

The next day Jimmi and Hikaru were sharing a cup of coffee in the empty bar. They had slept in and taken their time about getting out of bed once awake. Jimmi wore a pair of grey plaid walking shorts with a yellow t-shirt and a short fitted grey jacket. She had her hair in a pony tail. Hikaru, of course, had his uniform on. His jacket was thrown over an empty chair.

"Why do you do that?" Hikaru asked.

"What?" Jimmi asked as she was putting on her ankle boots.

"Wear your hair in a pony tail. I liked it better last night." He smiled. "All loose and around your face."

"I'll remember that, but Dad likes it better like this. He's going to be here any minute." Jimmi smiled, teasing him. "Are you going to wait and say hello?"

"I don't think so." Sulu stood up and put on his jacket. "I need to go visit my mother and my sisters. You wouldn't want to join me for that?"

"Too bad I have other plans." Jimmi said sarcastically.

"Will you meet me for dinner tonight?" He asked.

"Sure, I'll be here."

Sulu left about fifteen minutes before Dr. McCoy arrived. In the meantime, Jimmi checked the office to make sure Lenny hadn't spent the night on the couch. The office was empty. Jimmi wondered how he got home. She resisted the urge to call him. It would be better if she let him cool off. She'd talk to him later.

Dr. McCoy took Jimmi to lunch at a restaurant near Fisherman's Wharf. They had exchanged pleasantries. He had not asked where Sulu had spent the night. McCoy realized there were some things he did not want to know. But there were things he planned to discuss. He waited until they were seated and had ordered.

"You have had quite a year, Jimmi." Dr. McCoy started.

"Is this going to be a lecture, Dad?" Jimmi sighed. Every time they came together he had a list of the things she had done wrong. At least he could not complain about her grades this year. But that was probably all he would not complain about.

"I would prefer it was a discussion." McCoy said. "But I am very upset with how you've handled a number of things. Let's start with the way you treated your sister."

"I know and I'm sorry." Jimmi said looking at her iced tea.

"Is that all you have to say?" her father asked calmly.

"I wish you'd accept that I tried living with Joanna and family. It just didn't work" Jimmi said. At least he wasn't yelling. Maybe it would be an easier discussion this year. "Don't you think Joanna's life is simpler now that she's not looking after me for you?"

"Has it ever occurred to you that you have missed a chance to get to know your sister. That's what she wanted." McCoy said. "That is why she suggested the arrangement."

"Joanna suggested it? I thought..." Jimmi stopped and just stared at her father.

"You thought that I was attempting to exercise some control over you, so you did every obnoxious thing you could think of to get thrown out. When that didn't work, you just left." McCoy suggested. He knew his younger daughter very well. "Am I close?"

"Well, I don't think it was quite that calculating." Jimmi sulked. She didn't see why he couldn't just leave it alone. "I am sorry."

"Am I the one you should be saying that to?"

Jimmi sighed. She knew what her father wanted. "I'll call Joanna."

"You'll go see her." McCoy said firmly. The waiter brought their lunch.

"I'll go see her." Jimmi agreed as she picked at her seafood salad.

"Now about this bar." McCoy started again. Jimmi rolled her eyes. Her father laughed.

"Thought you were off the hook?"

"A girl can dream, Dad." Jimmi replied. "Besides the bar is nonnegotiable."

"What's that suppose to mean?"

"It means that I love what I'm doing and I plan to keep on doing it." She said simply. She had been running the bar for almost two years, she was not about to stop now no matter what her father said.

"You are still under age." McCoy warned her. "And I want to know what's going on. I mean details, Jimmi."

"I told you last night Dad." Jimmi explained. "Lenny and I are running the place. Lenny's uncle, Ivan Vasco, holds the deed and the liquor license. We are all partners."

"How long have you been working at this bar?" McCoy asked. "And why have you been keeping it a secret?"

"Almost two years." Jimmi said looking down at her plate.

"Two years?!" McCoy yelled. Then remembering he was in a restaurant, he lowered his voice. "You were only eighteen. Just out of high school! What made this Ivan Vasco think you and your partner were ready to run a bar? Or that you even had your father's permission?"

Jimmi shrugged. "Nobody ever told him any differently."

"Jean Marie O'Brien McCoy! Are you telling me that you let Ivan Vasco think I knew and approved of this enterprise of yours?" McCoy asked. He could not believe that even Jimmi would go that far.

"If I had asked, what would you have said?" Jimmi asked quietly.

"I probably would have told you to wait." McCoy said. "But that is not the issue here, young lady. What makes you think you can just do as you wish without even consulting me?"

"I think I am old enough to make my own decisions, Sir." Jimmi said coolly looking her father in the eye.

"Not all decisions, Miss." McCoy informed her. He hated when she called him sir. It always meant she was digging her heels in. And she was almost 21 now. Almost as old as some of the Enterprise crew. Why did she still seem so young to him? "I want to meet this Ivan Vasco and I want to see all the legal documents involved. And I mean today."

Jimmi chewed briefly on her lower lip before she said, "I might have some trouble locating Ivan and since Lenny isn't talking to me, I can't guarantee anything."

"I don't know what happened between you and Lenny." McCoy said. "And I don't believe I want to. But that is not an excuse. I want to know what you've gotten yourself involved in and what if any options we have."

"Yes Sir." Jimmi wanted to cry but refused to give her father the satisfaction. She stared at her lunch. It seemed very unappealing to her now. She got up to go to the ladies room.

"Excuse me."

