

The bar was starting to fill up and Jimmi went right to work. The Admiral sought out his son. It wasn't hard to find him. The music was going at full blast in the apartment. Brian was sitting backwards on the desk chair, concentrating on the computer screen. As soon as he saw his father, he switched the screen off guiltily.

"Computer. Turn the music off." Sulu yelled above the noise. When it was quiet he said, "That's better."

"Well?" Brian asked.

"Well?"

"Is Mom still mad?" Brian asked.

"Let me worry about Mom." Sulu smiled. "She's calmed down considerably. Do you understand why she was so mad?"

"I think so." Brian said. His father looked at him expectantly, so Brian continued. "She was worried about me. And she was mad cause I let her worry."

"That's part of it." Sulu nodded. "Come take a walk with me."

"I thought I was grounded." Brian said.

"You are. Make no mistake about that." Sulu said. "So take advantage of getting out. Come on."

They walked down to the playground. It was empty. Brian grinned at his father. "You haven't taken me to the playground in years Dad."

"From the time you were little you and Peter were off by yourselves." Sulu said. "I always assumed things were all right with you. I haven't paid as much attention as I should have."

"We were all right." Brian shrugged. "Until Peter met Jennifer."

"Yeah, I heard about that." Sulu leaned against the jungle gym. "What about you? There's no special girl?"

"All the girls I know want to be just friends." Brian shrugged. He climbed up on the jungle gym. He didn't want to have to look at his father if they were going to talk about girls.

"That girl we saw earlier seemed interested." Sulu observed. "What was her name?"

"Debbie." Brian said. "Today's the first I've seen her in two years. I don't know what she wants. I don't know what any girl wants."

"You have time Brian." Sulu said. "It's not a contest."

"Did you know a lot of girls before Mom?" Brian climbed around on the gym just above his father's head.

"I knew my fair share." Sulu said. "But I'm no expert. Listen to what the girls say. They are usually good at putting their feelings into words. Then be honest about what you are feeling."

"Then it works out?"

"Not always. But a lot of the time it will." Sulu sighed, "Of course your love life was not the topic I had in mind when I brought you out here."

"So, what did you want to talk about Dad?" Brian asked hanging upside down.

"Your trip with Brady of course." Sulu said. "You are going to hear things about Brady that aren't true. I want you to ignore them. Don't challenge them."

"What kind of things?"

"This is classified information, Brian." Sulu said. "You will probably hear that Brady

and I are enemies and that I am out to get him. It's not true."

Brian flipped over and landed feet first next to his father. "You threw him in the brig. Had him handcuffed."

"Appearances." Sulu shrugged. "That was for Brady's safety."

"Do you mean Brady's a Federation spy?" Brian whispered.

"Not exactly." Sulu said. "But when information comes his way that he knows we want, he passes it on for consideration."

"What kind of consideration?"

"That's not important." Sulu smiled. "But you are not to tell this to anyone. That means your mother, your best friend, anyone."

"Yes Sir." Brian said.

"So tell me." Sulu grinned. "What did you think of Space Station New Freedom?"

"I wasn't there long." Brian said. "But I did see the bazaar. I didn't know how tame the Fly By Night and No Ranks were!"

"I know what you mean." Sulu nodded. "It surprised you?"

"I heard about places like that Dad. But I didn't know they really existed." Brian said wide-eyed. "I saw both men and women of several different species wearing next to nothing. And they were ... well... Were they doing what I think they were doing?"

"You can buy just about anything on New Freedom." his father said. "So chances are they probably were. This is also something you don't need to bring up to your mother."

"You don't have to worry about that." Brian blushed just thinking about some of the things he had seen through the doors and windows of the bars. He changed the subject again. "Will Brady be all right?"

"Matthew Brady can take care of himself." Sulu said. "And I am working on getting Tau Regana in custody. Don't worry."

"So how long am I grounded for?" Brian asked switching subjects suddenly.

"A month."

"A month?" Brian whined. "But Dad..."

"Count your lucky stars." Sulu said. "Your mother wanted it to be the first half of the school year."

"You're kidding?!" Brian asked. "Razz!"

"Bri, you would be smart to do everything you can to show your mother how sorry you are." Sulu said seriously. "If I were you I'd be helpful and cheerful."

"I'm suppose to be happy that I'm grounded?"

"You are grounded for something that you did." Sulu stressed. "Right?"

"It was an accident." Brian said "It was out of my control."

"Accepting responsibility for your actions is part of being an adult." Sulu tried to be patient. "None of this would have happened if you had not illegally gained entry to Brady's ship. Right?"

