

Tomas Smith returned to Excelsior and his quarters. As soon as the door closed behind him, he started undressing. He switched the controls on the shower from sonic waves to real water, very hot. He let the steaming water flow over his head and down his neck and back. Slowly it started to wash the tension away.

It was still early in the evening. Tomas decided to try working off his extra energy in the gym. He had just put on his shorts when his door signal sounded. Tomas was not in the mood for company. His voice was harsh with irritation when he yelled, "What is it?"

The door slid open and Rosita Gonzales stepped through. She stood just inside the door. When it closed, she said. "I just came to tell you that I am not one of those people who think that jealousy is cute or that equate it with love. Jealousy comes from a lack of trust. And it really bothers me that you don't trust me."

"Uh huh." Tomas's voice was calm and cold as he stared at her. "So. Just what do you want me to do about it, Rosa?"

"Get it under control, Tomas."

"I am in control."

"Now. But not earlier." Rosita nodded. "And in the morning we will have to explain away what happened at the Café to Captain Sulu. This is exactly what I was worried about."

"Pardon me for having feelings for you." Tomas picked up his t shirt and put it over his head.

"I have feelings for you too, Tomas." Rosita said. "But I also have a career."

"You'll be a full commander any day now." Tomas said. "Sulu will probably bust me back to lieutenant and have me assigned to some out of the way subspace relay station."

"I doubt that."

"Come on, Rosa." Tomas grabbed the clean pair of socks off his dresser. "You know Sulu's reputation."

"I don't worry about the reputation." Rosita finally came further into the room. She picked the wet towel up off the floor and started folding it. "I know Captain Sulu."

"Oh, that's right." Tomas sat down on his bunk. "You are his protege. You can't do anything wrong. Some of us aren't so lucky."

"Self pity is not attractive, Tomas." Rosita sighed. "I have not had an easy ride because of my relationship with Captain Sulu. If anything, he demands more of me than he does of some others."

Tomas took a minute to put on his socks and to think. She was right. He had to get control of the situation. He watched her put the towel in the bathroom. They had spent a lot of time together in the last two months. And Tomas liked that she felt as if his cabin was hers. He got up and blocked her way in the bathroom door.

He reached for her, pulling her close. His fingers massaged her lower back. He spoke softly, his voice caressing her. "I'm sorry. I was out of line. Forgive me?"

"If I hadn't forgiven you, I never would have walked through that door." Rosita smiled at him. Tomas returned the smile and kissed her. A long slow passionate kiss. Rosita sighed. "We still have some things to talk about."

"It won't happen again, Rosa. I promise you that." Tomas kissed her neck.

"That won't be good enough for the Captain." Rosita insisted.

"Ok." Tomas sighed. He continued to caress her lower back. "You know him. What will it take?"

"There is only one way to go with Captain Sulu." Rosita said. "Accept full responsibility for your actions. He won't take any less."

"No problem." Tomas kissed her neck again, letting his hands move down her body.

"Tomas!" Rosita said. "Stop that. I can't think."

"That's the idea." He grinned at her.

"I'm serious." She insisted. "Are you listening to me?"

"I am hanging on every word." Reaching one hand to her neck line, Tomas started undoing her uniform jacket. He continued kissing her as he spoke. "You are telling me to take it on the chin. No excuses."

"And about tonight."

"Yeah?"

"Can I explain one thing to you?" She asked. He stopped kissing her and looked her in the eye. "If I walk away from you that means I need some time to think. So give me that time. Do not come after me. Ok?"

"Noted." He nodded.

Rosita smiled at him and said. "And the only other rule is the previously agreed upon, work is work and..."

"Play is play." Tomas grinned. "And since neither of us is working right now..."

"And since you are looking so sexy in those shorts..." Rosita grinned.

Later that evening when they were laying in bed talking, Tomas quietly asked. "What was it about Vasco?"

"If I tell you, are you going to get angry?"

"No." Tomas promised. "I just want to know."

"All right." Rosita sighed. "L.J. is attractive and funny. He's a great dancer and he is not Starfleet. But I guess the biggest thing about L.J. is he never made any demands on me."

"I don't make demands on you."

"Right!"

"What?"

"You insisted we go public with this relationship." Rosita said. "You demanded that. And that was hard for me."

"It's not like we made a ship wide announcement." Tomas said. "We simply started having lunch together in the mess hall. Then we did not deny the gossip."

"And I can just imagine what the gossip is going to be tomorrow." Rosita said. "Especially among the new ensigns."

"They have to report to us." Tomas said. "Who cares what they say to each other."

"I care."

"Why?"

"I don't have to be perfect in the eyes of the crew." Rosita said. "But I need to have their respect and their trust. How else can I command?"

"Ah, command." Tomas sighed. "That magic word."

"Are you making fun of me?"

"Do you have any idea how many people spend their entire career doing all the right things," Tomas said. "And never get to command their own ship?"

"Yes, I do."

"Command! It's like a carrot out there in front of you and you are the stupid little burro that keeps plodding after it." He said. "But you never get it."

"Is that why you pretend you don't want it?" Rosita asked. "Because you think it will never happen?"

"What do you mean pretend?"

"Come on, Tomas. I've been with you on away missions. You love it when you are in charge." Rosita said. Then smiling mischievously at him, she added. "You love it that way in bed too."

"Are you complaining?"

"No." She smiled and kissed him. "If I have any complaints, you will be the first to know."