McCoy watched her go. Running away in the middle of a conversation was one of Jimmi's standard diversionary tactics. He had learned long ago not to let himself get side tracked by it. Jimmi washed her face and got control of her emotions in the ladies room. She would not let her father run her life. She fixed her makeup and returned to the table intent on having a pleasant lunch. After all she only saw her father once a year. She did not want to fight with him.

She sat down and drank a bit of her iced tea. "Ok, Dad. I'm ready. What else?"

"One last topic." He smiled at her. This one would be a little easier. They had talked about it before. "Sulu."

"Well," Jimmi sighed. She picked up her fork and concentrated on her lunch. "I don't know what you want me to say about that, Dad."

"I know you don't want to hear this, but he is six years older than you." McCoy said. Jimmi ate her lunch and tried not to get upset. She had heard all this before. "You are still in school. Sulu wants to command. And if he doesn't get sidetracked, he will."

"So you think I'll side track him?" Jimmi asked.

"Not intentionally." McCoy said, but he did think about that possibility. And he worried about the effect that would have on her as well as Sulu.

"Dad..." Jimmi pleaded. She just wanted him to stop. To back off.

"Jimmi, you know how I feel about Sulu. He's a good officer and a good man. But you've got to be careful." McCoy counseled. "These subspace relationships are not easy on anyone. I worry about you, Dear."

"I know." Jimmi felt drained. "I didn't plan on falling for someone in Starfleet. And Hikaru's said all the same things you have: the age difference, the separation. But I can't help it, I love him Dad."

"Jimmi, you know he's on command track." McCoy said "That means he'll spend his entire career on a ship, probably in deep space."

"I don't have any answers, Dad. He just walked back into my life last night." Jimmi knew what her father said was true. But she didn't think it was as hopeless as he did. After all she had the grand plan. "I'll have to see what happens. Please trust me to take care of it."

"Jimmi....." It wasn't that he didn't trust her. He was worried about her.

"If you can't trust me Dad, maybe you can trust Hikaru." Jimmi said. "I know I do."

They spent the rest of the afternoon together. Jimmi pumped her father for all the ship's gossip. He was happy to oblige her. She had a unique perspective of the crew. By the time they got back to the Jade Palace in the early evening, it was open for business and filling up fast. Dr. McCoy walked in with her. He wanted to check on Lenny, among other things. Jimmi explained she had to change for work and ran upstairs avoiding Lenny.

McCoy walked up to Lenny who was sitting at the bar with a cup of coffee. He sat on the barstool next to him. "Coffee. That's a better choice."

"I'm ok, Doctor." Lenny said dispassionately, without looking up from his coffee. "I've made the proper adjustments in the medication."

"I'm glad to hear it." McCoy said quietly. "You do realize that you shouldn't drink at all."

Lenny turned to McCoy. "I realize that I will live my life as I see fit. I am tired of listening to doctors about what I can and can't do. It just requires adjustments."

"Ok, Lenny." McCoy nodded. After all he wasn't the boy's doctor, but he would give Lenny's mother a call just to make sure the family doctor was aware of the development. "Listen, I need to speak to this uncle of yours. How can I get in touch with him?"

"Come on in the office, Doctor." Lenny said. "He shouldn't be too hard to find."

They went into the office together. The only furniture was a large black glass desk with several chairs around it and a blue flowered couch with a black glass coffee table in front of it. The coffee table was strewn with computer pads, data storage bars, and other school supplies. There was a distinct lack of any conscious effort to decorate.

Lenny took only a few minutes to contact his uncle. The family resemblance was strong. Ivan had the same light brown hair as Lenny but he wore it longer and had a full beard. He must have been the younger of the Vasco brothers. McCoy couldn't believe he was any older than forty. "Ivan." Lenny made the introductions. "This is Jimmi's father, Dr. McCoy. He has some questions for you."

"What can I do for you Doctor?" Ivan asked pleasantly.

"Well, Mr. Vasco, I am just trying to get my bearings on what is going on here." McCoy said. "You see I never heard about this partnership or this bar until last night."

"You're kidding?" Ivan asked, his eyes wide with surprise. "Jimmi gave me the impression....well never mind. Is there a problem? I mean, the kids are doing a great job. There are running this place and still keeping up their grades. What more could you ask for?"

"I could ask for a little honesty." McCoy said. "My daughter is still under age and I would like to review any legal agreements before this goes any further."

"As far as the law is concerned, Doctor, legal contracts can be made from the age of eighteen not twenty one." Ivan said. "I have no problem with you looking at the contracts. But as for honesty, perhaps you should take that up with your daughter."

"And if I find something in the contracts that I don't like?" McCoy asked.

"I would certainly be willing to talk to you about it, Dr. McCoy. But I think you will find everything is quite fair." Ivan said. He looked away for a second, then turned back to the screen to say, "If you'll excuse me Doctor, I have another call."

When the screen was blank McCoy turned to Lenny. "You knew she hadn't discussed it with me. You could have told your uncle."

"I could have." Lenny admitted. He never censored himself with Dr. McCoy like he did with his own father. But then McCoy did not have the same expectations of Lenny that his father had. He brought the contracts up on the computer screen. "But it wouldn't have changed anything in the end. Jimmi always gets what she wants. These are the contracts. Take your time, Doctor."

McCoy studied the document on the screen. Lenny started to leave. "Lenny, ask Jimmi to come in here please."

"As soon as she comes down stairs, Doctor." Lenny said and went back to the bar.

In the bar things were pretty quiet. It was early yet. Randy stood in the doorway between the kitchen and the bar. He was sipping a cup of coffee and watching George prepare the day's special. They had been married for almost four years. And had been working together for two years more than that.

"Do you believe that?" Randy asked. He loved working in a bar because it always gave him plenty to talk about. Right now they were discussing the goings on between Lenny and Jimmi. "It was as if she didn't even remember he was in the bar."

