

“Well, Captain Spock.” Jimmi winked at him. The lunch rush tended to run late during ensign week. The Café was full of customers nursing large mugs of coffee and other caffeinated drinks. Some were even eating lunch. “About time you came to see me.”

“I will not officially be a captain until we reach the Academy.” Spock said. “And then the role will be more of teacher than commander.”

“A role I am sure you will fill nicely.” Jimmi said. “What will James T. be doing?”

“The Admiral will also be working with the cadets.” Spock said. “Just not as intimately.”

“And not on the ship.” Jimmi said. Spock shrugged. He was not entirely sure how it was all going to work as of yet. Or how those changes would affect his friend. Jimmi smiled and changed the subject, “So, are you eating alone today or is there some special lady joining you?”

“Only if you have the time to join me.” Spock said.

“Well, it is a little early for me for lunch.” Jimmi said. She generally did not get around to lunch until after the rush was over. “But I wouldn’t mind taking a short coffee break if you wouldn’t mind the company.”

“I would be honored.” Spock said. Jimmi poured them each a cup of coffee and came out from behind the bar and joined Spock at one of the smaller tables.

“So are you coming to Pavel’s going away party tonight?” Jimmi said after they were sitting down.

“Of course.” Spock nodded. “I am pleased to see his career advancing.”

“Certainly took his time in accepting the job.” Jimmi commented.

“Indeed.” Spock said. “But I understand his perspective. Even a positive change is not always easy.”

“It’s hard to leave your family.” Jimmi said. She vaguely wondered when they switched from talking about Pavel to talking about Spock. “But at least you get to stay on the ship.”

“Eventually I will be back with a trainee crew.” Spock said. “But there will be a lot of work before we take the ship anywhere.”

“I think you will make an excellent teacher.” Jimmi said and sipped her coffee. “Of course you will scare the cadets to death.”

“That is not my intent.” Spock said.

“You will ask some kid a question and while he is trying to come up with the answer, you will give him that look, and-”

“What look?” Spock interrupted.

“That Spock look.” Jimmi laughed. “You know, you tilt your head just a bit and one eye brow goes up and it seems to say, this is so easy, why don’t you know? And the poor cadet will be scrambling to come up with an acceptable answer.”

“There is no intentional look.” Spock said.

“Well, you do it all the time.” Jimmi said. “And people imitate it.”

“Indeed?”

“Indeed.”

“Interesting.” Spock said. He was about to ask her if the imitation was a joke or not when Mike Woo came up to the table.

“Sorry to interrupt, Boss.” He said. This was the third year he had worked in the Café during the summer. He was eighteen now and running the crew of six bus boys they had working

for the busy ensign week. "It's getting a little busy."

"Ok." Jimmi said.

"Nice to see you, Mr. Spock." The young man said as he was leaving the table.

"Mike." Spock nodded. To Jimmi he said, "He has grown quite a bit in the last year."

"Yep." Jimmi said as she stood up. "I love when Mikey comes to work. He's so cute and such a natural for this place. He knows when to be diplomatic. I am sure that is not what Randy told him to tell me when he sent him over here."

"Randy is not diplomatic?" Spock asked since that would not be his impression of the easygoing bartender.

"Not when he is working and someone else is goofing off." Jimmi laughed. "I'll be back to get your lunch order in a few minutes."

A couple of hours later, when most of the Café lunch crowd had disappeared, Dr. McCoy walked into his daughter's bar. Even if she had not owned the place, McCoy would have found this establishment a comfortable retreat. It felt like home. The warm colors of the polished mahogany bar, the vintage Earth music and the bartender who had his drink on the bar as soon as he sat down all made him feel welcome.

Jimmi saw him and walked over to greet him with a hug, "Hi Dad."

"Hello Dear." He said as he hugged her. "Ready for lunch?"

"Yes, I am famished." Jimmi said. She led him to the booth against the wall furthest from the bar that she reserved as her private table. They sat and talked over family business and gossiped about friends. One of the waiters brought them lunch and they lingered over coffee for much longer than Jimmi usually allowed herself.

