

Aftermath

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Aftermath

by [Miss_Von_Cheese](#)

Summary

What happens to each pairing after the end of Season 2. One chapter per pairing, just browse the chapter list.

[[Contains spoilers, obviously.]]

Michael/Sylvia: Marshmallow

Michael's heart was empty, her limbs heavy, when she eventually allowed herself a well-deserved moment of rest.

She laid on her bed, back stiff from having occupied the red angel suit for many hours, and was not even sure if she thought too much or not enough. Memories and emotions filled her overwhelmed mind, and yet she felt slow, unable to solve anything. Tired. In a gravity state of her own. Sadness and pain, as well as the sorrow of losing some of the people she loved the most, burdened her entire being and toned down the pleasure of succeeding in her mission. Their mission.

She rolled onto her side. Sleep would be hard to find, even though it was much needed, and she wondered for a second if she should go find Dr Pollard to get some help with it. She had just tried for the twentieth time to find a comfortable position when the door of her quarters opened and Tilly walked in.

Seeing their room in the dark, Tilly carefully closed the door and did not bother turning the lights on. Michael wondered if she should disclose her state, or pretend to be asleep to avoid conversations, because as much as she loved Tilly being chatty enough for two, she didn't have enough energy to engage in discussions at the moment.

She was used to the absence of light after laying in the dark for so long, and did not miss a second of Tilly carefully removing her dirty uniform, as swift and silent as her adorable clumsiness allowed her to. Michael could not contain a smile seeing her girlfriend's underwear. Only her favorite ensign could literally save the universe wearing panties decorated with pink paw prints. She had a magic of her own.

Tilly expertly removed her bra with a content sigh, without taking her t-shirt off, and left it on the floor before she carefully slid under the sheets to curl herself around Michael.

“Nighty night, Wonder Woman...”

There were just so many things to say about this sentence, it was wrong and inaccurate on so many levels and yet, Michael simply hummed in reply and crawled closer, wrapping her arms around Tilly.

She had wanted to avoid her girlfriend in favor of being alone but now that she could hold her, Michael had to admit her Sylvia was pure softness, a soothing presence like a balm over her anxious mind. Everything about Tilly was soft: her hair, her skin, her quiet breathing. Against her body Michael could feel her tender breasts, her tummy, her thighs, so pale and soft. Underneath the sweat she had broken during those last hectic shifts, Sylvia still smelled sweet from her favorite perfume, a fragrance that remembered Michael of sugar and candies.

The commander barely shifted and placed a hand on Tilly's bare hip, under the seam of her t-shirt, feeling imperceptible stretch marks under her fingers. Her existence, so kind and pure,

made this whole mess slightly more bearable. As she gently squeezed the velvety flesh between her fingers, a flash of touching memories replayed in Michael's mind.

One day when she was young, Amanda gave her two candies from Earth, with a knowing smile. Two white marshmallows. She explained she got them at a reception and thought they would remind Michael of her homeworld. That was so typically Amanda, trying to preserve her daughter's heritage and her own through chemically processed saccharin. Unexpectedly, Michael decided to put the sweets away and waited until Spock was home to share them with him, then made him discover the incommensurable pleasure of chewing on clouds and licking their sticky fingers not to waste a taste of sugar.

The memories brought tears to her eyes and Michael quickly wiped them, trying to remain silent. Sweet and pale, soft and squishy, Tilly was everything she always loved from her favorite candies... and so much more. A best friend, a girlfriend, a lover, a partner. Her everything.

"Nighty night, my marshmallow," she managed to whisper in a strangled voice.

Tilly looked up from the pillow where she was dozing, eyes opening wide. "Uh? Wh-what was that about?"

"Nothing," Michael lied before she kissed Tilly's lips, the most efficient way to avoid explaining herself.

L'Rell & Tyler: Apology gift

Chapter Notes

This chapter deals with L'Rell and Tyler's past, which as you already know contains abusive dynamics, and mentions fleeting references to these abuses. You are warned if you'd rather skip this part.

Tyler would have lied if he said he didn't enjoy the battle. The thrill of the fight, the adrenaline running through his veins as they destroyed Leland, well, Control and its ships, and the electrical atmosphere in the Klingon ship helped him go through the day without thinking of his sorrows. His human side hated to find it so exciting, he persuaded himself he was just playing a role, and yet he knew deep down he loved it, L'Rell's enthusiasm so contagious to his ears.