"I told you that was going nowhere." George said shaking his head. "Lenny thinks a whole lot more about her than she thinks about him."

"Yeah, you called it right." Randy laughed. "But I pictured this Sulu guy differently."

"How?"

"Taller."

"You picture everyone taller." George, who was much shorter than Randy, complained. "Has she come back downstairs yet?"

Randy stepped back into the bar and checked. "I don't see her." But some other customers were coming in, so Randy had to go back to work.

Lenny watched Jimmi come down the steps. She was ready for work but dressed just a little more conservatively than usual. She was wearing her forest green dress with the high neckline in the front and the open back.

"J.M.," Lenny said as she joined him behind the bar. It was the first thing he had said to her all day. "Your father is my office looking over contracts. He wants you."

"Damn. He's not going to give up on this." Jimmi complained. She looked Lenny in the eye. "We need to talk too, you know."

"I know." Lenny admitted. "When you're done with your father."

"That could take all night." Jimmi grabbed his hand and pulled him with her. The closest private place was the storage room that was off the kitchen just behind the bar.

"Ok, talk." Lenny said when they were alone in the storage room full of the supplies necessary for running a restaurant and bar. He was glad he had adjusted the medication. He felt like he could handle anything right now.

Jimmi knew exactly what she wanted to say. She had been practicing while getting dressed. So she took a deep breath and looked him in the eye when she said, "I know you are angry and hurt. You have every right to be. I don't want to hurt you, but I can't change how I feel either."

"It was a lousy thing to do." Lenny said with a shrug of his shoulders.

"You're right. I am sorry." Jimmi said. The store room was small and crowded. There was barely enough room for the two of them to stand there. "L.J., I wish I could make this easy, but I don't see how. I love Hikaru. I know you don't want to hear that. But I need you to understand."

"Why is it always what you need?" Lenny asked. "Why don't you ever think about anyone else?"

"I try, Lenny. I do." Jimmi said leaning back against the shelves. "Tell me how I can make it up to you."

Lenny thought about that. He had a brief fantasy about Jimmi swearing to love him forever, but he knew that would never happen. He even thought about her turning to him, heartbroken after Sulu was through with her. But he didn't want that either. He sighed, he just wanted Sulu to leave so they could get back to business.

"You can tell me where we go from here." Lenny sighed.

"What do you mean?" Jimmi asked, the confusion obvious in her voice. "Lenny, as far as I'm concerned we continue towards the ultimate goal. Did you want to change the grand plan?"

"No, but I thought you might." Lenny said. "Doesn't Sulu coming back change everything?"

"No." Jimmi protested. The plan was more important than ever now. "I'm still your partner, aren't I?"

"Yeah." Lenny said indifferently. "Partners, nothing more."

Jimmi looked at the floor. At least they were talking again. Making love to Lenny had been nice. He had made her feel safe and cared for. But it was nothing compared to her feelings for Sulu. "Partners and friends."

"You used to say friends and lovers." Lenny said. "I guess that no longer applies."

"I guess not." Jimmi said. "But L.J., we've been best friends since we were thirteen. I don't want to lose that. I don't want to lose you."

Lenny sighed. It would never be the same. He knew that, but they had to get past this if they were going to stay partners. "I'm not going anywhere, partner." He wanted to hug her but did not trust himself. Instead he just put his hands in his pants pockets and said, "Your father's waiting."

"Right." Jimmi said as they left the store room. "Thanks, L.J."

Jimmi headed directly to the office. George looked at Lenny questioningly. "Shut up, George!" Lenny left the kitchen quickly and went back to work.

"Dad, you wanted me?" Jimmi asked coming into Lenny's office. Her father sat at the desk studying the financial records of the Jade Palace. He looked up at her and called her over with his finger. It made her feel like a kid. Jimmi hated it, but she went over to him.

"Explain to me how you can be a partner in this business when you only had five hundred credits to invest." McCoy said. He wondered where she had gotten that much, but let it go.

Jimmi reached down and touched a few controls to bring up the partnership's financial statements. "Look." She pulled up a chair and pointed at the screen. "I get some of my pay as a percentage of ownership. And at the end of the year I get bonus shares based on the profits of the business. The way this is set up, in five years I will be an equal partner with Lenny and Ivan. At that point my salary will increase and the partnership shares will remain stable."

"Did you bother to have anyone look at these contracts before you signed them?" McCoy asked.

"Yes, Dad." Jimmi said with some irritation. What did he think of her? "I got a lawyer that specializes in corporate contracts. She thought it was very fair. There are some risks to me if the bar doesn't make it. Lenny and Ivan get their investments back first because they put up cash. But Dad, if you count the Academy there are three colleges within walking distance of here. How can we fail? And by hiring George we do a lot better business earlier in the evening. He's a very good chef. And Lenny and I have some other ideas too."

She stopped and looked at her father hopefully. He turned away from the computer screen to look at his daughter sitting next to him. He had to stop thinking of her as a little girl.

Perhaps it would be easier if he had lived with her these last six years instead of sending her away to school so he could be on Enterprise. Perhaps he had been selfish.

"You've thought this thing through more than I thought. And I'm sure that you realize that failure is a possibility." McCoy could see that she was putting the best light on the situation that was possible. "I just have one last question. Why couldn't you tell me about it?"

"I just wanted to do it on my own, Dad." Jimmi said softly.

"But I haven't been on the planet since I brought you here to go to college. Everything you've accomplished here you've done on your own." McCoy took his daughters hands in his own and turned her towards him. He didn't want her avoiding him now. "So why couldn't you tell me?"