"Right." Brian agreed reluctantly.

"Do you realize that if this had been anyone other than Brady you'd be facing criminal charges right now?" Brian started to object, but the look on his father's face told him not to. He just nodded instead. Sulu continued. "If you want to be treated like an adult you must act like

one. So start right now. If you want to complain, find a friend who will listen. But not your mother and not me. We've already been through hell once over this. Have you got that?"

"Yes Sir." Brian waited, but his father seemed to be finished. "I better get back to the bar and see if Mom needs any help."

"Good idea." Sulu nodded. Brian hurried off towards the bar. Sulu took a deep breath before following him. Chekov was leaning against a hull support at the edge of the park area waiting. "How long have you been here?"

"A couple of minutes." Chekov said. "That looked severe."

"I was trying to get Brian to accept his punishment gracefully." Sulu explained as they walked along together towards the Fly By Night. "I have no idea whether I actually got through to him or not."

"Give him time to think about what you said." Chekov advised. "I take it Jimmi has calmed down."

"Yes." Sulu said as they walked into the bar. It was filling up fast with Excelsior personnel. Jimmi and Mike were behind the bar. Angel was waiting tables and Brian was bussing them. "You know how she is. She kept all her frustration inside until she saw Brian."

"Then she blew." Chekov nodded. "So now it is out of her system."

"Right." Sulu said as they joined Dr. McCoy at the bar.

"Doctor. Perhaps you should set up a practice on this base." Chekov said. "After all you've been here often enough lately."

"No thanks, Pavel." McCoy smiled. "I am enjoying my sunsets too much."

"Harry, I thought you were going to talk to Brian about his punishment." Jimmi said from behind the bar.

"I did."

"Then why is he being so helpful?" Jimmi asked suspiciously. "He came in here and went to work without a word from me."

"Maybe he's trying to show you he knows he was wrong and that he's sorry." McCoy suggested.

"Perhaps he learned something from his experiences." Chekov added.

"Maybe you should be grateful and give the kid a break." Sulu shrugged.

"Maybe I'll just wait and see." Jimmi said. She smiled at her husband and asked. "Beer? Or something without alcohol tonight?"

"Beer." The Admiral said. Jimmi poured a draft for her husband and for Chekov.

"Pool table's open." Chekov observed casually drinking his beer.

"I'm game." Sulu said.

The Excelsior crew was enjoying their night off. Several officers had commandeered the poker table. Their game was drawing a crowd. All the hologram and computer games were busy, with people waiting to play. Commander Chekov had beaten the Admiral and three junior officers at the pool table. He was shooting pool by himself when Brian came to clear a few glasses away.

"Commander Chekov, can I ask you something?" Brian asked.

"Sure Brian." Chekov said while he lined up a shot. "What is it?"

Brian waited until he made the shot. "It's about Orion women. Brady said they develop

differently than human women. Do you know what he meant?"

"Well, Orions are humanoid. The difference between them and humans is minor." Chekov straightened up and looked at Brian. "What exactly did you want to know?"

"I met a girl. I thought she was a lot younger than me." Brian explained. "But Brady said she was about my age."

"Ah." Chekov nodded. "Orion girls develop a bit later than humans. But the difference is minimal. By the time she is seventeen or eighteen she will catch up with her human counterparts. I bet her hair was very short too."

"Yeah." Brian said. "How do you know?"

"Cultural sign of virginity." Chekov said. He lined up another shot.

"Guys too?" Brian asked feeling his own very short hair. Chekov smiled, nodded, and knocked the seven ball into the corner pocket.

Jimmi leaned across the bar towards her father. "You always told me how hard it was to have a family in Starfleet. But look at that."

McCoy followed his daughter's glance towards the pool table. "Chekov and Brian?"

"Take it from me, Dad." Jimmi smiled as she watched her son. "A Starfleet brat always has someone to turn to with their questions. I had the entire senior staff of Enterprise as my family. Brian can count many of the Excelsior staff plus a couple of stray admirals and an ambassador in his family."

"So you are saying the trade off isn't that bad?" McCoy asked his daughter.

"It never hurt me any." Jimmi shrugged. McCoy just smiled. He remembered a time when she would have had a very different opinion.

Brian took some dirty dishes into the kitchen. Paco was very busy, so Brian stayed in the kitchen awhile to help the chef get caught up. He had been in there awhile when his mother came in the kitchen to order a dinner.

"The Admiral is hungry, Paco." Jimmi announced coming in and looking in Paco's pots.

