

## A Future Unwritten

Posted originally on the [Ad Astra :: Star Trek Fanfiction Archive](http://www.adastrafanfic.com/works/1006) at <http://www.adastrafanfic.com/works/1006>.

Rating:	<a href="#">General Audiences</a>
Archive Warning:	<a href="#">Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings</a>
Category:	<a href="#">F/M</a>
Fandom:	<a href="#">Star Trek: Discovery</a>
Relationship:	<a href="#">Cleveland "Book" Booker/Michael Burnham</a>
Character:	<a href="#">Michael Burnham</a> , <a href="#">Cleveland "Book" Booker</a>
Additional Tags:	<a href="#">Grief</a> , <a href="#">Mourning</a> , <a href="#">Loss</a> , <a href="#">Established Relationship(s)</a> , <a href="#">Canonical Character Death</a> , <a href="#">Emotional Hurt/Comfort</a>
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2021-12-02 Words: 1,094 Chapters: 1/1

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by [InterstellarSiren](#)

### Summary

As Cleveland Booker reels from a devastating loss, Michael makes a promise to remain at his side.

There are times when words cannot describe grief, and pain is unimaginable. It's worse when the loss that causes that grief takes everything a person has to make it through the day. Cleveland Booker had known that kind of loss, and as a Kweijan, it had rippled through him in unexpected ways. Book hated himself for not seeing it coming. A part of him believed he had failed his people, his family.

Kweijan was his home. His brother and nephew had needed him. Instead of being with them and attempting to help, he had watched from a viewscreen as the world he knew exploded. That moment had brought with it a searing pain and a guilt that gnawed at his conscience. He should have been with them when it happened, not safe on the Discovery. Even Michael, the one constant person in Book's life, could not fully comprehend what he was going through. She had lost family before, yes, but never like this. Going into the future meant that she knew they were still somewhere, existing in the past universe that she had left but this—this was the end of an entire planet. He'd formed deep connections to the creatures on his homeworld, and had planned to take Michael back there someday. It was a promise that he could no longer keep.

Now, he wanted a different outcome. He wanted a way to take Michael to the place he had loved, to show her another side of himself that he had never opened up to anyone. But some wishes were not meant to be. In his sorrow, Book had closed himself off to emotion. The first time he cried openly for Kweijan had been in Michael's arms. So when she came to check on him following a difficult away mission, she was surprised to find him immersed in a hologram of the forests.

"Someone's doing better." Michael expected no response. There was no need for one. She knew him better than anyone on this ship ever could. They had been each other's tethers for so long that he'd almost forgotten how he managed before her. He could see the guilt on her face. She had wanted to be with him, paying him back for the support he had given when she found herself in need. She had put her duty to Starfleet before him, and of course, he'd understood. She was the captain of a starship, and couldn't defy orders to keep a promise, not even to the man she loved.

"It's a—process, I guess. I still can't quite believe . . . But this helps."

"I told you I would be here, Book. So this is me giving you whatever you need."

"I feel like such a fool. I failed them. I promised Leto. . . Things between Kyheem and I were just getting back to normal and now, they're. . ." The final word caught in his throat. The very idea that his family was dead was too much for him to wrap his mind around.

"You were there for Leto, Book. He knew that."

"But I should have told him that I was proud of him, that I loved him. I loved him so much. . . I hoped it wouldn't be another fifteen years before I saw them again, and now. . . Now I never will."

"But you're wearing your pendant again.", Michael noted. A smile tugged at the corners of Book's mouth. Before now it had not felt right to wear it. He had refused to do so, until a prick at his conscience changed things.

*Kyheem would not blame you for what happened. Neither would Leto. You couldn't have known. All that mattered was that they knew how much you loved them. Your bond with them doesn't change now that they're gone.* He had promises to keep now, to them and to himself. He might not be able to protect them, but he could carry the memories of Kweijan, and make certain that their deaths were not in vain. He would carry them with him wherever he went in the galaxy, with the promise that he and the crew of the Discovery would fight to make sure no other planet suffered his beloved Kweijan's fate.

“I am. I felt like I owed it to them.”

“To Leto and Kyheem?”

“Yeah— to their memories. I’m the last of my kind now. I feel like it’s up to me to keep their legacy alive.” Book loved the determination that flashed in Michael’s eyes when she took his hand again.

“Not just you. Us. All of us. Starfleet will help you now, if you let us.”

“I could use some help on a more personal issue as well, Michael. I don’t want to be the last of my kind.”

“You won’t be.”

“You sound so certain of that, Captain. Are you offering to help me?” Michael cursed him internally for the look that came her way; but she said nothing at first. It took a moment for the heat rising in her cheeks to dissipate, but when she found her voice again, her tone remained low and even.

“We have a very special bond, Book. I think you know that. Nothing would make me happier. When we decide the time is right. . . I’d be more than happy to help you.” A smirk formed at the corners of the captain’s mouth. Right now, she would say anything to put Book at ease. Still, he noticed a twinkle in her eye that suggested more than an offer.

“Not right away. But someday. When we’re both ready.”

“I’ll hold you to that, Michael. Also, thank you for—this. All of it. Being here for me and showing me what it means to be loved. That’s the fulfillment of one of my greatest wishes. Here, with you, I have a place to belong at last.”

As Michael closed her eyes for a moment of well-deserved rest in Book’s arms, she realized just how far she had come since first arriving in this strange new future. She had finally found the ability to see beyond herself for the greater good, and to forgive the mistakes of the past. She had let her heart heal and given herself a way to make a better future for everyone. Being with Book had given her a connection she had never expected upon meeting him, and that bond had made her a better person, a better friend, a better captain. She only hoped fate would be kind enough to let her have the future that they had promised.

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