"Because you think I'm a kid." Jimmi said. "And I'm not."

"Maybe, but you are not as grown up as you think you are either." McCoy said. "And I have reservations about your partners. How often does Ivan Vasco come to this bar of yours?"

"A couple times a month." Jimmi said. "He has other business to take care of."

"So most of the decisions are left to you and Lenny?" McCoy asked.

"Right."

"Last night when I walked in here, you were sitting at the bar with Sulu and Lenny was in here getting drunk by himself in the dark." Her father pointed out. "Perhaps if Lenny's uncle was here, it would be different."

"That's not how it usually goes." Jimmi said looking down at their entwined fingers.

"Lenny and I work very hard. We have the band. And I wait tables when Kimmy doesn't show up. Now that Lenny's turned twenty one he can work behind the bar. And it's only a couple of months until my birthday."

"I don't doubt that you work hard." McCoy said "You always have when it's something you want. But judgement is tempered by experience. And there is very little experience here."

"What do you want, Dad?" Jimmi asked tears in her eyes. Why couldn't he trust her?

"Jimmi dear, I want things to go right for you." McCoy said in a comforting voice. "I want to see that you don't get hurt. Why have you always been in such a hurry to grow up?"

Jimmi shrugged. There was no reason to bring up ancient history. She equated youth with helplessness and he knew all the reasons that she hated helplessness. "I can do this, Dad. I've been doing it. And I'm good at it."

"Well it seems I can't stop you." McCoy sighed. Jimmi's face lit up as she realized what he was saying. McCoy hastened to add. "But that doesn't mean I'm going to just let this go. We will continue to talk about this."

"Thank you Daddy." She leaned over and kissed him on the cheek. "I've got to get back to work."

When they walked back into the bar it was arm in arm. Several Enterprise officers had come to the bar. Scotty, Chekov, and Uhura sat at one table. Chapel and most of her nursing staff were at another. Sulu, out of uniform, was at the bar talking to a pretty young asian woman whose braided hair came to the middle of her back. Jimmi's heart stopped momentarily to see him smiling at another woman. She took a deep breath and freed herself from her father's arm to walk up to them. McCoy joined Scotty, Uhura, and Chekov.

"You're out of uniform, Mister." she teased. Actually she thought he looked wonderful in the off white fisherman-style sweater and khaki cotton pants.

"Uniforms are not required on shore leave." He smiled at her. "Jeanie, this is my little sister, Kiko. Kiko this is Jimmi McCoy."

"Nice to meet you, Jimmi." Kiko smiled. She reached over and hit her brother in the arm. "You can leave the 'little' out of it next time."

"Nice to meet you Kiko." Jimmi smiled. She should have guessed they were related. Now that she knew, the family resemblance was obvious. "I guess you were pretty surprised when he showed up at your office yesterday?"

"I work at home." Kiko said, but she looked at Sulu surprised. "You went to the office? And they let you in?"

"I'm allowed." Sulu complained. He explained to Jimmi, "I went to my sister, Misaka's office yesterday."

"Our older sister." Kiko put in. She laid her hand gently on her big brother's. "She's in Daddy's old office now."

"What's the big deal?" Jimmi asked, confused.

"My father had wanted me to follow him into the business." Sulu shrugged it off even as he explained. "He thought I was wasting my time going into the Academy."

"Our two older sisters now run the family business." Kiko explained. "Daddy thought we should all be in it. But especially his name sake."

"Namesake? You're a junior?" Jimmi laughed. "Kiko I'm glad you came tonight. I am learning so much."

"I am not a junior." Sulu said indignantly, but his eyes were laughing.

"Then what?" Jimmi asked.

"My father and I have different middle names." He explained.

"Then what is your middle name?" Jimmi asked.

Before Sulu could answer, Randy came down the bar and leaned across to speak confidentially to Jimmi. "Willie's back, Boss."

"Randy." Jimmi frowned.

"He seems very apologetic." Randy continued quietly. "Says it will never happen again."

"He's said that before." Jimmi shook her head.

"Come on Boss."

"You've got an awfully big soft spot for this guy." Jimmi sighed.

"He's ok." Randy said. "I told him I'd put in a good word for him."

"Ok. Tell him..." She changed her mind and stood up. "No. I'll tell him. Excuse me."

Jimmi walked over to a tall burly young man who stood sheepishly by the door shifting his weight from one foot to the other.. Sulu watched with interest as the young man leaned down to listen to what she had to say. Sulu had to smile. The man was easily double Jimmi's body weight, but he nodded obediently as she laid down the law.

"What was that all about?" Sulu asked when she had rejoined him. At the end of the bar Sulu watched Randy serve Willie a drink.

"I had to throw him out last week. Again." Jimmi explained. "He can be a bit of a

problem when he drinks too much."

"I can imagine." Sulu nodded and sipped his beer.

"J.M." Lenny said from behind the bar. She looked over at her partner. He nodded towards the stage. "The band's waiting."

"Right." Jimmi said. It was Saturday night and the band was the main attraction for the weekend crowd. Even though Lenny sometimes played with the band it was really her responsibility. She turned to Sulu. "Dinner is going to have to wait awhile."

"No problem." He smiled "Are you and Lenny ok?"

"Yes. We talked things over. He's not happy but it's ok." She explained but tried not to say too much. "I've got to get up on stage."

Jimmi headed towards the stage but was sidetracked by Chekov who walked up to her grabbed her arm and pulled her to the end of the bar. She laughed at him. It was not unusual treatment from her adopted big brother.

