

## A color stands abroad

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## A color stands abroad

by [ussjellyfish](#)

### Summary

Michael surprises Laira with her favorite flower. Laira didn't mention that she's terribly allergic to them.

### Notes

written for year of the OTP's December prompt, "That's my favorite thing about you."

The stinging of her eyes is a shock. Headquarters recycles air slower than a starship, because it's so big, but usually her office is fine.

The cause is that gorgeous emerald green flower, buried in soft purple leaves in Michael's hands. The scent of it floats sweet and light across her office, reminding her of home in the spring when the salda bloom all across the hills.

This particular sinus headache feels exactly like home, in the lake country after the rain. She's almost grateful for how familiar it is as she blinks - uselessly - trying to chase the tears from her eyes.

"Lt. Willa said you had a moment before your next meeting and I wanted to give you this salda flower."

"Thank you."

Michael holds it out and once the salda is in Laira's hands her tears break containment. They run hot down her cheeks and smiling is harder, but this is a real salda flower, fresh from the southern continent of Bajor, with rain still on the leaves. It's home, in her hands, and it's the sweetest thing Michael could have done.

They're in season now, near her home, and the whole hillside would be emerald green with them. She'd need two hypos just to stand there.

"You brought this for me?"

"I asked Saru what growth media I needed and I knew when we were jumping back, so I chose one that would be in bloom when I got here. Luckily it made it."

Laira has to set the salda on her desk to rub her eyes, and then bury her nose in her sleeve before it runs in a thoroughly undignified way. "That was very kind."

"Are you all right?" Michael touches her shoulder, her face soft with concern. She only needs a moment. "You're allergic to them."

"They smell wonderful—"

Michael taps her badge, opening up her tricorder. "You're *very* allergic."

"I haven't broken out yet, and being allergic doesn't mean that I'm not grateful."

"Is there something you can take to help?"

"Not in my office." Laira brushes tears off her face again, and Michael reaches up, taking over with gentle hands. "I don't often have flowers."

"And I thought that was because you were denying yourself."

"Truth be told, I'm allergic to so many of them that it would be a foolish idea."

Michael holds her face, her brown eyes incredibly bright. "One moment."

She walks to the replicator, ordering something Laura can't hear. The beautiful little salda flower sits on her desk, unperturbed. The petals curl around each other, opening up, but protecting the center. Her nose must be so irritated now that she can't smell anything, but she remembers the scent.

Michael hands her a handkerchief, then builds a little programmable matter structure of glass around the flower, sealing it in. "It'll take awhile for the internal climate control to clear the air in your office, but the allergens should cycle out. The terrarium will keep all the allergens inside of it and I'll talk to Saru, see if we can find a way to make saldas less vicious on your eyes."

"I'm fine, Michael."

"Oh, yeah, you'll be fine with tears running down your face all through whatever the next meeting is."

"Security briefing."

"Well, at least I know what Admiral Vance going to tease me for the next time I see him." Michael takes the handkerchief back and lifts Laura's chin, looking into her stinging eyes. Even blurry, Michael's radiant, as she always is. "Your eyes are so red."

"I should leave red for you." Laura touches her uniform shoulder. Michael wears red so well.

Michael smirks and starts to speak, but before she can say anything else, Laura touches her chin, tilts her face up, and kisses her. Laura's tears stick to Michael's face and as first kisses go, it's gentle, hopeful, and wet.

Beaming, Michael tilts her head. "That was a surprise."

"Hopefully a welcome one."

"I love surprises." Michael strokes a tear off Laura's cheek.

"That's my favorite thing about you." Laura rests her head on Michael's, then their cheeks touch, and they kiss again, lingering together while Laura's heart thuds in her ears.

"So I'm not allergic to this surprise," Michael says lightly, curling closer into her.

"My allergies are a weakness I've gotten out of the habit of admitting to anyone."

"They could be used against you."

"Everything could." Laura lets her hand linger on Michael's shoulder. Her feelings for Michael could be used against her in countless ways.

"Like us, hypothetically, if we were together."

"All of my relationships are complicated."

"Hopefully they don't all leave you in tears."

"Sometimes the tears are worth it." Laura stares into Michael's eyes, which is always dangerous, and she could stay here, drowning in the depth of them.

"Do you have time to beam to medical?"

Laura calls up the holo of her schedule and sighs. Vance is almost late, considering he hasn't arrived yet. "Not really."

"Would you let me?"

"Go get my allergy hypo?"

"I'm sure Dr. Culber could come up with something."

Michael won't be able to let it go. If she's going to arrive in the security briefing, that's an announcement.

"I'll be fine."

"You know, Dr. Culber had to tell me once that the normal amount of pain to be in during a briefing is none."

"You've already helped my headache."

"I caused it."

"Oh you've caused several, this one's hardly exceptional."

Michael chuckles, shakes her head, then stands on her tiptoes to kiss her again before she pops away with her transporter.

Laira dabs her eyes with her handkerchief, then shuts them tight to try and slow her tears. It's a fool's errand, so is not blushing when Vance clears his throat.

"Captain Burnham doesn't need to leave on my account."

"She's being gallant."

"Ah, fortunately for you, she's exceptional at that, ma'am." Vance approaches her desk. "You love salda flowers."

"I do."

"And they love you a little too much, if I recall correctly, ma'am."

"They have a violent affinity for my eyes."

Vance touches the terrarium and nods. "Didn't tell Captain Burnham that, did you?"

"Your phenomenal sense of intuition remains undimmed, even after all the years I've known you."

"When I say you're predictable, I mean it in the most endearing way, Madam President." Vance is suddenly interested in the ships through the view port when Michael's transporter pops back in.

"Admiral."

"Hello Captain, so kind of you to drop in."

Laira glares at him, and his grin could start a warp core.

Michael holds up a hypo. "Dr. Culber tailored this to your immune response. He thinks it'll work for the salda flower, but you'll need to take another dose in four hours if your symptoms return. He said you might feel a little euphoric or lightheaded for awhile."

"Don't fly any starships then?"

"I'd try to avoid it."

"Got it." Laira tilts her head and Michael injects her. Michael offers her the hypo and Laira folds it back into her hands. "Why don't you come back, tonight, to make sure I take it again."

"Around nineteen hundred hours?"

"It'll give me a good reason to get out of my meeting."

"Your eighteen hundred meeting is the interplanetary press corp," Vance reminds her.

Michael raises her eyebrows. "I can come later."

Laira kisses Michael's worried forehead, and sighs. "Arrive at nineteen-oh-one, and we'll leave. The press should be intrigued enough to stay busy for an evening."

Vance nods at that, leaning on Laira's desk. "At least several days, ma'am."

Michael looks from Vance to Laira, slipping the hypo back into her pocket. "Are you sure you want that?"

Grabbing the asymmetrical closure of Michael's uniform is remarkably efficient at pulling her gently closer. "Perhaps they need to experience one of your surprises."

"It'll keep them on their toes, captain." Vance nods to her, approving not just the non-announcement this is, but the relationship itself. Though, Laira's fairly certain he may have been involved in Michael bringing her the salda flower in the first place.

Laira's not sure if Vance looks away, or down when Michael kisses her. She's not sure if headquarters is still maintaining gravity or light either.

Must be the hypo.

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