Eventually McCoy checked the time and said, "I guess I better get going."

Jimmi also checked the time. "Wow, I did not realize it was so late. It's almost change of shift."

"And I assume Hikaru will be down soon." McCoy said. Jimmi just smiled. "Why don't you hitch a ride with us tonight and spend some time on Earth? I'll have some free time and I believe Hikaru will be on leave."

"It's the middle of ensign week, Dad." Jimmi explained the obvious. They got up from the table and slowly started walking towards the Café door. A few ensigns were coming in for an early dinner. "There is no way I can walk out of the Café tonight."

"Ok." McCoy said.

"But as soon as things calm down." Jimmi said, "I am planning on taking some time. Hikaru and I talked about it last night."

"Good." He smiled. He stopped just before the door and hugged his daughter. "Be sure to keep some time open for the old man."

"Of course, Dad." She smiled. "You'll be back for the party this evening. Right?"

"Yes, I'll see you then." McCoy turned and left the Café while Jimmi went back to work.

Enterprise would be shipping out at midnight as she always did in July. But she had no new ensigns this year. She was headed home to be given to the Academy to train cadets. All that

was left to do was have the going away party for Lt. Commander Chekov and the others who would be staying behind when Enterprise left to wait for other star ships to stop at Star base 12 to pick up their new ensigns.

The Café was nearing the end of the dinner rush when the senior officers of Enterprise came in to start the party. There was a nice crowd but the bar had not reached its capacity for people yet and the band was just getting ready to get started.

Lt. Commander Pavel Chekov walked in with C.J. Vasco. She was wearing a form fitting shimmery copper colored pants and camisole with a matching translucent copper blouse that had a floral pattern in bright blue splashed across it. They spent a good part of the evening mingling and talking with the Enterprise officers. Eventually they found seats at the bar.

“You’ll like Captain Terrell, Pav.” Jimmi said as she was getting them a refill on their drinks. “He’s a very nice guy.”

“You don’t know him?” C.J. asked.

“I know of him.” Pavel shook his head and shrugged, “But I have never met the man.”

C.J. winked at him and said, “I thought you knew everyone.”

“Almost.” Pavel laughed at C.J. then turned his attention back to Jimmi. “So what do you know, Princess?”

“His crew likes him.” Jimmi said. “He doesn’t spend much time here but he always has a dinner with all his senior officers before shipping out. And he likes his Saurian brandy.”

“Ah, the bartender’s view.” Pavel laughed. “Very important information about a new captain.”

Sulu walked up to the bar and said to Jimmi, “Hey Baby, take a break. Dance with me.”

Jimmi did a quick check down the bar. L.J. and Randy were both working. It would not be a problem. She laughed and said. “You are always giving orders. Do you realize that? Most people ask!” She did not wait for his reply, but turned and went to the end of the bar. He met her there and led her to the dance floor.

The song was about half over when Admiral Kirk walked up to Chekov and C.J. He smiled and said, “C.J., you look lovely tonight.”

“Thank you, Admiral.” She returned his smile then looked at Pavel and said, “I’ll be back in a minute, if you will excuse me.”

After she walked off towards the ladies room, Kirk took her bar stool. He took a sip of his drink and said, “Reliant is a good ship.”

“Yes Sir.” Chekov nodded. “And I am looking forward to my new assignment. But... Well...”

Chekov sipped his beer instead of finishing his thought. The Admiral finished the sentence for him, “But she is not Enterprise.”

“Exactly.” Chekov nodded.

“Pavel, I have felt that way about every ship I have ever left.” Kirk said. He chuckled softly to himself then added, “Well, not the Republic. But every other ship.”

“Why not the Republic?” Chekov asked with a grin.

“I was on the Republic for my first field assignment.” Kirk explained. “One of my bunk mates, Cadet Kazemi, was not the easiest person to live with. It wasn’t until years later that I found out she had heard some not so flattering things about me from a girl I had dated the year before at the Academy.”

Chekov laughed. "The girl friend of a woman scorned?"

"Something like that." Kirk nodded.

