

so lay down with me, let the river run dry

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by [InterstellarSiren](#)

Summary

Some nights, Agnes just wants to remember the good times.

Agnes Jurati was many things, but a woman who was good at expressing her feelings was not and would never be one of them. The day she believed she was ready to try being open and honest with someone about her feelings, Agnes wanted to cry. The tears wouldn't fall, not because they couldn't, but because it was impossible to let them. She wanted them to, but that would mean unlocking the doors again.

Agnes hated the emotions in her brain; there were rooms where each one had it's own way, and sadness was one of the worst. It had been so long since she'd been able to close it and open the door marked "Joy". She'd never bothered to explain it to anyone, because it didn't matter. No one ever understood how she felt; the last one to know what was going on no matter how many times she begged and pleaded for someone to see her and make her feel like she mattered. No one cared; she'd just been shouting into the void. It got so bad that she stopped yelling all together, made herself smaller. They'd never heard her anyway, why should anyone see her? No one wanted to, and she didn't think they ever would notice.

Until the day when a scruffy, damaged ex-Starfleet officer had been thrust into her orbit and tipped the scales so far that even she was unsure they could ever be righted again. She'd tried to stay away from him. The nagging voices in her head had warned her that she would never be good enough, that she could never, ever just be enough for a man like Cristobal Rios. She was never enough for anyone—they always left. Every time.

When Agnes is with him, it's easy. Cris made it easy for her to just let go for a while, to forget. He's good at the forgetting part, and it helps that the only thing he ever wanted from her was her. All the flaws she sees, every tear she's cried, everyone who forgot her. . . None of that's important to Cris. He'd learned to live in the moment, and slowly but surely, he taught her how to do the same.

"You don't have to do this alone, Agnes. I promise, you never will." It wasn't a promise that Agnes was sure of, nor did she know if she could believe it, but it hung there, in her orbit, ready for her to accept it whenever she was prepared to do so.

On the day that she was led back to Starfleet Headquarters to be interrogated about the mission to save Soji and find her home world, Agnes couldn't think straight. She had too many memories floating around in her head. Cris and his comforting warmth had given her a reprieve from the nightmares. She had to stop herself from remembering that very first time when he had taken her hand in his and led her back into his quarters.

The stabbing pain of guilt that washed over her mind made her hang her head, but only for a moment. This wasn't her fault. She didn't want to become a Tal Shiar spy, but there was so much at stake, and she had not known then who the good guys were. Even then, Cris had loved her. He'd taken all of that pain away for a night.

I don't deserve this. It shouldn't feel this good, not after everything I've done. Not when I know what's going to happen to this mission. The self-flagellation stung her psyche, but it kept her focused. Deep down, Agnes realized, this was what she'd always wanted. She longed to be with someone who cared about her and wasn't going to leave her alone. She'd always been the last to know when something was wrong. She'd gotten accustomed to the feeling that no one wanted her. She had concocted a fairytale ending for her relationship with Cris in her mind; in her world, he wanted nothing more to do with Starfleet or his rogue associations. She would be his priority, and they would travel the galaxy together without fear of anyone else coming after them. In his arms, Agnes knew that she had shelter. She could forget about Bruce Maddox and the sentient androids he'd worked on for years. All of that was in her past now, and when the floods of tears and guilt returned, Cris would be there for her. He had promised.

It took Starfleet nearly seven hours before they were finished with the debriefs. Seven whole hours of them asking the same questions over and over. Had Maddox in any way provoked her into killing him? Was there any reason for them to believe she was capable of committing that kind of crime again? Why should she be allowed to travel?

Agnes fired off her answers as rapidly as she knew how, but in the back of her mind, there was Cris. He was waiting for her with her favorite replicated ice cream, and a hot chocolate so warm that when she tried to touch the mug it burned her. He'd cared enough to check on her the night before.

"Please, tell me you're not stressing out over this. How hard can it be? You answer a couple of questions for them and they understand what happened. They'll know you were being used, Aggie. You probably won't even have to do anything once they hear the story."