However when the action faded, when all the ships were destroyed and Discovery followed Michael through time and space, love of his life disappearing to an uncertain and distant future, Ash felt all the grieving sensations he wished to avoid return to squeeze his chest like a fist gripping his wounded heart.

After the battle ended, he cheered along with his warrior brothers, for good measure, then quickly headed towards his quarters to get some rest, away from these men he knew he didn't belong with entirely. The turmoil of emotions heaving his heart and minds made it hard to relax and after a while he found himself walking to L'Rell's chambers, looking for someone, something to fill the empty void of his heart.

She was the only one on this ship who could approach him as a friend, the others viewing him as merely a bastard despite his status inherited from Voq's mind. And yes, that was probably a terrible choice he made, walking into her quarters, a few warriors passing by quickly judging him as the chancellor's pet, but truth be told he had made many mistakes and bad moves in his life already. If such was the price to pay not to be alone tonight, then he would play that role one more time. Anything rather than brooding over his dark thoughts.

L'Rell startled as he stepped into the room, then closer to her. She turned around, quickly wiping her cheeks. Ash pretended not to have seen her swift gesture, she needed to protect her unbreakable image, even from him. Her reputation was her safety.

"Sorry to disturb you," he growled softly. "I wondered if I'd be allowed a victory drink with our chancellor?"

L'Rell nodded thoughtfully, forcing herself to regain composure. She had lost a lot too, these last years, and it was a sight Tyler was sensitive to, even though the ambivalence of his

feelings was new and hard to navigate. He found out he could have empathy for her and still not forgive and forget.

"You may... although you might as well share a drink with a friend."

Ash nodded with a sad smile. *"Sounds like a plan."*

The only other option was to cry on his own and that was not something he would like to experience on a Klingon ship. At least, being with the Chancellor would protect him.

L'Rell opened a fancy cabinet decorated with skulls from a species Tyler didn't know, and took a bottle of Klingon liquor, her finest, as well as two large horns to drink from. Ash held her wrist to prevent her from going further and shook his head, grabbing the bottle by its neck. No need for more supplies tonight.

The flash of desire that his audacity sparked in her eyes turned Ash's blood into a cold stream. He removed the cork and drank a few swigs from the too strong beverage, knowing all too well he would need liquid courage given the most probable outcome for this night.

L'Rell's gaze lingered over his face as he swallowed the alcohol, letting it scorch his oesophagus. She shrugged, looking sad and almost empathetic, *"You know now what I felt when I lost Voq."*

Tyler looked down, long lashes fluttering. The situation was far from similar, and he would never have imposed himself on anyone to pretend having Michael just for him again, but he would not tell the chancellor about these thoughts and risk her anger.

"Wouldn't it be convenient if she had taken my sadness away with her?" he nodded, words carefully chosen.

L'Rell sat on the closest chair. She had not cleaned the blood on her temple, proudly showing off her battle wound. *"Is there anything I could do to relieve your pain?"*

Her voice sounded surprisingly soft and caring, a deep gentle tone Tyler didn't know in her. He shook his head, slouched on another chair, one leg propped over the armrest. *"Nah, this oblivion elixir will be enough."*

And he drank half of the bottle in two swigs, feeling already in his skull and his guts the terrible idea it was.

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When he woke up, several hours later from what he could gather of the position of the stars, his head was pounding. Hard. Thankfully his stomach had gotten used to Klingon delicacies so he just suffered the worst migraine... and that damn sadness was still there, persistent. Lingering. Like a widow's veil obscuring his whole world.

Tyler shifted in the bed. He felt tightly wrapped, warm and comfortable. Clean. With a grunt he blinked softly and looked down, shocked to be still wearing his uniform. He felt no

scratches, no bruises or new wounds, no strange soreness. Only his uniform and the sheets hugging him tightly. He had been tucked in bed, like he had not been since childhood.

He barely remembered the evening. He had shouted in anger and broken an ancient vase as he expressed all his rage and frustration of losing the woman he loved, a decision he was the only one to be blamed for. He had wailed and cried in L'Rell's arms, sobbing on her thick leather coat. Yet he did not recall big paws or teeth over his body, nor anything more intimate than friendly support.

