

Jimmi and Lenny walked into the Jade Palace together. It was a restaurant and bar in San Francisco not a far walk from the marinas on the northern shore. It was also close to the urban university, USF and just a short tram ride from Star Fleet Academy.

As usual Lenny had come to Jimmi's school and picked her up for the weekend. They had flown to San Francisco in Lenny's sporty little planet hopper. It was the ultimate in personal transportation vehicles. Guaranteed to impress any college girl, except of course Jimmi McCoy. She wasn't impressed with his family's money, his six foot frame, or with his classically handsome face. However Jimmi and Lenny had become very close. They worked long hours together every weekend and spent the nights they had together making love. They had big plans together. They were best friends.

It was still early. There wasn't much of a crowd at the Palace. Jimmi went up the back stairs to her room and transformed herself from college student to singer. She preferred dresses with bare shoulders and all the better if they glittered in some way. At school, she wore no makeup and kept her hair in a ponytail. At the Palace she did up her makeup and always wore her hair down. It had the desired effect, she looked several years older.

"Hello beautiful." Lenny said as she joined him at the end of the bar. He was going over their joint investment portfolio.

"How would you know?" Jimmi teased. "You didn't even look."

"You always look beautiful to me." He looked at her and smiled. "I just got the third quarter figures. Want to see?"

"Sure." She couldn't look over his shoulder, so she wiggled under his arm. Lenny rested his hand on her hip as they looked at the computer screen together. "Are we on schedule for the grand plan?"

"Depends on your schedule." Lenny shrugged. "The way things look right now, maybe five years before we could move on to stage two."

"Five years?" Jimmi complained. It seemed like her dream of a café on a star base would never come true.

"Patience, J.M." Lenny cautioned. "In that time we build up the capital, we get the experience, and we are done with this school nonsense."

"Patience has never been my strong point." Jimmi laughed.

"Yeah." Lenny nodded. "That's why you need me."

"What would I do without you, L.J.?" She smiled. She glanced at the door to see a familiar group walk through the door. "The band's here. About time." She kissed Lenny on the cheek and went off to get ready for the evening's work.

As the evening went on the bar filled up. Friday was a big night for the college crowd. There was a group of cadets from Starfleet Academy. And the soccer team from SFU had won their game so they had a crowd there. Not overly crowded but a good night.

Lt. Commander Hikaru Sulu walked into the Jade Palace. It was just as he remembered it from his Academy days. A bar that stretched the length of the room to the right. Booths along the wall to the left. About a dozen tables and a large dance floor. The lights were low enough to provide adequate privacy for intimate conversations.

The band was playing loud and rowdy music to a dance floor full of college students. Jimmi McCoy was on stage. She hadn't seen Sulu yet. She was singing a joyfully lusty song that Sulu knew she would never perform if her father was in the bar. If her father even knew about the bar. The last time Sulu had talked to her, it was still classified information. At twenty, she wasn't ready to let her Dad see that side of her yet. But if Dr. McCoy saw her in that red strapless dress, it wouldn't remain a secret for long. She certainly looked beautiful to Sulu. He loved the way her curly auburn hair caressed her bare shoulders. But it was her big brown eyes that flashed her every emotion that he had trouble forgetting.

Sulu found a seat at the bar and ordered a beer. At twenty six he was probably the oldest customer in the Jade Palace tonight. He ignored the college students that filled the bar. All he could think about was that day a little over a year before at the ship's picnic when he had said good bye to Jimmi. He had said all the right things. They were in different places in their lives. She was still in college, he had his career. He would be on the ship, she on Earth. It didn't make any sense. As she had run away from him crying, he had told himself it was for the best. But he had been miserable without her. Now he wasn't even sure if she would talk to him.

The band stopped playing. She was on her way towards him. Sulu took a deep breath. He would be nonchalant if it killed him. She stopped just short of Sulu's barstool. He turned to look at her and smiled even though she was not smiling at him.

"Hi Jeanie." No one called her that except Sulu. It had been his retaliation to Jimmi having dubbed him Harry.

