

Commander Sulu sat on the bar stool next to Lt. Gonzoles. The crew of the Enterprise was enjoying themselves. The party was in full swing. Even Mr. Spock and Admiral Kirk had come to wish the outgoing officers well. Jimmi put her empty drink tray on the bar and joined Sulu. Without interrupting his conversation with Gonzoles he reached out to Jimmi. She wrapped her arms around his chest and laid her head on his shoulder. It had only been six weeks since she had last seen him. While the ensigns in July had been the reason for opening the Café, these unscheduled stops by star ships would keep the bar going. And of course, seeing Harry more often was just a wonderful fringe benefit.

"You don't think you could talk James T. into letting the Enterprise stay for the night?" Jimmi asked when there was a lull in the conversation.

"You ask him." Sulu laughed. His fingers slowly traced the waistband of her tailored knee length shorts. The warmth of his touch in the inch of bare skin between her shorts and sleeveless cropped top was driving her crazy. "I'm sure you have more influence over the Admiral in these matters than I do."

"I already did." Jimmi sighed. "He's hopelessly bent on staying on schedule. Come midnight, you're gone."

"Sorry about that." Sulu said. He turned away from Gonzoles and said quietly. "But I do need to talk to you. Privately."

"Oh." Jimmi lifted her head to look him in the eye. He seemed very serious. "My table?"

"How about your office?" Sulu suggested.

"All right." Jimmi nodded. She turned to Randy. "Randy, I'll be in the office if you need me."

"Don't need her, Randy." Sulu warned. The bartender just nodded to them both.

After they were gone, Randy looked at Gonzoles and asked. "What is that all about?"

"I don't know." Gonzoles shook her head. Chekov came over, took Sulu's seat, and ordered a beer from Randy. Lt. Gonzoles smiled at him.

"Well, Lieutenant, are you looking forward to your new assignment?" Chekov asked. She nodded.

As they stepped into her office, Jimmi winked at Hikaru. With a touch of her finger, she locked the office door then wrapped her arms around his neck. "We should be careful. After all, we are not normally this bold when my father is in the bar."

"I assure you my intentions are strictly honorable." Sulu smiled at her.

"Too bad." Jimmi pouted. She kissed him. "Are you sure?"

"Come sit on the couch." He took her hands from his neck and led her to the overstuffed love seat against the far wall. Just big enough for two to sit comfortably and it was dark blue covered with small yellow flowers. It was the only homey touch Jimmi had added to her otherwise stark office.

"So what did you want to talk about?" Jimmi asked sitting down.

He sat next to her. "I've been thinking..." Sulu stood up suddenly. "Do you want something to drink?"

"No. I'm fine." Jimmi looked up at him perplexed. "What were you thinking?"

"Um...." Sulu paced over to the desk and then back to her. He sat down again. Sulu took both her hands in his. "About the spring. About that wonderful week we spent together."

"Oh my." Jimmi said softly.

"I want us to be husband and wife." He said earnestly. "Will you marry me, Jeanie?"

"Oh my." Jimmi stood up. Now it was her turn to pace. She couldn't look at him as she spoke. "I know I brought this up, but..."

"But?"

"Harry, we had just spent that week together. It was wonderful. And I hadn't seen you in a year." Jimmi tried to explain. "And I didn't know I was going to be here. And that morning I just couldn't bare the thought of not seeing you again for another year."

"But you are here now and that's all the better." Hikaru got up and went to her. "The ship comes here regularly. For supplies, personnel, repairs. We'll be together more often."

"But that will happen anyway. Do we really need to be married?" Jimmi asked. "Would it really change anything?"

"Such as?"

"We won't get to live together, I won't see you any more often than if we don't marry." Jimmi said. "You'll be on the ship and I'll be here."

Hikaru put his hands on her shoulders and turned her towards him. "Are asking me to leave Starfleet, Jeanie?"

"I would never!" Jimmi looked directly into his deep brown eyes. "But Harry, things are really going well right now. For both of us. I don't see any reason to complicate it."

"That's not what you said in San Francisco." Harry tilted her face towards him. He kissed her long and hard, holding her tightly. Barely catching his breath, he whispered. "I thought this was what you wanted."

"Oh, Harry." She sighed. Her heart raced as he held her close. If only he could be with her always. "You always did know how to get to me."

"But?"