He raised on his elbow, soft groan escaping his lips, to look at L'Rell who was crocheting clean tendons between her claws to knit a strange item. She gave him an amused smirk.

"You drank like a warrior last night. How do you feel?"

Too tired to remain polite, Ash ran a hand over his face, *"Hungover. Surprised to be fully dressed, if you can bear with my honesty."*

L'Rell tilted her head with an unreadable look, her claws still weaving complex patterns. She seemed to choose her words for a moment.

"After he went to Boreth, I talked to your captain, he felt like a wise one," she finally explained. *"He told me something interesting that day... said that the best apology gift of all is a changed behavior."*

Ash let his head roll onto the mattress with a tired sigh. Only some righteous prick like Pike could bring some common sense into a Klingon's mind. He opened his eyes again when L'Rell spoke.

"I got you fresh liver, the best cure to a hangover."

Swallowing his disgusted pout, Tyler looked at the golden plate and could not help the touched smile on his cheeks. *"You actually had it cooked this time."*

The gesture was particularly considerate. The ship's cooks must not have approved of this choice and the chancellor had defended her guest's tastes. Ash sat on the edge of the bed with a grunt.

"Thank you," he whispered. *"For taking my feelings into consideration, and not just Voq's."*

"You're a puny human but you have the heart and strength of a Klingon brave," L'Rell stated with the most tender gaze she was capable of. *"I have to let go of Voq, and that is far from easy, but I am proud to count you as my friend."*

Tyler locked his forearm to hers in a gesture of mutual respect. *"Thanks, warrior princess."*

She placed her forehead against his and growled tenderly, *"The Enterprise offered to take you back to Earth, you're awaited today. You know if you ever get tired of these smooth and weak Terran females..."*

Ash shook his head with an amused laugh, “*Yes, if I ever find those ridgeless girls of my own kind boring I'll come back to my baby mama.*”

L'Rell's confused look was rather endearing but Tyler was not sure he would ever find the strength nor the will to forget and forgive entirely. He had so much baggage to let go of, he knew the future would be uncertain and not so bright.

He was a complete mess but a few rays of light made life more bearable, like the universe being safe because of their sacrifices, his son being a blossoming man right where he was meant to be, or the Enterprise having the best painkillers available for humans, which was a nice ray of hope for his migraine.

He was not hers anymore and never would be again. He was his own man, although he was not sure yet who that person was.

Saru/Linus : Compatibility

Chapter Summary

After they almost faced their death, Saru realizes he doesn't want to die a virgin. What does Linus think about that?

Linus' claws gently scratching Saru's forearm through his uniform, up and down, in a soothing repetitive motion, provided the best comfort for the Kelpian after the last hectic days. His companion's weight, as Linus curled in his lap for the closest and most intimate snuggle they ever shared, grounded Saru in the present moment. He ran his sensitive fingertips over the scaly skin of his favorite Saurian's head, brushed his chiseled cheekbones, marveling at their lovely texture.

"My dear friend," he clicked softly. "There is something I wish to tell you about."

Linus reluctantly looked up from the warm spot he was nuzzling between Saru's throat and chest --the warmth attracted him more than anything else. He blinked with a solemn nod. "Yes, Captain?"

Saru shook his head, blushing, and modestly waved his hand. "Oh stop that, silly. There are no ranks between us in private, you know it!"

Linus closed his eyes with a happy smile. Their dates and intimate encounters usually were made of passionate discussions and interesting talks, yet tonight, after all that the crew had been through, no words were needed nor expressed. Linus had asked if it was okay for him to just stay there, then had curled up in Saru's lap for a long silent embrace. They were both lost, in an era that wasn't theirs, proud to have influenced the fate of the universe but still uncertain about their future. They needed more tenderness than words. More touch than thoughts.

"After everything we did these last few days, this decisive battle for our future, the sacrifices that were made... and after seeing my sister too, Siranna telling me she would fight like a Kelpian, so brave and bold..." Saru enumerated, waving his nimble fingers before his highly interested partner. "I have had a lot of thoughts. About life, about death, and about how short our time together might be. How wonderfully alive we are now."

Linus ran his slithering tongue between his lips, tilting his head. "Are you implying what I think you are, love?"

