captain is also your mentor." Lenny observed. "You censor yourself with him?"

"Damn right, I do." She said.

"I never pictured you as a yes man, Rosita."

"I'm not." She explained. "I give Captain Sulu my honest opinion of tactical and strategic problems. But I'm careful. I don't just blurt something out. I think it through first. It's ok to be wrong from time to time, but you better be wrong in an intelligent way."

Lenny laughed at her. "You take it so seriously."

"Well if you are going to make fun of me, I'm not going to tell you anything else." Rosita raised her eyebrow at him and drank her drink.

"Then let's change the subject." L.J. laid his hand on the bar next to hers, his fingers lightly touching her wrist. He leaned close to her and whispered in her ear. "Have I told you how beautiful you look tonight?"

"I think you said something along those lines." She said quietly. She turned to him, their faces only inches apart. She looked him in the eyes. It had been well over a year since Rosita had made love to a man. And they had always pleased each other. He kissed her gently for only a second. Rosita turned back to the bar and drank the rest of her beer. Lenny smiled to himself and drank his drink.

"L.J." Jimmi said from behind the bar. "Are you working tonight or flirting?"

"I can do both." Lenny winked at her. He relieved Jimmi behind the bar so that she could join the band.

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