Damn him, she thought. How could he just say hi, like she had talked to him yesterday. Like they had parted on good terms? How could he just sit there and smile at her? What in this galaxy did he expect of her? "Hikaru." She didn't know what else to say. It was only a moment, but it seemed an eternity before she added. "What are you doing here?"

"Shore leave." He said.

Jimmi just stared at him. Why did he have to look so good sitting there in his Starfleet uniform. He had been promoted since the last time she saw him. She did not trust herself to look him in the eye. Jimmi sighed and asked, "What do you want?"

"Can we talk?" Sulu asked. He stood up and closed the short distance between them. He tried to look her in the eye, but she avoided him. "Privately?"

"What's the big secret?" She asked. Jimmi backed up from him a step. Her stomach twisted into a knot. "Say what you have to say."

The college students milled around them as they tried to get to the bar or to friends. They laughed and called to each other. Hikaru reached for Jimmi's hand. "Take a walk with me."

"What difference would it make?" Jimmi asked softly as she looked down at his hand holding hers. She did not want to cry in the bar, but tears were filling her eyes. She pulled her hand from his. "Just say it. Whatever it is, just say it."

Lt. Commander Sulu took a deep breath. "I lied."

"What?"

"The last time we talked, I lied to you." he said. "I told you I never would, but I did. It was a mistake."

Jimmi did not know what to say. The last time they had talked had been at the picnic. He

had told her he did not love her. After all he had put her through he thought he could just walk in and say it was a mistake. Not even a sorry attached. Did he think so little of her?

"A mistake?! And you think that makes it ok?" Jimmi turned on her heel and started towards the back of the room. She found it hard to breathe. "You can just go to hell, Hikaru Sulu!"

Sulu watched her go for a moment then followed her. "Jeanie....." he caught up with her at the bottom of the steps that led to her apartment. Lenny was standing at the end of the bar watching them. He leaned on the bar trying to look shorter than his six feet so that he blended in with the crowd. He tried not to watch, but he couldn't help himself. He had picked up the pieces the last time Sulu walked out on her. Lenny was sure it would happen again. Sulu grabbed her arm. "Baby, please listen."

She glared angrily at his fingers on her skin and said very quietly. "Let go of my arm." He loosen his grip and she ran up the stairs. Again he followed her. She tried to slam the door in his face, but he was too close behind her. Sulu pushed the door open and came into the room. He closed the door. It was a small room. Just a bed, closet and a bathroom. Sulu did notice there were two coffee cups on the night stand and two robes hanging on the bathroom door.

"Now can we talk?" he asked.

"If I say no, will you leave?" she asked angrily.

"Yes, I will." He said earnestly. He searched her eyes for an answer. "I'd rather stay and talk, but ..."

Jimmi was angry. But she wanted the hear him say it wasn't over. She had dreamed of the day he would come back to her. She wanted him to say he loved her. She had never stopped loving him. "So," Jimmi said slowly. "Talk."

"I'm sorry that I lied to you." Sulu told her. He tentatively reached out for her, gently touching her arms. Jimmi softened towards him. She couldn't help it. Barely touching her, he moved his hands up her bare arms to her shoulders. "I made a mistake, can you forgive me?"

"I don't know." Jimmi said softly. Harry was asking her for something. She had always chased him and now he was after her. He took the step closer and held her in his arms. She closed her eyes. She wanted it to be true.

"I'm so sorry that I hurt you." He whispered. Could she believe him? He kissed her softly. "Please say you can forgive me."

"If I do," Jimmi said slowly. "What does it mean?"

"That I want you." He kissed her neck and shoulder as he talked. "That I love you. That I have missed you."

"Oh Harry." He smiled at her use of the nickname she had given him. His kisses made it hard for her to concentrate. He had always had this effect on her. What Jimmi didn't realize was she had the same effect on him. She was the only woman who ever made him forget that he was on command track and that everything he did affected his career. "I want to believe you, but how can I?"

"Let me prove it to you." He said feeling for the back of her dress. Reaching for the fasteners, he started to undo them.