"Dinner for three?" Paco asked. Stirring his ever-present chili. Paco had been the cook at the Fly By Night since it had opened seventeen years before. But Jimmi still thought he looked more like a trillium miner than a cook. Big, brawny, and hairy. He made quite a picture when whipping up one of his wonderfully delicate souffles.

"Yes." Jimmi said. "Both Dad and Hikaru want the fish. I want the pasta."

"Big surprise." Paco smiled.

"Forgive me for being predictable." Jimmi laughed. She looked at her son. "Brian, do you want to join us?"

"It's pretty busy out there, Mom." Brian looked up from the vegetables he was chopping. "Maybe I better take a break later. I wouldn't want to leave Mike shorthanded."

"Good idea, Bri." Jimmi went back to work.

"Well, Ensign Pelta." Admiral Sulu said. "How do you like serving on the bridge?"

Ensign Pelta had been sitting at the bar talking to Lt. Commander Kim. Since she hadn't seen the Admiral coming, she was caught unprepared. So Renee Pelta answered quite truthfully and enthusiastically. "I'm having the time of my life. Sir."

"Good answer, Ensign." Jimmi said from behind the bar. She looked at her husband. "Our dinner will be ready in a minute."

"Thank you, Jeanie." Sulu said to his wife. He turned back to the Ensign who was doing her best not to blush. "She's right, Pelta. That was a good answer. Have you been coaching her, Mr. Kim?"

"No sir." Lt. Commander Heesun Kim smiled. He had known the Admiral long enough to know when he was kidding.

After Sulu had gone to join his wife and father-in-law for dinner, Ensign Pelta dropped her head on the bar. Kim just laughed at her. She looked up at him. "The first time the old man even talks to me and I make a complete fool of myself."

"Are you kidding?" Commander Kim laughed. "He loved it. You made an impression."

"An impression, yes. But what kind?"

"I'll bet you a weeks salary that the next landing party assignment, you're on it." Kim said.

"You think so, Hee?" She asked. Lt. Commander Kim nodded and extended his hand. They shook on the bet.

Later when Jimmi was back behind the bar, Debbie Abboud walked into the bar. Normally the lone teenager wouldn't come into the crowded bar, but she was carrying a large box. She went directly up to the bar. Admiral Sulu and Dr. McCoy were sitting there.

"Good evening Admiral Sulu." She smiled at him tossing her long black hair over her shoulder.

"Hello Debbie." Sulu said.

"Ms. Sulu." Debbie turned her attention to Jimmi as she put the box on the bar. "My mother asked me to bring this back to you and to thank you. She said it was just what she needed."

Jimmi took the box and put it under the bar. "You tell your mother she can borrow it any time. If I'm not here, she can ask Mike."

"I'll tell her." Debbie said looking around the bar. "Is Brian around?"

"He's giving Paco a hand in the kitchen, but he's due for a break." Jimmi said. "I'll tell him you're here."

Brian came out of the kitchen and around the bar. He tried to ignore his father and grandfather at the bar. "Hi Debbie. What's up?"

"Nothing." she smiled. "My Mom asked me to return that tea service to the bar. So I thought I'd come by to see if you were living through the night."

"Just barely." Brian confided. "Want to play a hologram? We got a really great dogfight program."

"Fighting dogs?" Debbie asked skeptically.

"No! World War I airplanes." Brian said. "Come on I'll show you."

After the teenagers had gone to the back of the bar and the holographic computer games, McCoy said. "Now that's what sixteen year olds are suppose to be doing."

"Much better than running around the galaxy trying to get himself killed." Sulu agreed.

"You have talked to him about dating." Jimmi said to her husband. "Right?"

"Me?" Sulu asked. "What was I suppose to say to him?"

"That girls are people with thoughts and feelings. Not just bodies to be grabbed and groped." Jimmi said.

"If you are concerned about it, why don't you talk to him?" Sulu asked.

"I think it's a Dad kind of job." Jimmi said.

"Brian and I have talked several times regarding girls in general." Sulu explained. "I don't think it would be harmful for him to hear his mother's opinions on the subject."

"If you can do it without preaching." McCoy added.

"Look who talking." Jimmi laughed.

"Of course that doesn't look like a boy on restriction to me." McCoy said as he watched Brian showing Debbie the dogfight simulation. Brian seemed to be having a good time.

"Working in a bar is a very social activity." Jimmi shrugged. "Mingling with the customers is a required skill."

"Right." McCoy and Sulu said simultaneously.