Saru smiled, seeing the curious and definitely naughty look in his friend's wide eyes. He shook his head, a bit embarrassed, tried to find a way to express his feelings without sounding crude and disrespectful.

“Wouldn't it be quite a pity if, despite having found the most perfect companion, I died without knowing the delights of the flesh?” he eventually managed to ask in a delicate tone that contrasted with the dirty implications of his words.

“I would say it is a pity already that such a handsome stud like you has never been touched by loving hands,” Linus assured with a clap of his tongue. “The universe would be damned if it let such beauty go to waste.”

“Oh! Now you're just being outrageously flattering!” Saru squeaked, a deep blush spreading all over his cheeks as he disappeared behind his own hands.

Linus giggled and closed his arms around Saru in a warm embrace. “You are so pretty, don't hide from me please. I would be honored to be your lover, if just for one day.”

Saru ran a hand down Linus' jawline, dipped his fingertips under the seams of his friend's collar. “As far as I'm concerned, this wouldn't have to be only one night. I am a rather faithful lover, or so I would like to think... since I have never been...”

Linus looked down with a deliciously embarrassed shiver. He placed Saru's palm over his own cheek. “Your words make my blood boil, Cap-- Saru.”

For a Saurian that was quite the compliment!

“Yours...” Saru dared whispering with a gulp. “Yours make my extremities sticky...”

Linus opened his wide eyes in surprise, not used to his friend being so bold and forward, and frankly honored to receive such naughty words from his captain. He clapped his tongue, leaned towards Saru who did not shy away from the wet kiss.

With a series of soft clicks, hisses, moans, and whimpers, they both got up and, still kissing like there would be no tomorrow, proceeded to remove each other's clothes. Saru could not help noticing how strange it felt, undressing someone else, being undressed by them too. Adventurous hands pushed and pulled, their jackets, pants, and underwear falling to the floor with ease.

Linus arched against him, seeking physical contact like he sought the warmth of his UV lamp. Scaly skin brushed against Saru's ridges, sharing heat and friction. It's when they felt each other's nakedness, the pure energy radiating from both their bodies, that they slowly realized their own ignorance.

“I-- have never seen a nude Kelpian,” Linus slowly admitted, looking up to his lover.

Saru nodded. “Likewise... I mean, a Saurian... I have never seen a Saurian in his birthday suit.”

Both friends took a breath, with a soft “Oh...”. Holding each other's hands to gather their courage, they took a step back, then looked down, observing their slender bodies in silence.

After a few seconds Linus blinked his delicate eyelids once, twice. “Well, well, well... isn't it interesting.”

“Fascinating would be the word,” Saru chuckled, staring at the scaly arrangement of limbs around the Junior Lieutenant's lower stomach. “I do not see how... we could...”

“... make this work?” Linus wheezed, brushing two claws around the soft pink curls that grew above his lover's thighs, causing them to retract and palpitate under his touch. “I am eager to find a way, ss'sweetheart.”

The hours preceding their next shift proved they could find much more than one way to connect their respective anatomies, with enough respect, love and pleasure to leave them falling asleep happy and satiated, and that it would indeed have been a pity for Saru to remain ignorant of these sweet torments any longer.

Jett Reno/Nhan: A nice offer

When Reno walked into the turbolift after her too long, too tedious apocalyptic shift, her own bed was the only thing on her mind. Her bed, her special pillow that didn't hurt her neck, and maybe some chamomile... chamomile infused beer of course. She was softer than she used to but not that soft, thank you very much.

Just before the doors closed, she heard loud footsteps rushing towards her and she gritted her teeth. No, no more emergencies for the day, please! She needed a good sleep, maybe a quick orgasm, but no more adrenaline rush: she had already used about four hundred percents of her energy, if not more! Commander Nahn swiftly slid between the doors before they closed, long dark curls almost getting stuck as she smoothly found her way into the turbolift.

Jett nodded with a respectful smile, trying not to look at the girl's boobs, or her face, her lips, her eyes, ok, well, every part of their Security Chief was properly amazing so she'd better not look at all, for risk of staring like a too long widowed creep.

“Commander...”

And then something happened, was it a side effect of their jump to the future, the exhaustion maybe, or some sort of alien magic but Jett was almost sure she heard a “So... wanna fuck?” coming from her colleague's mouth and that was all kinds of crazy. She could not afford a trip to sickbay now for hearing voices!