"I mean it Harry!" Jimmi pushed him away and finally looked him in the eye. The room

was small. There was barely enough floor space to walk around the bed. There was only a foot between them. "If you've come for one night and then I never hear from you again, you can leave now."

"Jeanie," Sulu took both her hands in his. "I love you. Please give me a chance to show you."

"I love you too." She whispered, tears in her eyes. Jimmi wanted to tell him about the nights she had cried herself to sleep and everything else that had happened in the last year. She just did not know where to start. "But"

"I know. I'm sorry." He said softly. He took her in his arms and kissed her again. Jimmi sighed with pleasure. It felt so good. Could she have this forever? His fingers traced the back of her dress. He undid the fasteners and slid his hand down her bare back. She reached up and started undoing his jacket. He stopped and smiled at her. She smiled back, her eyes still moist with tears. She let her dress fall to the floor and backed up until she was on the bed. Jimmi watched him undress. They made love slowly, taking the time to get reacquainted.

When they lay quietly together, Jimmi had her head on his chest. She listened to his heart as it slowly returned to its normal rate. Softly she asked, "What did you say before?"

"What?" he asked lazily twisting one of her auburn curls around his finger.

"It had something to do with love." Jimmi snuggled against his chest.

He put his finger under her chin and tilted her head so that he could see her eyes. "I love you, Jeanie. I always have."

"Say it again."

He laughed. "I love you."

Jimmi sighed and closed her eyes. Then it hit her. Suddenly Jimmi sat up. "Oh my god!" She jumped out of bed and started getting dressed. "Oh my god!"

"What?"

"I can't believe I did this." Jimmi pulled her dress back on and quickly fastened the back. "Oh my god."

"What?" Sulu had no idea what the sudden problem was.

"I can't believe I came up here with you in the middle of work." She did not want to get into her recent relationship with Lenny now. She did not want to fight with Harry again. "I've got responsibilities here. I've got to go talk to Lenny. I can't believe it." She took a quick look in the mirror, put on her last shoe, left the room and ran down the stairs.

Hikaru took his time getting dressed. He wasn't sure how to handle this situation. The other bathrobe must have belonged to Lenny. After the way they had parted a year before, he couldn't have expected her not to date. But he hadn't been able to think about other women, why was it so easy for her to move on? Why did she confuse him?

When Jimmi came back into the bar she felt like everyone was looking at her. She bit her lip and looked for Lenny. He was not around. She went up to the bar and motioned to Randy the bartender. He was a well built fairly tall guy with sandy blond hair and a tan that came from spending many of his days at the beach. His pale blue eyes and constant smile gave him a wide-eyed innocent look that people instantly trusted. "Randy, where's Lenny?"

"You're kidding, right?" Randy couldn't believe she was going to rub his nose in it. He

knew Jimmi walked all over Lenny and he generally kept out of it, but this was too much. "Just what do you plan to say to him?"

Jimmi had no idea, but she couldn't just act like nothing had happened. And while she had sought out Randy and George's opinions before on personal matters before, this was not something she wanted to talk to him about now. She asked again, "Where is he?"

"In his office." Randy said. Jimmi took a deep breath and walked into the office. Lenny sat at his desk with a glass in his hand and a bottle of vodka in front of him. She stood by the door while he downed what was in the glass. He poured himself another drink.

"Want one?" He asked.

"It's still illegal for me to drink in the bar while it's open. Remember the hell your Uncle Ivan gave us about Christmas?" Jimmi said softly. Jimmi was still under age. Lenny had just turned twenty-one a month ago.

"Don't you dare bring up Christmas." He said angrily. Christmas was the first time they had made love. Since then he had often worried about what would happen when Sulu came back. He had never even met the man. But he had seen Jimmi's pictures and the way she still looked at them. Why did she just stand there? Why didn't she get it over with?

"L.J., I'm sorry." Jimmi started lamely. "I don't know what to say."

"How about he's in and I'm out." Lenny suggested bitterly. Damn her. "It's as simple as that, isn't it?"

"Nothing simple about it, Lenny." Jimmi said sadly. She didn't want to hurt Lenny. "You've always been my best friend. I--"

He cut her off. "Get out of here, Jimmi." What else could she say? She turned to leave. "And the next time he tells you to go to hell, I don't want to hear it. When he walks out on you, don't come to me." There was nothing else she could do. Jimmi left the office.