"Cris, it's not that simple. I . . . Maddox was important to me. At one point in my life, he was my entire world. Should I have gotten so invested in him? Maybe not. But for better or worse, we loved each other, and I killed him. I pushed him away, and then when we needed him most I killed him. All because of some half-Vulcan, half-Romulan bitch who couldn't let me eat a meal in peace. No. She had to show me what I believed was the end of the goddamned world and—," Agnes cut herself off, hand clenched so tight that she nearly lost sensation.

"Hey, hey. Easy. You need to relax. If you're this tense when they question you, you're going to self-sabotage."

"You've done this before, right? What's it like?" That froze Cris in his tracks, because of course, he hadn't done anything like this before. The closest he had come was a mission debrief after the botched first contact with Jana and Beautiful Flower. Most of it had washed away at the bottom of a bottle of brandy years ago, or tried to.

"You need to stick to what you know. Oh used you. She planted a tracking device on you, she manipulated your mind. Yes, what you did was wrong, but you thought you were doing it for the right reasons. Hell, you loved the kid when you met her. Called her a wonder." Cris paused for a smile, remembering fondly how Agnes had pointed out little details that Soji had been given to make her special.

"You didn't do this willingly. That's the key. Now, come on. You need to get some sleep. Can I hold you until it comes?" Agnes laced her fingers into his and squeezed; if Bruce were watching from whatever afterlife he believed in, what would he think of them?

"I guess I do. Thank you, Cris, for all of— this. For staying."

"As long as you need me."

That was before Cris had been called back to Starfleet, before he had run away to the safety they had provided him. He had left Agnes in the cold to deal with a ship with baggage and legacy attached. It was no surprise to her, since Agnes understood how much he needed the acceptance. He was tired of the rogue lifestyle to which he'd become accustomed. There had to be something more, a way back in.

He won't stop until he finds it, and there's nothing I can do to get him to see reason. I want to support him, but I can't see him killed for it. What had happened to standing by her? He couldn't do that if he was off in space somewhere. So much for being there as long as she needed him. Agnes had been abandoned before but with him, it stung. She had not expected to fall in love with a starship captain, who had become her port in the storm until now. She wasn't surprised when he hailed her a few days later.

"Look, Agnes, I know you said never to call you again if I took this commission but I need you to understand. . ."

"There's nothing to understand. I asked you to choose and you chose them. Pretty clear message that you don't want me."

"Come with me."

"What?" Agnes froze; that had been the last thing she was expecting. Deep down, however, she'd known it was coming. She couldn't run the risk. Cris' connection to her was far too complicated. And yet, she'd gone to him anyway. Just as before, it hadn't taken long before their minds and bodies were in perfect sync. One moment, she was weightless, carefree, and the next, she was in his bed ... *again*.

"I want you with me. I'll find a place for you. Just stay with me. If you can't, I get it. But I don't want us to go out like this."

"You're the one who *made* us go out like this." Agnes recoiled from Cris' touch, nearly hissing the words as she pulled away. She had enough of men who wanted to change the world at the expense of everything else. Enough was enough. So, if that was true, how had she ended up in his bed the minute they were back to Earth?

"You know you're a horrible liar, Agnes." Cris sighed lightly, propping himself up on one elbow to look at her.

"I know, I know, I said we weren't doing this again, and yet. . ."

"Eh, you know. Any old port in a storm. Admit it, Aggie, we're using each other." But if that was true, then why did laying beside him bring her comfort, and why did the voices in her head telling her that she was a killer who could never be loved or feel loved stop the minute she was in his arms? Here, she could cry, and no one would judge her. She'd always love him for that, even if it meant the relationship was over when they had to face the cruel reality of life once more. They would never be alone, because they'd always have each other.

The thing that helped her to let go was knowing that Cris would be there when she needed him. She could yell at him again in the morning. But for now, she could rest, knowing they were both in good hands.

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