Leaning back in his arms, Jimmi caressed his strong shoulders. "But Baby, aren't you the one who says sex doesn't solve problems?"

"What problem? I just want to marry you." Sulu reached into his pocket and took out a ring box. "I bought you a ring."

"Oh my." Jimmi said again. She put her hand over the ring box so he couldn't open it. "I'm just not ready, Harry."

"I see." He said quietly. He put the ring box in her hand. "Keep it. Wear it when you are ready."

"You don't understand." She turned away from him, putting the ring box on the desk. "I just opened this place last month."

"I know."

"July was great." Jimmi went on as if he hadn't spoken. "We exceeded all expectations and projections. July is a gold mine. But I've got to keep this place afloat until next July. It's going to take a lot of work and I'm not sure I can do it. I won't have time to think about or plan a wedding."

"Of course you can do it." Hikaru said. "I have every confidence in your abilities. You

are going to make this place a big success."

"Thanks." Jimmi smiled. "But it's going to take all my energy. Can we just wait? Put off the marriage plans until things are a little more settled?"

"I love you, Jeanie."

"I love you too, Harry." Jimmi looked him in the eye. "But please give me some time. Keep the ring for me."

Hikaru sighed, giving up. He went back to the desk and picked up the ring box. Returning it to his pocket, he turned back to her and said. "All right. I'll keep it. But I am not giving up on you."

"Good." Jimmi followed him. "Because I don't want you to."

Sulu sat on the edge of her desk. "Then we can discuss it on my next leave. You will be able to take vacation time with me, right?"

"Try to stop me." She smiled at him. "Can we go back to the party now?"

"We could." He smiled wickedly, pulling her back into his arms. "Or we could make better use of this time alone."

"We could." Jimmi started undoing his jacket. "But we'd have to be quick."

"No problem."

A few minutes later Jimmi sat up giggling. She straightened her knit top and grabbed her shorts. "I think we set a record."

"You wanted quick." He grinned at her from the floor.

She leaned over him and said. "I wasn't complaining." She kissed him quickly and got up from the floor to go to the bathroom. On her way, she added. "But we usually manage to take all our clothes off."

"Usually." Hikaru agreed. Laying on carpet, he knew if he just let go he would be asleep in seconds. He reluctantly forced himself off the floor and adjusted his uniform. Picking up his jacket, he suddenly said. "Damn it, Jeanie."

He went over to the small bathroom in the corner of her office and leaned in the door. She was brushing her curly auburn hair. Jimmi glanced his way and asked. "What's the matter now?"

"I told your father we were going to have this discussion."

"No." Jimmi whined. She stopped brushing to look at him. "Why?"

"I wanted to be sure he had no objections." Sulu explained.

"Couldn't you have talked to me first?" Jimmi put the brush down and faced him. "Then we could have talked to Dad together."

"It never occurred to me that you would have any objections." Sulu said honestly. "After what you said in San Francisco."

"I said someday." Jimmi walked past him and out of the office. Sulu followed her back into the bar. She joined Randy behind the bar while Sulu sat next to Chekov. Putting his favorite beer on the bar in front of him, she added. "Maybe you shouldn't be so damn sure of me."

"What was that all about?" Chekov asked after Jimmi went to pour some other drinks.

"Nothing." Sulu sipped his beer before adding, "Sometimes Pavel, I don't think I'll ever

understand women."

"We are suppose to understand them?" Chekov laughed.

Jimmi took a round of drinks to her fathers' table. The three of them were having a vigorous discussion about some obscure point of philosophy. Deep in thought, Jimmi placed their drinks on the table without paying any attention to the topic of conversation.

"Jean Marie?" Kirk asked. Jimmi finally looked him in the eye. He had evidently called her name more than once. "You were a thousand light years away. Is something wrong?"

"No, James T." She smiled. "I was just distracted. Can I get you anything else?"

"Coffee." Kirk said. Jimmi nodded and cleared their dinner plates.

"Are you sure you have nothing to tell us, Dear?" McCoy asked his daughter. Jimmi stared at her father. Suddenly it occurred to Jimmi that Hikaru had not simply talked to her father. He had asked his permission to marry her.

"Nothing, Dad." Jimmi assured him. She would not give him the satisfaction of discussing Hikaru's proposal. Instead she changed the subject. "Except that I have a special treat for dessert. I ordered it especially for you, Spock."