"Hi Pavel." She smiled. Jimmi had met Chekov the July he had reported to Enterprise. He had been at the top of his Academy class when it came to navigation and general science. It had impressed Captain Kirk, however Pavel dismissed it as the natural superiority of the Russian people. Both Pavel and Jimmi had grown up essentially alone and they adopted each other almost immediately.

"Are you crazy?" He asked. He didn't bother to say hello. "Are you going to put yourself through this again?"

"Maybe I am." Jimmi shrugged with a wide grin. "Tell me, do you scold Hikaru like this?"

"Yes." Chekov snapped. "Whenever he talks about you."

"Does he talk about me often?" Jimmi asked hopefully.

"Never mind!" Chekov scolded her in his heavy Russian accent. He did not want to encourage her. "I know you, Princess. You think everything will now be ok. You have not thought past tomorrow. What do you think happens now?"

"Now I have to get up on stage." Jimmi laughed. Pavel had been telling her for years that it would never work between her and Sulu. She wondered why he couldn't admit he was wrong. "The band is waiting for me."

"What about your partner?" Chekov asked. "What happens to him?"

"It was a mistake." Jimmi's smile disappeared. Perhaps she never should have confided in Pavel. "I never should have gone to bed with him."

"That is not what you said last Christmas." Pavel reminded her

"Last Christmas I was lonely and sad and a little bit drunk." Jimmi said. "And I was trying to get over Hikaru. But it was a temporary solution."

"You will be all three of those things again, Princess." Chekov warned her. But Jimmi didn't want to hear it. Right now she couldn't conceive of being that sad and lonely again.

Jimmi leaned across the bar and called to the bartender. "Randy, give my over protective big brother a beer on me." She turned back to Pavel. "I've got to go to work."

Jimmi ran towards the stage as Randy handed Chekov a beer. "I didn't know the Boss had a brother."

"She does not." Chekov laughed and took the beer.

Jimmi joined the band. They played a combination of types of music. Jimmi's one requirement was that the beat was suitable for dancing. Chekov asked Kiko to dance. They had met the last time Enterprise crew had shore leave on Earth. Dr. McCoy took the opportunity to sit at the bar next to Mr. Sulu. He ordered a bourban and water. Sulu sipped his beer and waited.

"Good evening, Mr. Sulu."

"Hi Doc." Sulu said pleasantly. After all he had known McCoy for a long time before he had met his daughter. "How'd the father daughter lunch go?"

"It gave me a headache." McCoy said sampling his drink. "She thinks I don't trust her."

"Do you?" Sulu asked without looking at McCoy.

"I don't think that's the issue." McCoy said. He took a deep breath and added. "She thinks she's all grown up."

"Yes Sir." Sulu said still looking straight ahead and avoiding the Doctor's gaze. He concentrated on the multicolored liquor bottles that lined the back shelf behind the bar.

"I didn't ask what happened a year ago when Jimmi caught up with the Enterprise on shore leave, and I won't ask now." McCoy also looked straight ahead now, speaking calmly but firmly. "But if I ever hear my little girl cry again like she did then, there will be hell to pay. Do you read me, Mister?"

"Loud and clear, Sir."

"Good." McCoy put his drink down on the bar and stood up. "Good night, Mr. Sulu."

"Good night, Doctor." Sulu said. Sulu waited until McCoy left the bar before motioning to Randy for another beer. Sulu finished the one he had in one gulp. "Thanks Randy."

"Not as easy as it looks." Randy smiled as he picked up McCoy's glass and emptied it in the sink.

"What's that?" Sulu asked

"Dating the boss's daughter." Randy said.

"Thank god he's not my commanding officer." Sulu laughed.

It was just getting dark and the cool afternoon was turning into a very chilly evening for this time of year. Dr. McCoy walked up the hill to Starfleet Headquarters. Captain Kirk had been in meetings there most of the day discussing the upcoming mission to the new starbase. Being Saturday evening the halls were unusually quiet. McCoy walked up to the ensign manning the front desk. It was a young Vulcan woman. It amazed McCoy how many Vulcans were choosing the Academy these days. Back when Spock went through he had been the only one.

"Good evening, Ensign." McCoy smiled pleasantly.

"Sir." She acknowledged his presence.

"I am looking for Captain Kirk." McCoy explained. "Is he still here?"

She consulted her board. "Yes Sir. Captain Kirk is in Admiral Reese's office. That's on level--"

"I know where it is, Ensign." McCoy cut her off. "Thank you."

McCoy walked down the empty hall towards the turbo lift. He got off on level three and

turned right. Kirk was coming out of the Admiral's office as McCoy approached. "Well Bones, there you are. I had almost given up on you."

"My discussions with Jimmi went longer than expected." McCoy grumbled. They walked along together towards the shuttle bay.

"What's wrong? Didn't she have any answers for you?" Kirk asked.

"Oh, she had all the right answers." McCoy said. "She ought to. She had two years to work on them."

"Two years?" Kirk asked wide-eyed. He laughed "I didn't know Jean Marie could keep a secret that long."

"The worse part is, there is nothing I can do about it." McCoy said. "The contracts are legal and fair. But I worry about this partnership set up."

"Why?"

"This other Vasco. The uncle." McCoy shook his head. "He isn't worried in the least that two relatively inexperienced kids are left alone running a bar. He only shows up once or twice a month. And as long as his profits are good and they keep their grades up, he's ok."

"What do you want, Bones?"

"I'd like an adult there who can say no." McCoy said. "No, you can't get drunk in the office just because you are upset. No, you can't walk around half naked."

"It couldn't be that you are over reacting just a bit?" Kirk asked. They walked up to the Enterprise shuttle. Lt. Kwon was going over the last of the preflight check. Admiral Reese's office had informed her that Kirk was on his way. "Whenever you're ready, Lt. Kwon."

