

## Sweet Dreams (Are Made of This) [Who Am I To Disagree?]

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## Sweet Dreams (Are Made of This) [Who Am I To Disagree?]

by [InterstellarSiren](#)

### Summary

Rios talks culture, his family and their future with his lover after teaching her how to defend herself in Starfleet.

### Notes

This work contains a couple of references to Hispanic (specifically Chilean) culture, as it was written for a Hispanic Heritage Month Theme over on Archive of Our Own.

There were no stars in this sector to guide his way as Cristobal Rios inched further out of Federation space. It was not the journey he had expected to take, but here he was. It had only been a few months since he'd left the library at Starfleet Academy behind, and with it, the memory of a particularly brilliant mind who haunted him.

She would have wanted to see these stars with me. I suppose she is, in her own way. Just because we're on different ships doesn't mean that we're that far apart. Space gives us unique opportunities. I'd never have forgiven myself if I took all of that away from her. He leaned back in the captain's chair, eyes closed for a moment, and then spoke to the air. He had activated the holosuite and selected the self scan option in a moment of drunken hubris, but he supposed there were uses for such things.

"Activate ENH.," he sighed to the air. The idea of actually using the holos seemed foreign to him— Rios would never admit that he did not trust the holosuite. It didn't make sense for his ship to have one. He has wondered before how Verengan decided it needed that kind of installation. The navigational hologram shimmered into view, immediately taking his place when Cris got up from the chair.

"You have the conn, I'm going to get some sleep. If there's any trouble, I've set the ETH to automatically join you." If holograms could appear stunned, this one would have. His eyebrows were raised, but he listened silently before managing,

"Aye, Captain." Enoch— the name the ENH has somehow given himself, though Cris doesn't know where it came from, and he certainly didn't give it— nodded resolutely and turned to the console to focus on his options. Ship squared away, Rios made his way back into his quarters, and sank onto the bed ready for the silent, dark relief of sleep.

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Elsewhere, the U.S.S Raleigh drifted through a patch of meteors. Lieutenant Erin McLaughlin was nearly asleep at her comms. The Raleigh had been sifting through this particular field for almost twenty-four hours, and the captain seemed convinced they would hear from someone in distress at any minute. They had initially been sent to collect samples from the meteors but no one could tell what had happened to that plan.

"Ms. McLaughlin, how long have you been on duty now?," asked the helmsman.

"Uh. . . About twelve hours— captain ordered me to stay in case. . ."

"You look like you're about to drop. I'll cover for you if we need it, go get some sleep. I know you're new, Lieutenant, but sometimes the captain doesn't think when issuing orders."

"You've gotta be kidding—what is this, some kind of hazing ritual where you're gonna rat me out to the captain the minute I lay down for abandoning my station?" The helmsman was a Bajoran, Vremi Lekr. Erin liked him well enough, but he seemed to be more apt for causing

trouble than helping.

“No. We might need to alert the captain to the need for more shifts. You’re falling asleep at your station. Go get some rest.” Erin smiled gratefully and nodded. Lekr was only one rank above her, but Erin looked up to him and was happy to do as he ordered.

“Aye, Mr. Lekr. I’ll see you in a few hours.”

“No, you won’t. I don’t want to see you before 0900, you understand me? Get some real sleep tonight. You’ve busted your ass since you got here. Captain’s impressed, but he also doesn’t want you to burn out and neither do I.”

“But—.”

“This isn’t a discussion, McLaughlin. To your quarters. That’s an order.” Vremi’s brow knitted in worry for a moment. As she turned to go back into the darkness, he softened. He remembered what it had been like. He was the kind of wide-eyed newcomer who wanted to learn everything. Maybe she was just like him. Or perhaps she was already turning jaded, like. . .

She shook her head, put the thought out of her mind as she settled into her bunk and turned off the lights. The last thing that caught her eye before sleep came was the box with her swords inside. One uniform, one ceremonial. Erin had been told she’d almost never have to carry or use her uniform sword, but that she should have the training to use it, just in case.