"Indeed?" Spock said. "What is it?"

"Let me surprise you." Jimmi smiled and returned to the bar. Sulu, Gonzoles, and Chekov were talking at the bar. This time Jimmi did not wait for a lull in the conversation. She leaned across the bar and whispered angrily. "You son of a bitch."

"What?" Sulu snapped his head around to look at her.

"You didn't tell him." She continued to whisper. "You asked him!"

"So?" Sulu hated a public scene. He felt that any disagreements they had should be saved until they could be alone. Jimmi on the other hand just said what she felt when she felt it.

"Do you still think of me as a child? That I need my father's permission?" She accused. "I just can't believe you!"

Jimmi turned and stormed into the kitchen. Sulu took a deep breath. He was very conscious of Gonzoles sitting next to him trying not to notice the scene. She had turned her back to concentrate on whatever Chekov was saying. When he trusted himself to speak calmly, he called Randy over. "Randy, please ask your boss to come out here."

"Sure." Randy said and went into the kitchen. He returned a minute later and started wiping the bar in front of Sulu.

"Well?" Sulu asked. "What did she say?"

"You don't want to know." Randy said.

"Really?" Sulu got up and walked determinedly around the bar. He went behind the bar, past Randy, and into the kitchen. Jimmi was helping George at the large work table that dominated the center of the room. George nodded to Sulu then turned his back to attend to something on the stove. Jimmi had a large knife in her hand and was cutting up a fresh watermelon. Sulu stood across the table and said. "We are not done."

"I thought we were past this whole problem with my father." Jimmi said cutting half the melon in half again. "But there you go again. Treating me like a child."

"That's not what I did." Sulu leaned on the table between them. "No matter what you want to believe my position on the ship is part of this. And your father is still a superior officer."

"Right." She pointed the knife at him. "And so you gleefully clear everything about us

with him first!"

"Jeanie, do you think I liked talking to him about it? Do you think it was easy?" Sulu asked. "He was harder to ask than you were. And you said no!"

She stabbed the knife into what was left of the melon and came around the table to him. "I did not say no. I said later!"

"Well. Regardless, I felt I owed him that conversation." Sulu sighed. "Now, you tell me what I am suppose to do next. Because I'm at a loss."

"Why are you suppose to do anything?" Jimmi asked.

"My mother tells me I am not being fair to you. Your father is not sure that marriage as an institution is worth the trouble." Sulu said. "And you want to one minute but not the next. All I know is this is not something I want to fight about."

"Really?" Jimmi raised her eyebrow. "You followed me into the kitchen not to fight?"

"Well, I got your attention, didn't I?"

Jimmi took a deep breath and spoke slowly when she said. "Look Harry, I understand that it is complicated for you. But you and Dad can not make my decisions for me."

"That's not what I was trying to do." Sulu said. "No matter what you decide, there are still rules... "

"I swear I don't know where you get all this nonsense." Jimmi sighed. She couldn't help but smile at him as she added. "Is it Starfleet? Or that extremely proper upbringing of yours?"

"You don't really want an answer, do you?" He smiled at her. He took her hand, but it was sticky from the watermelon. She tried to pull it away but he brought it to his mouth and kissed her palm.

"Harry." She said softly

"Hmmm." He looked her in the eye and smiled. "Can I have a piece of that watermelon?"

"I was saving you a piece." Jimmi laughed.

"If you two are through." George said his back to them as he stirred a pot of chili on the stove. "I'd like my kitchen back."

Ignoring George, Sulu asked. "So, am I forgiven?"

"I guess." Jimmi gave in reluctantly. "I know you and Dad talk. But how can you know what I want when I'm not sure myself?"

"You're right." Sulu said "And I will never take for granted that I know what you want again."

"Right." Jimmi smiled at him. "Now get out of here. I'll bring you some melon in a minute."

After Sulu had kissed her and left the kitchen, George said. "He sure knows what to say to get around you."

"Well," Jimmi sighed as she returned to working on the watermelon "It may look that way to you. But we wouldn't fight so much if... Well, if he wasn't on the same ship as Dad and if he didn't really believe all that Starfleet nonsense about personal responsibility and morality."

"I think you just like the fights." George said.

"I like the making up." She grinned and took a tray full of watermelon slices into the bar. She took the first three slices to her fathers. As she put the plates in front of them, Jimmi said.