Hikaru was sitting at the bar with a beer. Randy ignored her as she hurried passed him on her way to the kitchen. George was cutting vegetables. Jimmi sat on the stool next to his work area and with the back of her hand wiped a tear from the corner of her eye. She spent a lot of time talking to George as he cooked. He was a short muscular man from central Mexico in his late twenties. Aside from the fact that he was a wonderful cook and married to Randy, they knew very little about him. He didn't talk about himself much, but he never failed to let his young bosses know when he felt they were botching things.

"Oh George." Jimmi sighed. "I've really messed up this time."

"Yep." George said without looking up from his work.

"I'm so confused." She said slowly. Jimmi desperately wanted someone to tell her she wasn't wrong. It was obvious to her that she was not going to get that from Randy. But she had poured her heart out to George before and he had always listened with empathy. "I don't want to hurt Lenny, but Harry..."

"That's the Starfleet guy?"

"Yes."

"The one you've been pining after for a year?"

"Have I been pining?" Jimmi asked softly.

"Oh, yeah." George said. "Definite pining. For a Lt. Sulu. Harry?"

"It's Hikaru Sulu actually and he's a Lt. Commander now. I just call him Harry...." There was no need to explain the nickname further. Her friends were used to Jimmi giving nicknames out. She picked up a piece of carrot, twirling it in her fingers. "I have loved him since I've known him, George."

"What about L. J.?" George stopped and looked her in the eye. "He's loved you for a long time."

"I know." Jimmi's answer was just barely above a whisper. "It was a mistake...."

"You mean to use Lenny to make yourself feel better?" George asked. "Yeah, I would say that was a mistake."

"Damn it, George." Jimmi said. "I was trying to get on with my life. I was trying to forget him."

"But did Lenny know that?"

"Of course Lenny knew." Jimmi said. Lenny had been there for her during the entire confusing relationship with Sulu, how could he not know how she felt.

George shook his head slowly. "You really believe that?"

Jimmi sighed, not sure what else she should say or how much she should explain. Finally she said, "I can't help how I feel. I just hope that I haven't ruined my friendship with Lenny. I don't know if I could stand that."

"It is a possibility, Boss." George said.

"I know, George." Jimmi sighed. George had not said what she wanted, but just talking to him about it made her feel better. She stood up and said as she was walking out of the kitchen, "But he'll calm down, then we can talk. I will just have to see where it goes from there."

Jimmi left the kitchen and came around the bar to Sulu. There were no empty bar stools. He got up and offered his to her. She sat down. Harry leaned on the bar. "Everything straightened out?"

"It's as good as I can expect. But I'll work that out later." Jimmi shrugged. Sulu nodded and drank his beer. Evidently she wasn't going to tell him about her relationship with Lenny. He wanted to know, but didn't feel he really had a right to ask. Jimmi asked, "So how long is this shore leave?"

"Seventy two hours." He could not help but smile at her. He could not believe how things had turned out. It wasn't at all what he had planned. "And it took me awhile to find you."

"Damn, my father is probably looking for me too." Jimmi said. "You know I wasn't expecting Enterprise until Tuesday. I better call my roommate."

"All she'll say is that you are in San Francisco visiting a friend. At least that's what she told me." Hikaru said. Of course he had known that she and Lenny had bought the bar two years ago. Jimmi's father did not.

"Well, I guess I better call Dad. Can I use your communicator?" He took it out and handed it to her. She opened the channel. "Enterprise, this is Jimmi McCoy."

"Jimmi, what are you doing on this frequency?" Uhura asked as she compensated for the

background noise.

"Borrowing Sulu's communicator." Jimmi said holding the communicator close to her to hear over the bar noises. "It's good to hear your voice, Uhura. Is my father looking for me?"

"Yes, he is." McCoy answered gruffly. Jimmi could imagine him standing over Uhura on the bridge of the Enterprise. From his voice she could tell he was frowning. "Where are you?"

