

The next morning when Jimmi woke up the cabin was empty. She put on her black tailored walking shorts, a black silk camisole, and her black ankle boots. She added a three quarter sleeved cardigan sweater that was woven with various shades of pink and purple. Since she was going in search of her father, she buttoned the sweater up a button or two higher than she normally would.

Her father was in sick bay talking to Mr. Spock. Jimmi walked past the nurses and med techs who were getting ready to process the next batch of new ensigns through sick bay. "Good morning Dad, Mr. Spock."

McCoy looked at his chronometer. "Is it?"

"Oh, it's not that late Dad." She smiled at him indulgently. Someday she would get up early and surprise him. She turned to Spock and asked, "How are you Mr. Spock?"

"I am well, Ms. McCoy." Spock said. "Are you enjoying your visit?"

"That is a very complicated question, Mr. Spock." She said with a smile. "I was on my way to get some breakfast. If you'd like to join me, I could attempt an answer."

"I believe I would find that interesting, however I am involved in the assimilation of the new crew members at present." Spock said. "Perhaps later."

Jimmi grinned at him and asked. "Mr. Spock, why can't you just say you're busy?"

"I did."

"How about you Dad?" Jimmi asked.

McCoy smiled. "I am also involved in the assimilation of new crew members."

Spock just raised his eyebrow at McCoy's mockery. Jimmi laughed and said, "Well, I'm sure I can find somebody who is not busy." She walked out of sick bay and headed directly to dining hall three.

She got her breakfast and looked around for some company. Dr. Bobby Lopez sat alone at a table watching her. He smiled. She walked over to his table. "Mind if I join you, Doctor?"

"Have a seat." He said. "But call me Bobby."

"Ok, Bobby." She smiled. "So tell me, Bobby, how do you like working for my Dad?"

"I'm learning a lot from your father." Bobby said. "His medical knowledge is phenomenal. Chief medical officer, that's the job I want."

"Ambitious." Jimmi smiled. "But that doesn't answer my question. How do you LIKE working for Dad?"

"I LIKE working for myself." Bobby laughed. "But as bosses go, your father is ok. Better than some I've had."

Jimmi smiled. He must be trying to make time, Jimmi decided. Most of her father's staff called him a demanding perfectionist. And those were the ones who were trying to be nice. "You have a generous nature, Bobby."

Jimmi didn't see Hikaru come into the dining hall. He got a cup of coffee and came over to their table. She was laughing at something Dr. Lopez had said when Sulu

stopped next to her and said, "Good morning, Ms. McCoy. Dr. Lopez." He smiled. She looked up, startled.

"Mr. Sulu." Bobby said coolly. He didn't need a third wheel right now.

"Morning." Jimmi smiled. "Got time to sit down?"

"A minute." He said sitting next to her.

"I thought you were on duty." Jimmi said.

"I am." He said. "I'm on my way to the Base to check in whoever is reporting today. But I needed a little extra caffeine this morning."

"Didn't get enough sleep last night, Commander?" Bobby asked sipping his coffee.

"Not quite, Doctor." he said smiling at Jimmi. "But I'll get by. Was your father waiting up last night?"

"Of course. My father always waits up." She smiled. "When I'm an old lady with children of my own, he will still wait up for me."

She had to bring up children? Sulu drained half his coffee in one gulp. He stood to go. "I'm late. See you later?"

"I'll see you before I go." she smiled.

"I thought you were staying another day." he frowned. Hadn't they gotten things straightened out last night? She just sighed, not saying anything. "May I speak to you privately?"

She followed him across the room. "Harry, I'm catching the last shuttle home tonight."

He didn't bother to point out that she never referred to Earth as home before. "I thought you were going to stay another night. I want you to stay another night."

"I just don't feel like I belong here anymore." she said. "This is your life and I have to get back to mine."

"Did I miss something?" Sulu asked. "I thought we made some progress last night."

"It's not about you." She tried to explain. "It's more about Enterprise and how I feel... about myself, I guess. Understand?"

"I'd like to understand. But I am running late right now." Sulu said. "Please stay. It's only one more night. Stay and explain it to me. Please."

Why couldn't she say no to him? Especially when he said please? She smiled and gave in to him. "Ok, I'll stay one more night."

She would have liked him to kiss her, but he wouldn't here in the dining hall. He just nodded and smiled and left. Jimmi returned to the table. Her coffee was cold. Bobby Lopez was drinking his coffee and watching her.

"You could have told me." Bobby said a bit irritated.

"What?" Jimmi asked.

"Sulu was your date last night?" he asked. She nodded. "You could have said something."

"And ruin all this good flirting?" Jimmi said with a shrug and a smile. "You

know, you really do have a talent for it, Bobby."

"That's suppose to be a compliment?" he asked. Jimmi shrugged again and sipped the cold coffee. "Maybe you were just trying to make your boyfriend jealous."

"No." Jimmi laughed. She found it hard to believe his feelings were actually hurt. She had just met this guy. How much of his ego could be invested in her? "I like flirting. I think it's fun. And I use it a lot in my work, so a little practice never hurts."