"Fresh from the fields of Carolina."

"Wonderful." McCoy said.

"You spoil us, Jean Marie." Kirk grinned.

"Thank you, Jimmi." Spock added.

"This is just to prove that it does pay to give me a little advanced warning that you are coming." Jimmi smiled.

"You had advanced warning?" Kirk asked.

"I have my sources." Jimmi winked at him. "I knew you were coming yesterday morning. Now if you will excuse me, I have other people waiting for watermelon."

The party continued. Lt. Gonzales was not the only officers leaving Enterprise for new assignments. One from nearly every department was transferring out. It was obvious to all that the rumors couldn't be ignored much longer.

McCoy finally cornered his daughter not too long before midnight. "I get the feeling you are avoiding me, Dear."

"Don't be silly, Dad." Jimmi smiled. She set down her tray of dirty dishes on the empty table she had been clearing. "It's been a busy night. So did you enjoy the watermelon?"

"Very much." McCoy mused. "No matter what they do to preserve it or replicate it, Starfleet just can't reproduce that fresh from the fields taste. Although I was a bit surprised to hear you say you ordered it especially for Spock."

"Didn't you know that Spock loves Earth's fresh fruit?" Jimmi asked. McCoy merely shook his head. "He really just tolerates the rest of our cuisine. George has learned to cook a few Vulcan dishes. He's planning to experiment with a couple other off world recipes."

"Well that's interesting but that's not what I wanted to talk to you about." McCoy said.

"Oh?" Jimmi asked, her hazel eyes wide and innocent.

"No need to pull the innocent act." McCoy said. "What's wrong?"

"Nothing's wrong, Dad." Jimmi put the last couple of glasses from the table onto the tray. "It's just been a long day."

"I mean between you and Hikaru." McCoy clarified.

"We're fine." Jimmi picked up her tray. "It's just that sometimes we need to clear things up between us. And with his schedule I can't always pick and choose those times."

"So have you cleared things up?"

"We've agreed to talk about it later." Jimmi explained. She started for the kitchen, but her father stopped her.

"I'm glad you two are talking." Dr. McCoy said. "If you need another perspective, you know I'm here."

"I know Dad." Jimmi nodded.

"I'm going to go back to the ship. We'll be leaving soon." McCoy said. He kissed his daughter on the cheek. "I'll talk to you soon."

"Ok." Jimmi smiled. "I love you, Dad."

"I love you too, Dear." Dr. McCoy turned and left the bar. Most of the Enterprise officers had left by that point. Sulu was still there talking to Gonzales. After Jimmi had returned the dishes to the kitchen she joined them at the bar.

"Ten more minutes and you are AWOL, Mister." Jimmi said in Sulu's ear.

"I am aware of the time." Sulu smiled. He put his arm around her waist and pulled her close. "Like to walk me to the transporter room?"

"You couldn't stop me." She sighed.

They left the bar together. Jimmi slipped her arm around his waist. Hikaru responded by putting his arm around her shoulders. While they walked along, Jimmi said. "I hate the Enterprise coming to the base for just a couple of hours."

"Would you rather we not come at all?"

"Of course not." Jimmi said quickly. "I'd rather you spend the night."

"I wish I could." He stopped just outside the transporter room and kissed her. "Some day I'll have my own ship. Then I'll have a little more control over these things."

"When?" Jimmi asked holding on to him tightly. "It seems like you've been on the verge of making captain forever."

"It seems that way to me too." Sulu nodded. "But look at it this way, if you had been on Earth I wouldn't have seen you at all today. And I'm glad I got to see you even if it was just a couple of hours."

"Me too." Jimmi smiled up at him. "You are going to be late."

"In a minute." He kissed her again passionately. Neither of them wanted to let go. "I have to go."

"I know." She sighed but did not let go of him. "I love you, Harry. Don't ever doubt that."

"I never have." He assured her.

"Be careful." She loosened her hold on him.

"Always." He replied with a smile. "I'll talk to you soon."

Jimmi just nodded as he left her standing in the hall. When the doors of the transporter room closed behind him, Jimmi leaned against the wall and closed her eyes. She took a deep breath and walked briskly back to the Café. Jimmi went straight to her office. After washing her face and fixing her make up, Jimmi returned to work with a smile.