"I'm working Dad. I have to cover my rent you know." She said. Rent was one of the arguments her father had used to get her to live with her half sister during her first year of college. "If you have time to come see me, I'm at the Jade Palace on Jade Street in San Francisco. Mr. Sulu is here. We could use the business."

"I'll see you soon, Enterprise out."

"So much for your bar being a big secret." Sulu said "And thank you for pointing out to your father that I was here."

"Did you want me to lie?" Jimmi shrugged. She was good at leaving things vague with her father, but if he asked outright she never lied to him. "He was going to find out about my secret life sometime."

"Just don't be too truthful, Ok?" Hikaru said. "I still have to work with the man."

"He's going to ask, you know." Jimmi said.

Sulu finished his beer. "Well, if you're not going to lie to him then I guess I better learn to deal with the Doctor as my girlfriend's father."

She smiled at him. Sulu could not have made Jimmi happier. It was Sulu who hadn't wanted their relationship to be common knowledge on the ship. If only Lenny could be happy for her, then everything would be perfect. She looked up and saw her father and Captain James T. Kirk coming towards them. Dr. McCoy was the older of the two. A bit of grey could be seen in his full dark hair especially at his temples. Kirk was fairer and broader than McCoy, but the most obvious thing about him was an air of authority. She tapped Hikaru's arm and he straightened up. A reflex action. Jimmi laughed at him.

"Dad. James T. I'm so glad to see you." She got up and hugged them both. "What do you think of my bar?"

"Your bar?" McCoy asked. He had felt there was something she wasn't telling him. But he had never imagined anything like this!

"Yes. Lenny and I own it." Jimmi forced herself to smile as she watched her father carefully. If she acted like it was all perfectly normal, maybe he wouldn't make a scene. "Would you like a drink?"

"Jean Marie, you're not even old enough to drink." Kirk said "How can you own a bar?"

"Lenny's uncle took care of the legalities." Jimmi explained quickly. "But we do the work. There is a table over there if you'd like to sit down."

"Yes, let's sit down." McCoy said. He wanted a better explanation. A long and detailed explanation. "If you'll excuse us, Mr. Sulu."

"Of course, Doctor." Sulu reclaimed Jimmi's barstool, while her two fathers escorted her to the empty table.

"Where is Lenny?" McCoy asked looking around as Jimmi and Kirk sat down. "I'd like

his side of this as well."

"L.J. is a little upset right now, Dad." Jimmi said slowly looking up at her father.

"Where?" McCoy repeated pointedly.

It was a direct question. She had to answer. "He's in his office."

McCoy studied his daughter for a moment. "What aren't you telling me?"

"He's angry at me right now, Dad." Jimmi tried to shrug it off. "He just decided to have a drink. It's nothing."

"Is it?" McCoy asked. Jimmi thought her father seemed worried. He leaned on the back of his chair. McCoy knew Lenny's history with alcohol was not good. "I better check on him."

"No, Dad." Jimmi said grabbing her father's arm. "He wants to be alone."

"I'll be back in a minute." McCoy patted her hand gently and removed it from his arm. He headed toward the office. Jimmi watched him move through the crowd towards the bar.

"Why is he so interested, James T.?" Jimmi asked, turning back to Kirk. "He doesn't even like Lenny."

"Are you sure?" Kirk asked.

Jimmi found Kirk's answer confusing. She cocked her head to one side when she said, "He's always worried about the time I spend with him."

"What is it you don't want your father to know, Jean Marie?" Kirk asked. He rarely called her Jimmi and she never called him Jim. It was just another nickname game she had been playing since she was a kid.

"Ummm. Well, James T. it's kind of classified." Jimmi said looking over her shoulder but her father was no longer any where to be seen. "I just hope Lenny keeps it that way."

"You and Sulu are no longer classified information." Kirk observed.

"But Lenny knows all my secrets, James T." She sighed. Kirk raised his eyebrow at her. She ignored him and called the waitress over. He decided against asking her anything else. He knew McCoy would take care of that.