She’d been learning during her last year at the Academy, but could a person ever feel confident enough with a sword in their hands? She wondered what Cris would be like as a teacher. He’d had experience with Starfleet, and she was sure she’d seen photos of a sword on his desk at the library. It looked like a relic from the distant past, perhaps a gift from someone who had been close to him. His father. . . Or perhaps it was a memento of a long-dead ancestor. As she closed her eyes, images played in front of her, more memory than dream.

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## Starfleet Academy Holodeck

“All right, if you insist on learning this, I suppose I can’t stop you.”, sighed Cris. His eyes were fixed on Erin’s training uniform, but then, they fell to the object in her hand. A blunted training sword; the kind she would have little need for these days. She had set up a way for him to observe her training.

“Cris, is something wrong?”

“No. No, it’s only— well. These are old tech. No one’s used them in eons, and you’re not likely to find them in use unless a society is pretty far out on the pre-warp scale.”

“Okay, but that doesn’t explain why officers have one.”

“Supposed to be ceremonial. We... I mean you... will only need them for rare special occasions. But there may be times when it could save your life to know how to use one. I was always better with phasers. I can hold my own, though. Just don’t care to. Not after what happened to —.”

“That why your crewmates called you ‘Aramis’?”, Erin asked, trying to change the subject for his sake. She knew it was the wrong question when she saw Cris shiver, waves of a memory washing over him.

“Yeah, I guess I’m more like him than I care to admit. There are things they never got to know, too. While I’ve been gone, there was someone who might have stolen me from you. Her name was Liselle, she was. . .”

“Some kind of royalty, I’m guessing, given the analogy.”

“A Marchioness. I just called her ‘Marquesa’. Easier that way. She was lovely, but in the end, her people needed her more than I did, and I couldn’t stay. So, nothing happened between us.”

“So what happened with your Marquesa?”

“She wasn’t mine. I wanted to protect her, to be more honest with her than I was. I guess that’s why I’m so afraid for you. In the end, she betrayed me to help her people. I think I could have loved her if she hadn’t.” He seemed to shake himself from the memory, enough to stand facing her.

“I hope you never need to use what I’m about to show you.”

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All remained quiet about *La Sirena* as Rios prepared himself for sleep. Somewhere in the back of his mind, he could see Erin, waiting for him. She was dressed in a calf length navy blue skirt that flowed out from her hips, a sky blue gauze blouse and a white cardigan. He knew he was dreaming, but he didn’t want to wake up. He had paired a dark blue sweater with dress pants and a black jacket.

“What are we doing here?”

“You’re here to take me on that date you promised, Cris.”

“Seems a bit futile, doesn’t it?”, he mused, but he took her arm anyway.

“I think it’s sweet. We may not be able to defy death, but we can live our lives so that we’re worthy of it and all life gives us while we wait for it.”

“Hm. I feel like we should take some kind of blood oath to that.”

“You would, Mr. Tragic Sense of Life.”

“You don’t understand, Erin. This is why I didn’t want you to fight. Our world—Starfleet, the way we survive now—is broken. It’s so cracked that sometimes I wonder if it’s not shattered at the core, and we’re too stubborn to die.” He let a hollow laugh escape his throat.

“Maybe. But at least we break beautifully.”, she whispered, her hand on his arm.

“Here I thought I was the cynic.”

“Mm. Let’s not doom and gloom tonight.” There was no reason to let emotions get in the way. They were here together and that was what mattered. Cris began to wonder what would happen if he asked her to stay with him.

He pulled her into his arms, leaning in to capture her lips with his for only a moment. The gentle softness of her skin was almost too much for him to take in. Did he dare to admit how sweet it would be to him to have her before they were parted again by space?

“Cris...”, Erin started, but he silenced her with another kiss.

“I just want to be here with you, Erin. No words, just us.”

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Though they were on separate ships, Cris and Erin bolted upright in their beds at the exact same moment, comforted by the quiet hums of their respective vessels. In the back of their minds, both knew that the other had experienced the same dream. The thought of being together would unite them, even when they were light years apart.

Erin grabbed her PADD, knowing she wouldn’t be able to get back to sleep until she made sure he was all right. She froze, trying to imagine how he would perceive her message. If she said she’d had a dream about him. . . One where they had nearly. . . She let the thought trail before her PADD chirped so only she could hear.