She ran a hand over her tired eyes, mumbled, “I'm sorry? I didn't get what you were saying, Commander.”

This time she looked Nahn straight in the eyes as the Commander slightly leaned forward with a smirk, still at respectable distance but her body language definitely flirty.

“Do you want to fuck?” Nahn repeated. “My room or yours, a few beers, and a good old shag before sleeping for twelve hours straight.”

Jett felt her eyes widen. She shook her head. As far as she was concerned the answer was yes, a thousand kinds of yes. Did she want to have sex with Nahn? Yes, against the wall yes, in the shower yes, she'd lift her in the turbolift and eat her out in the dining hall if she had a word in the saying. But. This sounded strange, and not right, and uncalled for. So, like a complete moron out of an old-school romantic comedy, Jett heard herself reply, “But-- why me?”

The commander was young, hot, and definitely a great catch for anyone on this ship. Hell, even Detmer and Owo would adopt her for a threesome if given the chance! Why would she pick a grumpy old mule like her? Nahn nibbled her bottom lip, ran a hand in her luscious curls, never departing from her strong unbreakable vibe.

“I wanna have some fun, Jett, I wasn't laid since, uh... I almost can't remember,” she explained, gaze growing predatory. “We saved the universe today, so I want someone who's

gonna give me a proper reward, not one of these virgin nerds, if you see what I mean. I don't feel like going through the tedious process of courting someone to end up disappointed.”

Jett leaned back against the wall, crossing her arms with a surprised smirk. Once the surprise gone, she felt both flattered and enthralled by the idea.

“Are ya stroking my ego so that I can stroke your clit in return?” she snickered.

“Glad that you get my point,” Nahn laughed back, before she straightened her posture and turned towards the doors that would soon open. “My place or yours?”

Jett placed her hand on Nahn's lower back, feeling her shiver with anticipation. “In my quarters, I have a few custom accessories I manufactured that you might enjoy...”

Nahn gave her a quick glance, pursed her nose with a smile. “Hell yeah.”

Reno mentally shrugged. Okay, her plans had just changed but it probably was for the best. She would never have dared to try anything with such a hottie but like hell she would let the occasion pass. They had already done the impossible today, what was one more miracle after all?

Spock/Pike: Break up attempt

Chapter Summary

A.k.a Christopher Pike sometimes has the worst ideas ever. And still gets his happy end.

“I’m heading off to my quarters,” Pike announced to his crew, with the kind of solemn casualness only a Starfleet captain could maintain. “I’ll see you all in the morning.”

Number One slightly turned her head to look at him and replied with an amused smirk, full of insinuations, “Have a good evening, Captain.”

Pike gave her a polite smile but did not feel the joy associated with the gesture. Deep down he was crushed, sentimentally annihilated. His plans for the next few hours promised for a mortifying experience.

Tonight, and despite all his will not to do so, he would break up with Spock. His soft, gentle, loving partner, the smartest officer and the most perfect friend... and Chris was on his way to break his (warmer than they all thought) Vulcan heart. As if the kid had not suffered enough yet.

He felt like a monster, as he walked towards his quarters. A monster on the death row. This room was his, the cosy corner he had just found again within the Enterprise, more than the impersonal quarters he was inhabiting on Discovery. And it would be the scene of his most painful breakup. What a wonderful night indeed!

Yet as guilty as he felt, Chris knew he would feel even worse if he forced Spock to share his life, be a faithful companion, build their relationship from the start only to share the experience of this gruesome death the time crystal had shown him. This was not fair.

Spock was still so young, he had a promising life ahead of him, he deserved to spend it with someone his age, someone healthy with a brilliant future. Breaking his heart would be the most difficult task Christopher Pike ever had to perform, and the pounding of his heart punctuated his one of a kind walk of shame.

He didn’t know how his lover would react. The poor boy had lost his sister once again so recently, they had lost many good friends, left a valuable crew behind. Making him suffer even more felt like a more unbearable ordeal than what Pike knew his future held. He tried to persuade himself it was an act of benevolence and mercy to push Spock away before he would get too hurt. Yet he knew the words would be rough like sandpaper over his tongue.