Sulu walked up to the bar and leaned on the open spot next to Chekov. Jimmi was back behind the bar. She put a beer in front of Sulu. She grinned at Kirk and asked, "James T, how in the world is Enterprise going to get along without Pavel?"

"It will be a struggle, Jean Marie." Kirk said. He put his glass down and offered Chekov his hand. "I have to get back to the bridge. Pavel, you will be missed. Good luck on Reliant."

"Thank you, Sir." Chekov said as they shook hands. Kirk left them. If anyone questioned why Kirk was needed on the bridge when Enterprise was just going home, they kept it to themselves. Jimmi moved down the bar to serve other customers leaving Sulu and Chekov alone.

"It is going to be odd." Sulu said. Chekov shrugged. "Can't remember the last time we left a star base that you were not sitting next to me."

"You are the one who has been pushing me to take this assignment." Chekov reminded him. He did not bother to remind Sulu that he would not be on duty when the ship left port tonight. Chekov knew what his friend meant. They had been working together for so long that they knew exactly what to expect of each other. On the bridge, on landing parties, during their off hours. The certainty and familiarity of the Enterprise and her crew was something that Pavel knew he would miss intently.

"I know, I know." Sulu agreed. "I did not say you shouldn't do it. It is the right move. It's just going to be odd."

"I know." Chekov nodded and drank his beer.

C.J. returned to her seat next to Pavel. He put his arm around her shoulders and pulled her close to him in a hug. He gave her a quick peck on the cheek before releasing her. C.J. looked at him and asked softly, "You ok?"

"Of course." He said dismissing his concern. The band started a new song. "Let's dance."

She nodded and led the way to the dance floor. She did not say anything more until they had been dancing for a minute. "You know, you are just a big softy."

Pavel smiled. "I hope that is not how my new captain sees me."

"He will see the perfect officer, I am sure." C.J. said. "But I know the real you. You are going to miss being on Enterprise."

"You have no idea how much." Pavel said seriously.

The party was in full swing when Captain Mboma walked in. He had been to the Café at some point every day in July, just to keep tabs on the ensigns that were waiting to report and to enjoy the charged atmosphere of the Café. There was excitement and anticipation coming off the young officers in waves. They had trouble containing themselves; dancing and drinking with enthusiasm.

There were also the civilians who came to meet family members who were stationed on the ships. The civilians came in the day the ships were due and left as soon as the ships were gone. They brought pride, longing, and tears to the base. The reunions of the families tended to

be quieter and involved a lot of touching and holding.

Tonight the Café was full of Enterprise officers as well as ensigns and civilians. When Captain Mboma walked through the crowd, he spotted a familiar face. He walked up behind her and spoke in Swahili, saying, “Hi Beautiful.”

Commander Uhura turned to him with a huge smile on her face. She opened her arms invitingly, and he stepped into the hug. “Bash, you beautiful man. It is so good to see you!”

“Surprised, mpenzi we?” He asked using the Swahili endearment he had used for her all those years ago.

“Not at all.” Uhura grinned. She let her hands slide down his arms until she held both his hands. “I knew you were stationed here.”

“Oh?”

“I’ve known Jimmi McCoy for years.” Uhura explained. “As soon as you told her you knew me, I got a letter from her asking for details.”

Bash Mboma laughed and asked. “And did you give them to her?”

“I gave her some details.” Uhura laughed. “Certainly not all!”

“Good.” He said. He took a minute to just look at her; he could not help but smile. “My god, you are just as beautiful as the day we met. Let me buy you a drink.”

“Sure.”

C.J., Pavel and Hikaru all sat at the bar together, with Pavel in the middle. The crowd had grown considerably in the last hour and it was taking all three bartenders to keep up with the orders. Chekov and Sulu looked at each other when they saw Uhura hugging a captain they did not know.

“Who?” Sulu asked with a nod of his head in their direction.

“I don’t know.” Chekov shrugged. He looked down the bar and called, “Princess.”

Jimmi finished serving a couple of lieutenants and came down to her friends. None of them needed a drink. “What?”

Sulu asked, “Who is that captain with Uhura?”