"Work? I thought you were a college student."

"I am, but I also run a bar in San Francisco." She explained. "Next time you're in town come by and I'll buy you a drink."

His wounded ego seemed to be mending. But he was due in sick bay. They cleared the table and parted ways. Jimmi was about to leave the dining hall when Uhura and Chapel walked in for a coffee break. Jimmi got a fresh cup of coffee and joined them.

"Well..." Uhura said expectantly.

"Well what?" Jimmi smiled knowing exactly what she wanted to know.

"Well, how was your date last night?" Chapel asked. "I tried asking your father, but his comments didn't make much sense."

"What did he say?" Jimmi asked.

"Never mind." Uhura said. "Sulu has not been himself since we left Earth. We want to know how it went last night."

"He hasn't?" Jimmi was surprised. She didn't think anything she did really affected him. "We had dinner at that new restaurant on the base. It was nice. We had a really big fight. And then we made up."

Uhura and Chapel looked at each other. Chapel asked. "What was the fight about?"

"Nothing. And everything." Jimmi said.

"That clears things up." Uhura complained. "Nothing more specific?"

"The fight was stupid." Jimmi sipped her coffee. "But at the end we talked about some things we had never talked about before."

"Things?" Chapel and Uhura asked simultaneously.

"Things!" Jimmi insisted and changed the subject. She had probably said too much already. "Anyway... who's up for a little shopping?"

"I'm on duty." Nurse Chapel said.

"Well, I'm not." Uhura laughed. "Let's go."

When they beamed down to the station, Lt. Commander Sulu was talking to two ensigns. The young man and woman returned to attention when Lt. Commander Uhura materialized. Sulu told them to relax before turning to Uhura and Jimmi.

"Is this the shopping patrol?" he asked.

"Yes." Uhura said. "I haven't bought myself anything new in ages."

"And you Jeanie?" Sulu asked.

"I make it a point to buy myself something new at least once a week." She smiled. "Maybe I'll buy something for you."

"I don't need anything." Sulu laughed.

"Shopping is not about need." Jimmi said. She looked to Uhura. "Why don't men understand this?"

"It's a genetic anomaly." Uhura winked at Sulu. "Come on, I know exactly where I want to start."

"Yes, I know exactly where you mean." Jimmi smiled. "See you later, Mr. Sulu."

"You certainly will, Ms. McCoy." Sulu smiled as they left the transporter room. Sulu turned back to the two ensigns. "O'Rourke and Bernstein, the transporter operator on Enterprise will have your cabin assignments. Stow your gear and then report to sick bay. Dr. McCoy likes to see every new officer personally. Now, on your way."

"Aye Sir."

Jimmi and Uhura walked through the shops looking over the merchandise and talking. "I still don't get it, Uhura."

"Have you considered that men and women aren't supposed to always understand each other?" Uhura suggested. "Besides what's so different about how he just acted? That seemed very normal to me."

"That was how I wanted him to be yesterday when I arrived." Jimmi said, holding up some skimpy red lingerie. "What do you think?"

"I think Hikaru would love it." Uhura smiled even though it wasn't something she would ever choose. "Well, what did he do yesterday that was different?"

"He was formal to the point of indifference." Jimmi complained as she put the lingerie back and considered other choices. "Like he didn't want to admit I was there."

"You know Starfleet regulations and codes of conduct are very important." Uhura said. "And the rules are clear."

"If he gave me half the consideration he gives Starfleet..." Jimmi said.

"Then he wouldn't be a command officer." Uhura said. She examined a silk robe approvingly. "You know how that works."

"Yes, yes." Jimmi said irritably. "I've heard all about command tests and the importance of each decision. So why does he think a personal relationship just happens?"

"Oh, girl, he is so much better than he used to be." Uhura laughed. "You should have seen him at the Academy. He didn't have a clue."

"Tell me." Jimmi smiled. Uhura hesitated. "Come on, Uhura!"

"It was the first time I saw Hikaru off duty." Uhura shrugged with a smile. "I walked into a party and he was sitting between a pair of blond twins."

"Twins?"

"Yes, they were very friendly." Uhura added. She put the robe back. "But before the party was over, each had slapped him and left."

"What had he done?" Jimmi laughed.

"Use your imagination." Uhura raised her eyebrow. It reminded Jimmi of Spock. "Anyway later that evening, he tried his line on me."

"And?"

"I told him I was nobody's third choice." Uhura laughed. "He didn't understand."

So I made it my personal mission to educate that boy about women."

"And so began a beautiful friendship." Jimmi laughed.

"Well, he's learning any way." Uhura smiled. "You should be grateful."

"I am. Thank you."

They shopped for most of the morning. Both women made purchases. Jimmi's taste was a bit flashier than Uhura's. But they enjoyed the time together. Lt. Commander Uhura had to report for duty. They walked back to the transporter room together. Sulu was there talking to the transporter chief, Mr. Auguayo. Uhura beamed up to the Enterprise..