Dr. McCoy walked through the office door at the end of the bar. He stopped just inside and ordered the computer to increase the dim lights. Lenny was still sitting at his desk. The bottle of vodka was half gone. McCoy pulled out his communicator and asked that his medical kit be sent to him. When it appeared, the Doctor took out his medical scanner. "Lenny." he said. "You know alcohol interferes with your medication. I know Dr. Yager has talked to you about that....Lenny!"

Lenny just stared at him, dazed. When his brain chemistry was off center like this, he had trouble thinking clearly. He couldn't figure out how Dr. McCoy had appeared in his office. "Dr. McCoy?"

"Lenny." McCoy gave him a shot while he spoke to him slowly but firmly. "You've got to eat some food. Are you listening to me, son?"

Lenny blinked and tried to focus on McCoy. He nodded. The shot was counter acting the alcohol. "What's the reading?"

"The ionic bond is practically non existent and the SSRI is correspondingly high."

McCoy said. "But that shot and a good meal should put you back on schedule. Take your medication and stay off the alcohol."

Dr. McCoy went to the bar and got Randy's attention. He asked him to take Lenny some food, making it plain that it was a medical matter. When Randy questioned McCoy, the doctor said only that Lenny was having a reaction to some medication. McCoy had been aware of Lenny's condition for several years. He also knew that Lenny did not want it to become common knowledge. After he was sure that Lenny Vasco would be ok, McCoy rejoined Jimmi and Captain Kirk at the table. They had ordered him a drink. Jimmi bit her lower lip, waiting for her father to say something. When he did not, she asked, "What did Lenny have to say?"

"Not much." the doctor said. "Perhaps our discussion of this place should wait until he can join us."

"I don't know, Dad." Jimmi said. "He may not want to talk at all."

"Regardless, for now let's talk about you." McCoy smiled at his daughter. "Let's start with, where are the rest of your clothes?"

"You don't like this dress, Dad?" Jimmi smiled mischievously. Her father had not approved of her clothes since she hit fifteen. She had expected that comment. She counted on that comment.

"It seems to be missing something, Dear." McCoy didn't want to sound like a over protective father, but he couldn't help himself. Looking at her now in the clinging red strapless dress, the dangling red stone earrings and matching necklace, she could easily be mistaken for a twenty five years old. That made him nervous. And working here in a bar, anything could happen to his little girl. "You're going to get sick or worse."

"I'm fine, Dad." Jimmi laughed. This subject was easy for her. She could take care of herself and her father worried too much. The harder subjects would come later. "But when I'm up on stage, I need a little flash. It holds the audience's attention."

"I'm sure it does." McCoy grumbled and sipped his bourbon and water.

"So, what else is going on in your life, Jean Marie?" Kirk asked looking for a safer subject.

"You mean besides the fact that I'm working in a bar, that Hikaru and I are friends again, and that I'm carrying a decent average at school?" She smiled.

"There's more?" McCoy asked. Friends? Is that what she was going to call it? He wanted to ask, but decided to wait for a better time. A time when they could talk alone. I time when he had her full attention.

"No, Dad. That's it."

"What made you want to own a bar?" Kirk asked.

"Because if I own the place I can sing whenever I want to. At least that was the original idea." Jimmi smiled. She wasn't sure why her father wasn't more upset. She had expected a major meltdown regarding the bar itself. He had hit the roof a couple of years ago when she had just walked into the officers club on Starbase Twelve looking for him. "But I find I like running a bar. I'm having fun."

"What does Mr. Sulu think of you working in a bar?" McCoy asked softly. His piercing blue eyes looking right through her.

"I didn't know I was suppose to ask his permission, Dad." Jimmi frowned. Her father could be so old fashioned sometimes.

"You're not." Kirk laughed.

They caught up on each other for awhile. Jimmi had to get up to take care of business. She sent the band on without her or Lenny. He evidently wasn't going to come out of the office. She went up to the bar. Randy's attitude was indifferent towards her. He made himself busy when she passed by. She stopped next to Sulu to see how he was taking her father being there. But before she could say anything he pulled his communicator out.

Over the noise of the bar, it was amazing that Sulu heard his communicator's signal at all. He opened the channel, held it close, and answered. "Sulu here."

