

dancing with a loaded gun

Posted originally on the [Ad Astra :: Star Trek Fanfiction Archive](http://www.adastrafanfic.com/works/1246) at <http://www.adastrafanfic.com/works/1246>.

Rating:	Teen And Up Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	F/M
Fandom:	Star Trek: Voyager
Relationship:	Kathryn Janeway/Chakotay
Character:	Kathryn Janeway , Chakotay
Additional Tags:	VOY S02E25: Resolutions , Enemies to Lovers , Missing Scene , Developing Relationships , Friendship , Past Relationships
Language:	English
Series:	Part 5 of summer mini challenge , Part 1 of being in love with you (is like...) , Part 8 of inking it out
Stats:	Published: 2023-12-30 Words: 1,969 Chapters: 1/1

dancing with a loaded gun

by [lilly_c](#)

Summary

He didn't bother to look back as Kathryn approached, he knew her footsteps like the rhythm of his heart.

Notes

Spoiler for Resolutions. Missing scene(s). Written for the gulf prompt on my summer mini challenge [table](#). The title is from Lost These Days by 30 Seconds To Mars. Thanks to Tamara for doing beta.

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

Kathryn and Chakotay continued to stare at their lightly dusty comm badges for several moments after Tuvok had ended his hail.

"Thirty hours," Chakotay whispered, disbelieving that they were going to be cured and returning to command Voyager after been left behind to their current life almost three months ago. "Excuse me," he said a little more loudly before leaving the shelter at a rapid pace.

"Chak..." Kathryn started, sounding numb with grief and unable to finish his name the moment he left their home. All she could do was give him some time to process the latest twist to their predicament and go to him when he'd be more receptive to her presence.

Kathryn finally placed the comm badge on the tabletop before taking another glance at the detailed schematics for their boat on the computer, the boat they would never build or explore the river in. She wanted to smash one of them and she didn't care which. Instead she got up and started to organise her belongings that were already on the table into two piles to try to keep her mind off the latest blow she'd been dealt.

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Chakotay was sitting on the river bank, with his shoes beside him, trousers rolled up to his calf, feet dangling in the crisp shallow water. He didn't bother to look back as Kathryn approached, he knew her footsteps like the rhythm of his heart.

Sitting beside him, Kathryn rested her head against his shoulder and placed an arm around his back. "You calmer now?" she asked, gauging his facial expression more than the tension in his back and shoulders.

"A little," he said, "I went for a long walk then came here and went for a swim. I decided to stay here while I dried off but it didn't really help though. I would have had to go past the shelter to get to my punchbag. I can't go back there, at least not yet."

Kathryn nodded her understanding, taking a moment before speaking again, he didn't need to know that she'd nearly smashed something out of anger earlier. "What do we do now?" the question sounding more loaded then she expected it to.

"Hmm?"

"Us." She lightly kissed the side of his neck. "I mean, can we be in command on Voyager and still be Kathryn and Chakotay when we're off duty?"

Chakotay slightly moved away from her to lay on the grass guiding her to join him. "We could but there are some things to consider, not just

our duty to the crew but our other relationships.”

“Other relationships?” Kathryn asked, uncertain of what direction his line of thinking was going.

“Mark” he stated, “Unless that’s...” he paused.

Turning to her side, resting her elbow on the ground and head against her palm. She lightly traced his lips with her thumb. “I haven’t forgotten about him...” she paused realising that the rest of her answer could create more of a gulf between them at the worst possible moment. “When we encountered The Botha, I came to some conclusions about my relationship with Mark thanks to the disturbing visions I had.”

Chakotay gently twisted a lock of her hair around his fingers. “Disturbing visions?” he asked, hoping that he wouldn’t have to disclose what he saw at the hands of The Botha.

“I was alone in my quarters when I heard Mark’s voice asking if was there and to look at the puppies.” Kathryn swallowed a sigh that threatened to escape, she missed Mollie desperately, often regretting not bringing her on the original three week mission. “I went to my bedroom, turned the lights on and nobody else was there. It was strange but I heard Mark’s voice again.”

The last line piqued Chakotay's curiosity. “What did he say?”

“He was telling me that he missed me and wanted to know when I was coming back.” Kathryn paused for couple of seconds. “He said that someone else was in my thoughts and that I was thinking of them, not him. He didn’t think I missed him.”

“I need to know something Kat, for my own peace of mind.”

Kathryn smiled at the use of the name he had called out the first time they made love. “Anything.”

“Who were you thinking of?” he asked, knowing that experiences of alien mind control weren’t really the place to be starting from when it came to matters of the heart.

Placing a soft kiss against his tattoo, Kathryn said “It’s you, Chakotay, that I’m in love with. I just couldn’t bring myself to say it out loud to anyone not even you, no matter how much I wanted to.”

“How long?”

“Since we had our picnic on the holodeck,” she replied truthfully, although she’d definitely felt lust toward him during those difficult first few weeks in the Delta Quadrant but never acted upon those thoughts and feelings for fear of making a fool of herself.

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Noticing that the light was fading, Chakotay stood first to put his boots back on before holding his arm out to Kathryn to pull her to her feet.

“It’s getting late and we still need to pack,” he casually mentioned, hoping that Kathryn had at least made a start while he had wandered off to sulk.