"Just a couple of more minutes, Sir." Kwon responded.

"I think Jean Marie looked lovely last night." Kirk said as he and McCoy settle in the passenger seats of the small shuttle.

"What if something happens to her Jim, and I am a million light years away?" McCoy asked seriously. "How do I just fly away and leave her there?"

"Well, you could always resign your commission and watch over her twenty four hours a day." Kirk teased his friend. They had been over this ground many times before. McCoy just raised his eyebrow at Kirk. He was not in the mood to be teased. Kirk sighed. "You didn't know how you could put her in boarding school to come aboard Enterprise, but you did. You didn't know how you were going to handle being a single parent, but you did. Should I go on?"

"Hmmm." McCoy responded non-committally. He didn't want to be so damn reasonable about it. "She wants us to come to dinner tomorrow night. You, me, and Spock."

"Not Sulu?" Kirk asked knowing full well the Doctor wasn't happy about the whole situation.

"Don't get me started." McCoy grumbled.

"Ready to depart, Captain." Lt. Kwon said. "Destination?"

"Space dock. Main landing bay." Kirk answered. Enterprise transporters were off line for maintenance. In the space dock landing bay they could check on how much cargo was left to be loaded on the Enterprise and check on a few other details. Lt. Kwon cleared their departure with Starfleet Control and took off.

"What am I suppose to say to Sulu?" McCoy continued. "I trust you with my life but stay

away from my daughter?"

Kirk laughed. He was glad it was the Doctor's dilemma, not his. "Maybe it's time to let go of Jean Marie just a little. She's a good kid. Trust her."

"Do I have a choice?"

"I don't think so."

At the Jade Palace Sulu and his sister, Kiko, had joined Chekov, Uhura and Scotty at their table. They were enjoying the party atmosphere. Scotty was the only one of the group that Kiko had never met before. She knew Uhura from her Hikaru's Academy days. Kiko remembered Uhura as the first woman who was her brother's friend.

"Are you still living at the beach, Kiko?" Chekov asked.

"I can't give up that apartment, Pavel." Kiko explained sipping her wine. "The light in my studio is perfect."

"Studio?" Scotty asked. "What do you do, Lass?"

"I try to paint." Kiko smiled shyly. She did not like to talk about her art especially with people she did not know well. "And I sculpt, some."

"She is being modest." Chekov said. "She does beautiful pieces. You have seen one of her paintings in my cabin."

"The two nudes on the beach?" Scotty asked. He had admired that several times. Chekov nodded. "That is a beautiful painting, Lass. I'd like to see more of your work."

"Any time Scotty." Kiko smiled. "To find my studio, you just keep going down hill until you hit water."

"I have to work tomorrow and the ship leaves Monday morning." Scotty said. "Would you mind showing me now?"

"Sure." Kiko said a little surprised that he was serious. Scotty finished his drink and they left together.

The band took a break. Jimmi went directly to the bar where Randy handed her a large glass of water. She drank it and he refilled it for her. She took the refilled glass and joined her friends at the table.

"Aren't we missing someone here?" She asked taking the empty seat next to Sulu. It was the one that Kiko had just vacated.

"Kiko took Scotty back to her studio to show him her paintings." Uhura explained. Jimmi raised her eyebrow. The other three at the table laughed at her.

"Don't get any crazy ideas." Sulu laughed. "Kiko has been involved with someone for some time."

"It's none of my business, but crazier things have happened." Jimmi shrugged. She saw people cheating on their loved ones every weekend. But their laughter made her feel uneasy. She wondered what they knew that she didn't.

"Trust me." Sulu said leaning back in his chair. He was smiling at her.

"I see my Dad has also left." Jimmi observed, changing the subject.

Sulu's smile faded when he said, "Yeah, he left a while ago."

"He didn't say anything to you about tomorrow night, did he?" Jimmi asked. Sulu shook

his head. "I asked Dad, James T., and Spock to come to dinner."

"Tomorrow night?" Sulu asked. He tried very hard not to look or sound panicked. Jimmi nodded. She expected him to say something more, but he didn't.

"Excuse me." Jimmi stood up and started towards the ladies room. She caught Uhura's eye and with a nod of her head asked her to come along. Uhura also excused herself. In the ladies room Jimmi asked, "Ok, what am I missing about Kiko? What was so funny?"

"Kiko is involved with another woman." Uhura answered, checking her make up.

"Oh." Jimmi laughed. "I never considered that. She was so chummy with Pavel."

"That's because Pavel bought one of her paintings last year." Uhura explained. "The next time you are on the ship, make it a point to go to his cabin to see it."

"I will." Jimmi said.

While they were talking in the ladies room, Sulu and Chekov were talking at the table. But their conversation wasn't so calm. Kimmy brought them two more beers. Chekov would have liked to flirt with her but Sulu was demanding his attention.

"Tomorrow!" Sulu rubbed his chin thinking desperately about how he could handle this development.

"Dinner with the family?" Chekov snickered.

"You have to get me out of this, Pavel." Sulu said very seriously.

"Me?" Chekov laughed. "How am I going to do that?"

"I already have plans to spend the day with Jimmi." Sulu said. "I want you to come in here about seventeen or eighteen hundred hours with some life or death excuse to get me out of this!"

"What life or death excuse can I use? The Captain will know it is an excuse." Chekov was glad it was not his problem. He would never have gotten involved with the Doctor's daughter. As far as he was concerned it was a no win situation. Far too complicated.

"Use your imagination." Sulu said.

"Is that an order?" Chekov teased.