"When do you get off duty?" Jimmi asked Sulu.

"Sixteen hundred hours." Sulu said. It was about an hour away. "One more transport is due in today. We are expecting three more officers."

"So you just hang out here in the mean time?" Jimmi asked. She sat down on the steps up to the transporter pad. Sulu sat down next to her.

"Usually all the new personnel report at the same time. One very busy morning and it's done." Sulu explained. "This year, we came in early. So the new ensigns have been straggling in and I've been here for three days now. Between shuttles I wander around the base, get coffee, stop and talk to whoever is around. It's been rather boring."

"Hmmm.... After you left the dining hall this morning, Bobby Lopez gave me a hard time." Jimmi said.

"About what?"

"He thought I was leading him on." Jimmi shrugged. "And that I was doing it just to make you jealous."

"Well, I wasn't very happy to see you sitting there with him." Sulu admitted. "Do you know what his reputation is?"

"I can guess." Jimmi laughed. "Give me a break, Harry. I work in a bar. I see his type all the time."

"Hmmm...." was Sulu's only comment.

"I bought you a present." She smiled tantalizingly, her eyes sparkling.

"Are you going to let me see it?" He reached for her package.

"Nope." She laughed pulling it away from him. "If you want to see it you'll have to be nice to me."

"I am always nice." He said. Three ensigns walked into the transporter room. Sulu stood up to meet them. They each snapped to attention and reported for duty. Sulu had left his computer pad on the transporter control. As he reached for it Jimmi jumped up and started out the door.

"I'll catch up with you later, Commander." She said and was gone before he could answer. He just shook his head and went back to work.

Jimmi found a turbo lift. The starbase turbo lifts had voice activated computer interfaces because of the frequent traffic of travelers who were unfamiliar with the base layout.

Once the door had closed and she was alone in the small compartment, Jimmi

asked. "Computer, which level is the least densely populated?"

"Level 34." the computer answered.

"Level 34." Jimmi requested of the turbo lift.

"Level 34 is restricted to personnel with level three clearance or higher. State clearance code."

"I don't have a clearance code." Jimmi frowned. "Ok, computer, which level that is not restricted is the least densely populated?"

"Level 62." The computer answered.

"Computer display lay out of level 62." Jimmi requested. The display appeared on the screen that was on the wall above the controls. She touched one of the rooms.

"What's this room?"

"Supply room 6205." The computer replied.

"What is stored in supply room 6205?" Jimmi asked.

"Surplus emergency survival supplies." The computer said. "One hundred fifty blankets, one hundred fifty palm lights, one hundred--"

"Stop." Jimmi told the computer. "level 62."

The turbo lift started down and continued heading down for a relatively long time. The turbo lift doors opened. Jimmi stepped into an empty hallway. She quickly found room 6205. On the door was written Surplus Supplies. She stepped carefully into the door's sensor range and the door slid open. It was lit only with emergency lights which kept the intensity of light at less than fifty percent of normal. That was a good sign. It told Jimmi that the room wasn't used often.

She did not ask the computer to raise the lights because she didn't want to alert anyone that she was there. She stayed for about half an hour checking into what supplies were there. She was also waiting to see if anyone would come and check to see who was in room 6205. But no one came. A few personal touches and it was perfect. She would surprise Harry with it tonight.

Lt. Commander Sulu beamed back to the Enterprise with the last three ensigns that had arrived while he was talking to Jimmi. Sulu left the three officers in Chief Petty Officer Martha Landon's capable hands. He was on his way back to the bridge when he ran into Captain Kirk.

"Sulu, what's the status of new personnel?" Kirk asked.

"All present and accounted for." Sulu said. "I just left the last three with Chief Landon."

"Good." Kirk nodded. "Then as soon as Scotty's done in engineering we can be on our way."

"Back to sector thirty two, Captain?" Sulu asked.

"Yes. As long as the negotiations continue on Staircase 68 we have to at least be close by." Kirk said. "Besides, I want to keep an eye on the Della Mir."

"Yes Sir." Sulu said. "They are not all traveling salesmen."

"Captain Hold-drah and Captain Tenn-drah certainly are not." Kirk agreed.

"Although their ships seem to be the same as the other scouts we met."

"Or at least saw."

They stepped on the turbo lift together. "Bridge."

"I wonder if there is a way to tell the difference between a military scout ship and a trade scout ship." Sulu said.

"Spock is studying the sensor contacts we've had to look for just that." Kirk said. "Commander Von Maltz has sent us all the data he has from his runabout's contacts as well."

"The diplomatic team doesn't seem overly concerned." Sulu observed.

"They're not on the front lines." Kirk said as the lift opened onto the bridge. The command chair and helm stations were empty. Chekov was leaning on the hand rail talking to Uhura. She was turned away from her station, laughing at something he had said. Sulu went directly to his station. Kirk stopped and surveyed them. "I take it there is nothing to report."

"Everything is quiet." Chekov said and returned to his station.