He had mentally practised them all day, almost blurted a “We need to put some distance between us” when an officer asked for his signature on a document. What would be the most logical way to pass his message? A vocal recording, a written letter? A face to face confrontation? How were these things done on Vulcan? Pike’s heart swelled in his chest as he got closer to his room, a boulder threatening to choke his tight throat.

He could not bear the thought of Spock growing even more in love with him, being his devoted companion and feeling obligated to stick with him through the terrible years to come. For how long would he survive in this state? Barely alive. Unable to move, to kiss his caring partner. Spock deserved a life of happiness with someone more able to take care of him. Somehow, Chris was glad to have seen his doom, at the very least for this opportunity only, to be able to push Spock away before his heart would be too hurt.

When he reached his quarters, Chris noticed the small blinking light on the panel. Someone already was in there, and only one charming Vulcan had access to his private chambers. Perfect, now he had to make up his mind and quickly find a way to deal with his feelings!

Chris stood in front of the door for a long moment, body and heart already hurting with anticipation for the painful discussion to come. He took a deep breath, then two. Then a dozen. As a Captain he thought he did a decent job but as a boyfriend? He was a complete disaster! Grabbing his badge and his courage, Pike opened the door and stepped into his room.

A frown appeared on his face as he saw the dim lights and the table set. Spock was standing in the center of the room, wearing a fancy black Vulcan tunic Pike had never seen before. He tried to talk but Spock gestured towards the table with one hand.

“Apologies for my intrusion,” he explained. “I took the liberty to set a romantic dinner for us. As lovers do in your culture.”

Pike’s shocked gaze ran from Spock and his gorgeous outfit to the table. In its center stood a single holographic candle that looked nothing like the real thing he remembered from his youth. Two plates of what appeared like a very healthy, nutritious, bland and unromantic meal, as well as a pitcher of still water composed the feast. The napkins had been festively folded in triangles instead of the usual squares, and it's the sight of a single mint leaf next to the hologram that broke all of Pike's resistances.

He felt his nose tingle for the first time in decades, barely could be aware of his own reactions before a loud whimper escaped his lips and he burst out into tears, hiding his face in his shaky hands. Like a dam suddenly opened, his tears flew right out of him, his chest heaved by deep sobs. Oh God, this was even worse than he had imagined! Spock had been through an incredible amount of efforts to offer him this pathetic excuse of a romantic dinner, and it was the most touching gift Chris ever received. He could not believe the Vulcan had come out of his natural ways like that just for him. To prove his affection in a human fashion. This was unbearably thoughtful!

When his sobs started to fade after a couple of minutes, the captain looked up, noticing his friend had not moved.

“This was not the expected outcome,” Spock stated, hands behind his back. “You seem hurt. It’s rather regrettable if I offended you in any way.”

Chris wiped his puffy eyes on his wrists to contain a second wave of tears.

“No,” he whined. “No, you did not. This is perfect, Spock. Absolutely perfect.”

The young officer blinked in silence, looking quite unsure. He waited patiently as Pike dabbed his cheeks with a folded napkin, then took a step closer.

“I am confused. Would you mind defining your reactions, please?”

Chris slowly looked up, and the second he gazed into the deep brown eyes he knew he would not have the strength to break their bond. Not now nor ever. He was a coward in love.

He shook his head, tried to smile, the weakest smile of all, “Tears of joy, love. They do exist.”

“Oh...” Spock simply replied. “I see. Would you like to express more of your emotions before we start dinner?”

“I...” Chris sighed, looking at his friend. “I will wash my hands first. You can wait for me.”

And he disappeared in the bathroom to freshen up a little, disturbed in his plans. After running his wet hands all over his face, trying to regain composure, he saw Spock walk in behind him and stand one step closer than necessary.

“Knowing your range of emotions, I find you appear quite upset, Christopher,” the Vulcan said, staring at his reflection in the mirror. “I do not wish to intrude but I believe it to be logical to ask what troubles you. Is that a matter we should discuss together, shall I provide verbal support? Or support of a more physical nature?”

Chris took a deep breath, slowly turned around to face his dear companion. There had been so much between them, so many emotions, shared moments, losses and reunions, he could not just run away from him and hide, or lie. This was not him. He had never been.

So, with a gulp, he announced in a tone that sounded much more desperate than he hoped, “I’m gonna die, Spock.”