"Yes! If it has to be." Sulu said "I am not ready for this, Pav. You didn't hear Dr. McCoy just before he left tonight."

Chekov was about to ask what McCoy had said, but Uhura and Jimmi were on their way back to the table. "Here they come."

"How about that dinner, Jeanie?" Sulu said. "I'm starving."

"Me too." Jimmi smiled. She turned to Chekov and Uhura. "How about you guys?"

"Not us." Chekov said getting up and taking Uhura's hand before she could sit down.

"We have an assignment to take care of."

"We do?" Uhura asked staring at him like he was crazy.

"Yes, we do." Chekov said pulling her away from the table. "I will explain on the way."

"Good night." Jimmi called. Uhura just waved as Chekov ushered her out the door.

Jimmi turned to Sulu, "Did you do that?"

"What?" Sulu asked.

"Did you tell Pavel we wanted to be alone?" Jimmi asked. "Is that why they left in such

a hurry?"

"I have no idea what Chekov is up to." Sulu said. But he knew that between Chekov and Uhura, he would be ok. Chekov would arrive tomorrow afternoon with a plausible excuse.

"How about dinner?"

"After going round and round with my father all day, I feel like having something that is totally bad for me." Jimmi said. She motioned to the waitress, Kimmy, to come over.

"Cheeseburger and french fries?" Sulu asked, grinning at her. She nodded. "Make that two."

It didn't take long for their meal to arrive. Usually on Saturday night Jimmi just snacked between sets with the band. Since she was actually sitting down to dinner she sent the band on without her. Several of the regulars said hello to her as they went by. One or two even commented that she was breaking her own rules about not sitting with the customers. She just laughed and ignored them.

"I seem to have a lot of competition." Sulu observed while he was eating his french fries.

"You have no competition." Jimmi smiled. "But you might as well know, flirting is one of the main requirements of my job."

"Oh?"

"If I make people feel welcome and comfortable, they come back." Jimmi explained.

"And if they come back a couple of times and I recognize them they feel important."

"They feel important because they are recognized in a bar?" Sulu's tone was skeptical.

"They start to think of it as their bar because they are getting special treatment. And that's good for business." Jimmi said. "Randy is especially good at it. He remembers what a lot of people drink. You'd be surprised how big a difference that can make."

"You really like this." Sulu realized.

"Yes, I do." Jimmi said. "I love coming to work. I have fun here. I can't imagine doing anything else."

"Interesting." Sulu said. "That's how I feel about being aboard a starship."

"I know." Jimmi smiled at him. There was so much they needed to talk about, she was not sure where to start. But her father's question about the bar still filled her mind. "It doesn't bother you that I work in a bar, does it?"

"No." Sulu said. "If it did, would it make a difference?"

"My Dad asked me what you thought of me working here." Jimmi explained "I told him I had never asked you. So I thought I'd ask."

"So you are giving me license to comment?" He asked carefully.

"You are so Starfleet, Lt. Commander." Jimmi laughed. "Yes, you have my permission to comment on my choices. Of course I reserve the right to ignore your advice."

"I only have one concern." Sulu said seriously. "Lenny."

"Oh." Jimmi said quietly. Well, she had asked. "You want to be more specific about that concern? After all, he and I are just friends."

"Just friends? Are you sure?" he asked. "It seems like more."

"Lenny and I are very close." She looked deep into his brown eyes. "We can't help it. As partners we put in a lot of hours together. We've been good friends for a long time."

"And that's all?" he asked.

"Don't you trust me either?" Jimmi demanded. "It's bad enough that Dad--"

"I'm not talking about trust." He cut her off. "I'm talking about honesty."

"Honestly, I don't see why it should matter what has happened in the past." Jimmi said.
"Recent or otherwise."

"What matters is that we are honest about our feelings." Sulu said carefully.

"When it comes to this past year," Jimmi said slowly. She tried to ignore the panic that was tying her stomach into a knot. "I don't owe you a thing."

"Not even the truth?"

"The truth is that Lenny is my partner."

"Damn it, Jimmi. I am not stupid." He said. "And I am no ogre. It won't hurt you to tell me the truth."

"You need the truth? Fine." Jimmi stood up and leaned across the table. "Lenny and I have been lovers since last Christmas. But it was over the minute you walked in that door. Are you happy now? Ok?"

She started to leave the table but Sulu grabbed her wrist to stop her. "Ok."

"What?" She stared at him in disbelief.

"I said ok." Sulu calmly let go of her wrist and picked up his cheeseburger. She just stood there and stared at him.

"Now what?"

"Why don't you sit down and finish your dinner?"

Jimmi hesitated. She sat down. "I don't understand. You don't care?"

"I wouldn't go that far." he said.

"Harry...." He put his burger down and waited for her to continue. "I thought....I mean I asked you. At the picnic I asked you point blank if you loved me and you said no."

"I know." For the first time, he avoided her eyes.

"That was....." She stopped for a deep breath. "devastating."

"That was not my intention. I had hoped to free you of a false hope." Sulu stopped. There was no point in going on. "Well... no matter what my intention, I was wrong. I'm sorry that I hurt you, Baby."

"It doesn't matter any more." Jimmi said. She reached across the table to his hand. "We're back together. That's what's important."

"Hey, J.M." Lenny came by their table. "Your audience is waiting."

"I know, L.J." Jimmi said as she got up. She left half her dinner on her plate. "I know. I'm coming."

"Jeanie..." Sulu asked before she left the table. "About this dinner.."

"What?"

"You didn't want me to come too, did you?" He asked

"Sure." She smiled. "Why not? It will be great. I'll have the people that I love most in the world all together at my table. I'll have to talk to George about making something special. I wonder what wine we have in the cellar."