Upon approach to the shelter a familiar shriek greeted them. “He’s looking for food. Again.” Kathryn said as she crouched down to let the monkey come towards her while Chakotay went inside to replicate some fruit and nuts for their honorary pet to eat.

Returning with the snacks for the animal, Chakotay scattered them along the ground before Kathryn asked, “Is our dinner ready?”

“I’ve made mushroom and leek pasta, it’s still on the replicator.”

Kathryn stood and walked the short distance to their dining area to place their meals on the table and light a couple of candles. She chose a mixed fruit flavoured cider for their drinks. Taking her seat she waited for Chakotay to join her.

Once they had finished their meals and drinks, Chakotay and Kathryn looked around every area of their shelter to decide how to tackle packing. They knew that they were taking the bathtub, headboards and sand paintings as well as the few pieces of equipment that hadn’t perished in the devastating plasma storm. The rest could be left behind, in case others happened to be struck down with the virus that had landed them on the planet in the first place.

The packing had taken less time than they expected it to, as a reward, Kathryn got another two glasses of the mixed fruit cider taking them out to the stoop where Chakotay was looking up at the night sky memorising the constellations they’d been making up every night for the last time.

“I have something to tell you,” he said as he accepted the glass, clinking it against hers. “I wasn’t coping at first.”

“Huh?” Kathryn uttered, placing her glass on the ground so that she didn’t accidentally spill it.

“When I was building your bathtub, it was my way of coping with the way my life has been turned upside yet again. You had your research and I had my woodwork projects and sand paintings.”

“What are you saying? You want to stay here alone?”

Chakotay took her hand linking their fingers together. “I guess what I’m trying to say is that while I gave you the impression that I was coping with been alone with you. I was having a hard time adjusting to no longer living in space.”

“That’s why you liked to challenge me when I was too focused and too stubborn to see any other options.”

“Something like that.” Chakotay let out a light chuckle. “I did realise that not only did I love you but I am falling in love with you and it took me a while to fully understand why I threw myself into doing things for you to make your life here easier.”

Wiping the tears away with the back of her free hand, Kathryn whispered, “your ancient legend is actually a love confession.”

Chakotay smiled at her before taking a large swig of his drink. “We probably should call it a night, we’ve only got a few more hours here.”

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Kathryn had been tossing, turning and staring at the ceiling for what felt like half the night but must have been a lot less than that. She slowly moved to sit, toeing her slippers on before going to the door for fresh air to see if that would help her to relax and sleep.

Looking up the now familiar stars she had named on similar sleepless nights she couldn’t help the sadness that enveloped her as she knew that this would be the last time these stars would be above her home.

Quietly making her way back inside she went to Chakotay’s alcove and started to open each drawer in the small chest that he still hadn’t packed away. She rummaged in each one looking for a sweater she’d often borrowed when it got too cold at night.

“Kat, what are you looking for?” came the slightly sleepy question. Kathryn turned, a slight smirk formed that didn’t quite reach her eyes when she noticed that Chakotay’s eyes were red and puffy from crying and pretending to be sleeping.

Kathryn left her hunt to sit on the edge of his bed. “I was looking for the sweater I borrowed the last time it was cold.” Reaching under his pillow, Chakotay produced the maroon coloured sweater he’d been wearing on the day they met. Passing it to Kathryn he watched as she put it on then moved to lie beside him, taking some of the covers.

“Are you mad?” Chakotay asked, unsure if he was projecting his own anger towards Tuvok’s decision to disobey orders onto her.

Placing her hand on his chest, Kathryn softly replied, “I am a little mad but I can almost understand why they disobeyed a direct order to save our lives.”

“Me too,” he admitted. “I just hope that The Vidiians haven’t lied to them and the cure for our virus is real.”

Kathryn didn’t reply as she had fallen asleep while he was talking.

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“*Commander Chakotay and Captain Janeway please respond*” came the static hail of the rarely used comm badges. “*Please respond. Voyager is in orbit.*”

Chakotay stumbled out of bed making his way to the dining area. Tapping the small smooth metal device, he said, “Chakotay here,” hoping that he didn’t sound as though he’d just woken up.

“*I will beam down with the cure.*”

Looking at his alcove, he could see Kathryn moving out of the bed. “Erm, no, give us another half hour or so. We’re not quite ready.”

Tuvok was suspicious for Chakotay’s reason to stall for more time. “*Very well. I will have The Doctor transport two hyposprays with the medicine to your location.*”

Kathryn stood behind Chakotay her cheek pressed against his back, arms wrapped around his chest. “Thank you Tuvok, Chakotay out.”

“They’re already here?” Kathryn asked, not quite grasping that more than thirty hours had already passed.

A transporter beam lit up the table dispensing two full hyposprays. “This is our cure.” Chakotay stated, picking up one of the devices and pressing it against Kathryn’s neck. “Why don’t you go and get dressed first. I just need a minute.”

Kathryn hesitated for a moment, slowly nodding her acceptance and leaving him alone for a few minutes.

Chakotay picked up the remaining hypospray and pressed it against his own neck before going to dressed into a uniform he thought that he was never wearing again.

Taking one final look around their home and saying their goodbyes to the monkey, Kathryn gave the order “two to beam up.”

End Notes

First posted to Dreamwidth on 26.9.23

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