"Lt. Healy, Sir." Sulu could barely hear him. "I need to ask you about the medical supplies in cargo bay three."

"Stand by, Mr. Healy." Sulu looked over at Jimmi apologetically. "Business. I need to take care of this."

"Some shore leave." Jimmi said. She nodded toward the end of the bar. "Use my office. It's the second office door. At least you'll be able to hear."

"Thanks."

While he was gone, Jimmi took the opportunity to go back to the kitchen. George was busy with several orders. His work focused on the table against the wall towards the bar. The dirty dishes were piling up in the sink behind him. They desperately needed more kitchen help. On the counter by the alley door a piece of broiled fish was cooling on a chipped plate.

"What's wrong with this, George?" Jimmi asked.

"It fell on the floor." George responded over his shoulder.

Jimmi smiled at George's back and picked up the plate. She stepped into the alley and softly called. "Here kitty kitty kitty."

Three two month old balls of fur slowly inched out of their hiding places. They waited patiently as she put the plate down. Jimmi reached one finger out to the largest and bravest of the kittens. It hissed at her.

"Tough guy." George laughed over her shoulder. Jimmi withdrew her hand and let the kittens feast on the fish. The mother cat waited in the shadows licking her tail.

"Come on." Jimmi said. "Mama cat won't come out to eat until we leave."

They retreated into the doorway and watched as the grey tabby cat cautiously followed her kittens to the food. "She's looking better." George observed. "Almost healthy."

"No wonder. Milk, cheese, eggs, now fish." Jimmi teased him. "What's next? Steak?"

"Maybe." George shrugged. "Maybe for steak she'll start trusting us."

"She thinks we're trying to trick her." Jimmi said. "I don't think she'll ever trust us."

"Maybe." George returned to his cooking. Jimmi leaned in the doorway and watched.

The cats lick the plate clean and fade back into the alley's shadows. Jimmi retrieved the plate and dropped it in the sink. Back in the bar Sulu was sipping a beer and waiting for her.

"Where'd you disappear to?" He asked.

"I have business too you know." She smiled. She leaned across the bar to ask him about his conversation with Enterprise. "When did they make you quartermaster?"

"The cargo is part of a special project I am overseeing." Sulu explained.

"But any more than that is classified. Right?" Jimmi finished for him. He nodded, smiling. Jimmi came around the bar to him and changed the subject.. "My father doesn't seem to have any problems with my seeing you now. I don't get it."

Sulu shrugged. "Maybe he's just bowing to the inevitable."

"Maybe he's been so busy giving me a hard time about the bar and the dress, he just hasn't gotten around to you yet." Jimmi laughed, hoping it wasn't true.

"Maybe." Sulu smiled. The band started to play a slow love song that was one of Jimmi's favorites. "Dance?"

"Are you sure? With my Dad here?" Jimmi asked. He offered his hand and they walked out to the dance floor together. Jimmi felt she never danced as well with anyone as she did with Harry. After all he had taught her how. Besides she just loved being in his arms.

McCoy and Kirk watched them dance. McCoy tried not to grumble. After all he couldn't complain about her choice of Sulu. He was an honorable man and a good friend. But he was six years older than Jimmi and he was in Starfleet. Both McCoy and Kirk knew how hard Starfleet could be on a relationship. Kirk sipped his drink and teased his friend. "I think you're looking at son-in-law material, Bones."

"She wouldn't, would she?" McCoy asked. He hoped she didn't rush into anything. His little girl had so much growing up to do yet. He shook his head. "Let's get out of here."

The song ended. Jimmi and Sulu saw Dr. McCoy and Captain Kirk starting to leave. They walked over to their table. "Going?" Jimmi asked.

"Yes, dear." McCoy said. "But tomorrow I'd like to take you out to lunch. We could really catch up."

"Ok Dad. I have a room over the bar. So I'll be here." She kissed him goodnight.

"Good night, Dear. Mr. Sulu."

"Goodnight Doctor, Captain."