“Incoming message from...”

“Cristobal Rios.”

“Computer, accept and activate private listening. Quietly, please.”

“Acknowledged. Private listening activated.”

“Erin, I know it’s late and I’m sorry but I—I had a dream about you, and couldn’t get you off my mind. Let me know you got this, okay? I love you.” The quiet reverence in Cris’ voice was evident. She shivered, pulling her blankets closer around her. She needed to call him. With her PADD in hand, Erin slipped out of bed and made her way to the rose gardens she and her colleagues had been keeping.

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La Sirena had been floating aimlessly in space now for a few days, while her captain waited for his next orders. The Iotians would be off his back soon enough. Cris sighed and rubbed the back of his head, as his computer suddenly chirped.

“Incoming message.”

“On-screen.”, he huffed, settling into the chair. He hoped to God it wasn’t Ledger again; the woman and her henchmen had given him enough trouble in the last year. They still had him looking over his shoulder.

“Hope I’m not bothering you, Captain. I couldn’t sleep.”

“You’re never a bother to me, estrellita. You wanna talk about it?”

“Ship’s too quiet, I think. I had a dream about you, and with this damn heat. . .”, she trailed, and Cris had to fight back a laugh. Knowing her as he did, he could only imagine what the dream would have entailed. Did he dare to admit he couldn’t sleep either?

“Dreaming about me, huh?”

“Forget I said anything.”, Erin sighed, and he nearly heard her fling herself onto the bed. Rios barked a laugh, the first one he had allowed himself in longer than he could remember. She made him feel at home, at peace. She reminded him that he needed some time back in Chile, where his mother would have been in a warm kitchen making cazuela or empanadas, and begging a younger version of him not to spend too much time stargazing. That was his real home, one he couldn’t wait to show her.

How he wished he could introduce her to this gem of a woman who made him happier than he’d been in months. His mami would have loved her. She was enough to keep his feet on the ground and make him want to reconnect to his roots. It was a sweet enough dream to keep him grounded.

He could hear the questions now: “Is she a good Catholic?”, “Can she cook for you? Are you eating enough?” At the least, he had found a woman who would love him unconditionally. That was the sweetest thing he could hope for in the life he’d chosen.

“No,” Rios whispered softly, “I can’t. Truth is, I was imagining what it would be like to take you home with me. I kind of wish you could have met my mother. She would have had a thousand questions for you, and then invited you into her kitchen once she warmed up. Can’t help thinking she’d have liked you. She was a stickler. But she wanted me happy.”

“It’s a pretty sweet dream, Cris.”, Erin’s voice softened. It wasn’t often that Cris talked about growing up in Chile, or how they’d left when he got into the Academy. She couldn’t help wondering how he had managed to leave all of that behind.

“It is. She’d have been proud I found somebody in Starfleet, too. After my dad left, it was kind of our anchor. She always said they needed more women in the ranks but she wasn’t cut out for the exploration bit.”

“What else do you remember?”

“She used to read me Neruda and Mistral.”

“And Isabel Allende, I’m guessing?” It was a wild guess, but it made sense. Though the texts were dated now, they still retained their status as classics. She’d noticed he had a penchant for that sort of thing. She saw Cris shake his head, impressed with the deduction.

“I shouldn’t be surprised you know your literature. They’re all more up your alley than mine, but yes.” He wanted to take her hand, but again, he was reminded that there was a screen in the way.

“The argument could be made that Neruda is more your speed.”

“Point taken.” They talked for hours, and he told her more about how frightened his mother had been when they first discussed leaving Chile for San Francisco so that she could work. He hadn’t wanted to leave it all behind, but certain things remained as natural as a heartbeat.

When they ended the call, both Cris and Erin knew they could sleep soundly. They would dream of the day when their missions would give them enough time to take in all the things they wanted to do and see together. There would be days for them to roam wherever they wanted; to choose a place to make a home, and stars to guide the way and light their exploration.

Someday, that dream will be reality. We’ll make sure of it, Erin. I promise., Cris thought as he turned out the light, smiling at the book of poems on his nightstand. For once, he had a sweet dream to combat the nightmares.

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