The officer’s lashes fluttered imperceptibly and he replied, “I am aware of that fact.” And for a second Chris felt a judgemental glare on him, like he was some unintelligent person. Of course he would die, he was human after all. Spock seemed to find the statement unsurprising.

“No, I-- you don’t understand...” Chris sighed before he realized how insulting he sounded to his smart friend. “I will die, I don’t know when but... I know how. And what the crystal showed me was... really not glamorous.”

Spock's nostrils flared in an annoyed sigh at his choice of words. This human gibberish was not to his liking but Chris had a hard time finding the right terms to express his disgusting future.

"What is your point?" Spock asked. "I am aware of your mortality, and what you faced when you held the crystal upset you. This I can understand, but how is that related to me, or to our dinner?"

Chris was mortified as he chose, once again, to be honest and placed his hands on the edge of the sink he rested against. "When I walked into my quarters, my intent was to stop our relationship before your feelings would be too strong, so that when my probable slow and painful death occurs you won't mourn a lover, but just a friend."

Spock's eyebrows slightly raised in shock, not more than one or two millimeters, but the rest of his face remained impassible. An expression the Captain had seen way too often on Burnham's face. Chris used that opportunity to explain further.

"It was my firm intention to let our feelings fade before we were too involved, I wished to preserve you from suffering, and yet... when I came in, determined but not willing to end this, seeing your beautiful dinner, the romantic atmosphere you set just for me... this was beautiful, love, and I just couldn't do this anymore."

"You wished to leave me," Spock repeated dryly. "I see why my romantic intents were not well received."

"I did not wish to," Chris protested to defend himself. "All I ever wanted was to protect you, even though it hurt me to even consider..."

The cold glare Spock gave him, so dark, mature, and looking more than ever like his father without his soft beard, shut Pike's mouth. The Vulcan took some time to answer, hands still crossed behind his back, before he finally emitted his judgement like a handsome but cruel magistrate.

"You do not need to explain your intentions, it seems like your kind favors this strategy," Spock said in a cold and almost despising tone. "You push me away, just as Michael did when we were children, not for my own sake but so that you don't have to face your own imperfection. You cannot stand the idea of disappointing me one day by not being your idea of perfect, so you would rather suppress my sentiments for you in a dishonest way, rather than accept my sadness and love keeping you company during this long agony you might, or might not experience."

Chris looked down with a frown. He did not expect to be read so clearly by his lover who so often had troubles understanding his reactions, yet he felt more exposed than ever. And he who never before had suffered Spock's anger felt shaken by the stormy energy contained in his partner's body. He knew he would hurt him by breaking up with him but had not realized it would be deeper, stronger than any other kind of separation.

"I didn't want you to be trapped in a relationship with a dying old man," Chris sighed.

Spock held his gaze. “Your honesty is appreciated. I take that my attempts at courting in a human fashion changed your mind. The debate is over then. Do you object to taking the most rational and logical path from now on, and making the most of the time we have left together?”

“The most logical path for me was to protect you,” Chris tried weakly, not even convinced with his own words.

This time a small smirk, terribly insolent, bloomed on Spock’s cheeks. “You were wrong, but this is not your fault you were born from an illogical species.”

Pike wanted to make that subtle smirk disappear, get his authority restored even though there was no hierarchy in their private quarters, yet he could not lie to himself: this attitude was everything he loved about Spock and he would follow his favorite rebellious officer to the edge of the universe without a second thought. He tilted his head, biting his lower lip.

“Oh, come on. You like that I’m emotional enough for the both of us. My inconsequential humanity and my public displays of emotions are very cathartic for you.”

Spock, oh so annoyingly smug, turned around to leave the bathroom with a soft “I have no idea what you’re talking about, Christopher”.

Just before they reached the dinner table together, Spock turned around on his heels once more, reached for Chris and firmly shook his hand, staring into his eyes with intent. Although the captain had never before understood what was so special about Vulcan kisses, it didn’t take him more than a second to feel the raw intimacy of their palms locked and their fingers cradling each other. This was almost more indecent than the human kisses they often shared.

He was a coward wrapped around a mutineer’s little finger.

And maybe making the most of every minute spent by his side until the end of his life was the best idea anyone ever had on the USS Enterprise and beyond.

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