"Goodnight" Kirk hugged her and kissed her on the forehead. He started to say something else but thought the better of it. He just winked at Jimmi and followed McCoy out. The San Francisco night had turned chilly. Kirk sighed, at least there hadn't been any yelling this year. "Well, that went better than expected."

"You think so?" McCoy was still grumbling. How could she have kept this from him? Her letters had been full of life at Georgetown University. She talked about classes, friends, even an occasional date. She never mentioned owning a bar with Lenny Vasco of all people.

"What did Lenny have to say?" Kirk asked.

"He was so drunk, he could barely talk." McCoy confided, but he had to keep the medical reasons why this upset him to himself. "This is not good, Jim."

"Think it over before you blow up at her, Bones." Kirk counseled. He took out his communicator.

"You are suggesting I may over react?" McCoy asked indignantly.

"You?! Of course not." Kirk laughed. "You've never over reacted with Jean Marie before!"

"OK." McCoy admitted. "I'll count to ten."

"Try ten thousand." Kirk said, but he didn't give McCoy time to respond. He flipped open his communicator. "Kirk to Enterprise. Two to beam up."

When the Doctor and Captain had left the bar, Jimmi and Sulu looked at each other and breathed a sigh of relief. They laughed and went back to the bar. Sulu ordered another beer and Jimmi got a soft drink. Randy was in and out of the office several times, but Lenny never emerged.

"I'm hungry. Are you hungry?" Jimmi asked.

"Sure, I could eat." Sulu said. "But I thought you had to stay at the bar. Your partner doesn't appear to be working tonight."

"This is not the same Jade Palace you went to as a cadet." Jimmi said proudly. She wished he'd leave Lenny out of it. "George is a great chef. Real cooking. Nothing replicated."

"Really?" Sulu was surprised. It had always been strictly drinking and dancing when he was a cadet. "So what's your chef's specialty?"

"This time of night he does mostly junk food. You know the stuff that's really awful for you but just tastes great in a bar." Jimmi laughed. "He get's in moods and cooks whatever he feels like. The menu changes nightly. Tonight his specials were broiled salmon or brunswick stew."

"So what do you recommend?"

"I like the stew, but everything's good." Jimmi said. They sat in a booth far away from the stage and ordered a late dinner. While they waited for their food to arrive, Jimmi couldn't help but smile at him. "I still can't believe you're here. When do you have to report back?"

"By Monday morning." He said. "I assume you have to be back at school by then."

"I usually go back Sunday nights. I have a history class first thing Monday." She shrugged. "But it wouldn't bother me to miss a class."

"That is your decision of course, but I wouldn't want your father to think I was a bad influence on you." he said.

"But you are." She laughed. Her tone was still teasing when she asked, "Is this how it's going to be? You reporting back to my father on my activities?"

"I don't think so." He laughed. The waitress brought their dinner. More seriously, he added, "But we do need to talk about how it is going to be."

"Let me see. We'll see each other once a year if we're lucky. Since subspace time is restricted we'll actually talk about once a month." Jimmi said. With him sitting across the table from her, all those restrictions seemed so far away that Jimmi just could not take them seriously right now. "So we'll have to make due with a lot of letters."

"That's all true." Sulu smiled. Of course she had lived with these restrictions with her father for years. "But there's more."

"What do you mean?"

"We'll be living different lives." Sulu said slowly. "A lot of which I won't be able to talk about. And we'll be meeting different people..."

"That's obvious." She held her breath for a minute, wondering if he was going to bring up

Lenny. She decided to play dumb and said. "Between school and the Palace, I meet new people every day. What does that have to do with us?"

"I don't know." Sulu said quietly. Evidently she still didn't feel the need to tell him about her relationship with Lenny. "I just want us to be honest with each other. If someone else comes into the picture, I just want us to talk about it."

"I agree." Jimmi said quickly. "From now on, if anybody comes between us we have to be honest about it. And talk it over."

Sulu nodded and ate his fish. What else could he ask of her. After all he had made it clear a year ago that they had no future. They finished their meal and spent what was left of the evening dancing. When the bar closed Jimmi and Hikaru went upstairs leaving Randy and George to lock up.