“Bash Mboma.” Jimmi said. “He took command of the base a few months ago. Nice guy. Evidently they knew each other when they served on the LaSalle.”

“Hey Boss.” Another customer called. Jimmi went back to work.

“Heard of him?” Sulu asked Chekov.

“No.” Chekov said. “You?”

“No.” Sulu shook his head.

“How is that possible?” Chekov laughed. “I thought she told you everything.”

“Evidently not.” Sulu grinned. “We’ll have to get to the bottom of this.”

“Good god, I thought the whole ‘Starfleet runs on gossip’ bit was over stated.” C.J. said. “Until now.”

“I don’t know how you can say that, C.J.” Sulu said.

When Mboma excused himself to go to the men’s room, Sulu sat on the empty barstool next to Uhura. She turned and looked at him. Sulu gently laid his fingertips along the side of

her face.

“What are you doing?” Uhura asked.

“Mind meld.” Sulu said with a grin. “So you won’t have to tell me, I’ll just know.”

Laughing, she knocked his hand away. Uhura explained, “We knew each other on the LaSalle. There was a short affair. He received a promotion to lieutenant and a new assignment and that was the end of it.”

“Not many details.” Sulu said.

“Well that’s enough for the time being.” She said. “Now go away. He’s coming back and I am having a good time.”

“Ok, ok.” Sulu laughed and left her alone before Captain Mboma returned to his seat.

Slowly the Enterprise officers started leaving the bar. There was no real reason to leave at midnight. They were just heading home to Earth and that was only a few hours away at warp speed. But it had been Kirk’s habit for many years to end the shore leave at midnight and he saw no reason to change that now.

Most of them stopped to say goodbye to Chekov. He was not the only officer who was not leaving with the ship. At least two dozen were staying to meet other ships and new assignments. There was a lot of hand shaking and hugging. C.J. sat at the bar watching.

Commander Uhura walked into Chekov’s arms and hugged him tightly. She whispered, “You take care of yourself.”

“You too.”

As she stepped back from him, Uhura smiled and added, “And let me know everything that is happening on Reliant!”

“Everything.” He laughed and nodded. “And you will keep me informed too.”

“Of course.” She said. “My god, I am going to miss you, Pavel.”

Before Chekov could answer, Sulu walked up to them and said, “It’s about that time.”

“A couple more minutes and you will be AWOL.” Chekov said with a grin to his friends.

Uhura hugged him one last time, whispered goodbye, and quickly left the bar.

Sulu offered his hand and said, “Pavel, I’ll talk to you soon.”

“If you need me,” Pavel said. They had also talked about the possibility of Sulu getting his own ship and of Chekov signing on with him. “Just yell.”

“I will.” Sulu said. Jimmi walked up to them. Hikaru smiled at her, “Walk me to the transporter room?”

“You couldn’t stop me.” Jimmi said.

After Jimmi and Hikaru left the Café, Pavel turned back to the bar. He took C.J.’s hand and whispered, “Take a walk with me.”

“Sure.” She said, but when they left the bar it was not for a leisurely stroll around the park as they had done so many times before. Pavel strode with a purpose and she hurried to keep up. It only took her a few minutes to realize where they were going.

They stepped onto the space station’s jogging track. It was a wide corridor that rimmed the edge of the large station. There were 10 lanes marked off for runners on the floors and distances in several languages marked off on the inner wall. The outer wall was lined with large windows looking out to the stars. Depending on the rotation of the station, you could also see the

ships in port, the moons around Gamma IV, the planet itself or the system's ordinary yellow sun.

Pavel immediately turned right and kept walking. C.J. wondered how he knew which way to go, but said nothing. When they saw the Enterprise, they stopped and stepped closer to the large clear pane. Pavel knew the orders being given; they ran through his mind. A report that the crew was present and accounted for, the check on all systems, the order to inform the base they were leaving, the clearance from the base to go with an approved departure pattern.

He stood and watched, and said nothing. C.J. leaned into him and he put his arm around her shoulder. Slowly the big ship pulled away from the base. They watched as she got smaller and smaller. They stood there until they could not see her any more.