"Jeanie..."

"The band is waiting." She said as she inched away. "I'm still working tonight."

"Damn."

While she was on stage singing, Sulu went back to the bar. He had a chance to talk to several of the Enterprise officers that were there. Christine Chapel joined him at the bar. She was an attractive blond woman a year or two older than Sulu. As head nurse of the Enterprise she had quite a lot of responsibility and a level head.

"So you and Jimmi are back together?" She also did not mince words.

"I guess." Sulu responded. "You must think I am crazy."

"Oh yes." Chapel laughed. She knew from experience that you couldn't control who you loved. "But who am I to judge? We don't always fall for appropriate people. I think you are pretty lucky."

"Lucky?"

"The girl you love, loves you back." Christine said. She drank her wine and sighed. She had not been so lucky in love. Her first love had disappeared in space. Then there was Spock who could not or would not return her feelings. "That's pretty lucky."

"You have a point, Christine." Sulu said. "But now I have to worry about her father."

"All three of them." Christine chuckled. She was a bit more serious when she added "I don't think you have much to worry about there. Although I would give Dr. McCoy time to get used to the idea."

"Time." Sulu said. "Yes, that makes sense to me. I just hope Jeanie understands."

"Problems already?"

"Nothing I can't handle." Sulu smiled and hoped he was convincing.

"I have to go." Chapel said checking her chronometer. She finished her wine. "My sister should be off work by now."

"Have a good time." Sulu said. She just winked and left. Telling the Chapel sisters to have a good time together was like telling tribbles to eat. It was quite awhile before he could talk to Jimmi again. Sulu spent his time watching the crowd and sipping his beer. As the evening wore on the bar became rather crowded. Lenny had joined Randy behind the bar.

"You want another?" Lenny picked up Sulu's empty beer bottle.

"Sure." Sulu said. He extended his hand across the bar. "We've never been introduced, but I think we should be. Hikaru Sulu."

"Yeah, I know." Lenny said. But he shook Sulu's hand anyway "L.J. Vasco."

"L.J." Sulu smiled. "If you and Jimmi are going to be partners, we should get to know each other."

"J.M. and I are partners." Lenny said. He put a fresh beer bottle in front of Sulu. "We have been partners since our first band. We were fifteen."

"Of course." Sulu agreed. He didn't mind if Lenny felt a need to establish a prior claim. "I understand you told Jimmi not to trust me."

"She's not stupid." Lenny shrugged. Selfish, yes. Stupid, no. "What do I care if she trusts you or not? All I care about is the business."

"Good." Sulu said. As long as they understood each other.

It was just about closing time. It had been a good Saturday night. The Enterprise crew

had brought in a lot of credits. Jimmi walked down the path by the bar saying goodnight to customers and heading towards Sulu. He had spent the last hour talking to two cadets. He was out of uniform, but one of the cadets heard Randy call him Commander. When they found out he was on Enterprise, they had asked endless questions about life beyond the Academy.

"Closing time, gentlemen." Jimmi said to the two cadets. "Drink up."

They obliged her and went on their way. Slowly the bar cleared out. Jimmi asked Randy for a glass of Organian peach wine with crushed ice. She sat on the empty barstool next to Sulu and sighed.

"Tired?" Sulu asked.

"It's been a long day." Jimmi said. She took a drink of the wine. It was sweet and cold. She let herself relax "Did you have fun talking to the cadets?"

"Sure, why not?" he smiled at her. "They are eager to get to the real thing. How about you?"

"What?" she laughed.

"Eager for the real thing?" he took her hand lightly in his and looked deeply into her eyes. His patience had limits. He did not like having to wait for her.

"I have to help clean up the bar." Jimmi said.

"How long does that take?" Sulu asked.

George came up to the bar and handed some dirty glasses to Randy. "We'll clean up tonight, Boss."

Jimmi eyed George suspiciously. "What's this going to cost me, George?"

"I'll think of something." George winked.

"Thanks George." Jimmi smiled at him. "I'll make it up to you."

"I know you will." George said.

They went up to her room together. Jimmi sipped her wine and slipped off her shoes. She never was able to just close the bar and go to sleep. She needed time to unwind. Sulu wasn't interested in sleep just yet either.

"We need to talk." Sulu said.

"After spending the entire afternoon and part of the evening with my Dad." Jimmi said on her way into the bathroom.. "I am really all talked out."

"This is important." he said. "It has something to do with your father."

When she came out of the bathroom she was wearing a short bathrobe. It was made of a lightweight flannel of pink and grey. It was very soft and comfortable. "Can it wait until tomorrow?" She asked putting her arms around his neck. "Tomorrow we will do what ever you want to do. Ok?"

"I'll hold you to that." He smiled and pulled her close to him. "But we still need to talk."

"About?" Jimmi asked.

"This dinner you are planning." he said slowly.

"What about it?" Jimmi laid her head on his shoulder.

"I'm not sure I should I come." he said. Jimmi pulled back from him so she could look him in the eye. He seemed serious. She did not understand why he was worried about a little dinner.

"Don't be silly." Jimmi said. She sighed and smiled at him. "Are you worried about how Dad will react? He is going to have to accept us. He has no choice. And James T. told Dad he should relax and not worry about it. As for Spock, he never was upset about it. I told him about my feelings for you before I told you."

"You are pushing Jeanie." he said.

"And you have too many clothes on." Jimmi said. She pushed his sweater out of the way and started undoing his pants.

"You don't play fair." He laughed and pulled his sweater over his head. "We have not finished talking about this."

"Tomorrow." Jimmi giggled.