

For the Journey Before You

Posted originally on the [Ad Astra :: Star Trek Fanfiction Archive](http://www.adastrafanfic.com/works/1570) at <http://www.adastrafanfic.com/works/1570>.

Rating:	Not Rated
Archive Warning:	Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings
Fandom:	Expanded Universes (General)
Character:	Tabatha Chase , Ajshae , Elloh Hex
Language:	English
Series:	Part 1 of Rhapsody Rabbit Gavilán
Stats:	Published: 2024-05-11 Words: 5,263 Chapters: 1/1

For the Journey Before You

by [MirandaFave](#)

Summary

A response to the Weekly Challenge 47: Fair Weather and written as a poor birthday gift to Steff, a story aboard the civilian cargo freighter *Rhapsody Rabbit Gavilán* and her eclectic crew.

Independent Freighter *Rhapsody Rabbit Gavilán*

Chase Haulage and Astral Shuttle Enterprise

“Fair weather and clear skies.” Captain Tabatha Chase intoned as she began to cycle up the *Rhapsody Rabbit*’s engines. As the whine began to build, Meetra Ros from behind smiled and purred in delight.

“Something tickling your whiskers, Meetra,” Chase asked as she clicked through the various controls of the dual seat cockpit, with a hearty satisfaction with every flick and click of the manual buttons. The *Correlia Class* freighter was an eon old by any standard but had been built to last and to survive the practicalities of space flight, which included being away from space ports with the bespoke parts to keep the ship flying.

“No, nothing Skipperrr. I just like it, is all.” The abundance of red curls that comprised Chase’s hair do bounce to look back at Meetra in her nav/conn station inviting an expansion on her answer, even as with practiced deft fingers she continued flight prep. “Fair weather and clear skies. I just love when you say it before take-off. Even, maybe especially, when it is less than fair weatherrr and clear skies.”

Both women looked out the wraparound cockpit windows slaked with falling rain and a horizon beyond the spacecadem and its lurid electric lights to a bank of dull grey.

“Well, it’s less about the actual status of the skies, and more it’s the wish for, the hope for clear skies and fair weather. The hope for the journey, safe travel and maybe, just maybe an adventure. And, I don’t always say it!” Chase remarked, shaking the sentimental notion off.

“Ha! That’s because we don’t always have the luxurrrry of such when we take off. Sometimes we get too much of that ‘adventure’. Oh. Space porrrt has given the all-clear signal forrr launch. Inspectorate Liscux adds, we should rrrrefrain from rrrreturning anytime soon.”

“Oh he’s a sore loser at cards.”

“I think it was the bar brrrawl that was the deciding factorrrr.”

“Well that was hardly our fault! We didn’t start it.”

“No, but we did finish it.”

Chase’s hand dropped fractionally for a moment to pat the Andorian Magnum at her hip. “Ha! Yes, yes that we did. Bora, all stowed away down there?”

The intercom she leaned into crackled in response with her Denobulan first mate’s voice, “All secured down below. Putting Dale through his paces. You need me up there?”

“You good, I’ve got her in my hands.” Clicking the conn off, Chase signalled at the caitian. “Meetra, come on up to the second chair.”

“Me? But Borrrra...”

“He’s trying to teach ‘Starfleet’ the proper way to secure and store cargo. Come on girl, up you get. You’ve taken watch plenty of times at the controls.”

Nervously adjusting at her flower adorned dungarees as she stood, Meetra bit at her lip feeling a little apprehensive. “Yes, but that was always

in space and when underrr way. All I everrr had to do was sit and get comforrtable.”

“Well, this is a little bit more involved. But you may as well learn. The *Rabbit* knows you and trusts you, so all you need to do is know her and trust her to take you to the stars.” Tabatha smiled with beaming reassurance and patted the sink in leather cockpit seat at her side bidding Meetra on. “That’s it. Strap in. I’ll finish the final checks. Hex? Ellioh! ... Nesquith? Is Hex there?”

Finally, Nesquith replied from the engineering compartment. “He is ... but they are reciting poetry to the core presently!” Nesquith’s crackling voice still had all the lispy tone of his species even over the comn.

Chase smiled with patience for engineer, a patience she rare extended to anyone else on the boat. “Well, ... ok. Interrupt the poetry session and ask Hex are we green to fly?” Tabatha clicked her fingers and pointed Meetra to a panel. “Watch those dials. I want even thrust levels on all eight initially and then as we take off, parallel thrusters should have tandem readings making for a level and smooth take off.”

Meetra nodded, studying the dials carefully whilst testing the controls in safe mode. Chase smirked as she watched her from the side. “It’s ok, Meetra. You’ve handled the *Rhapsody* before. Maybe not at launch but you took over the flight stick when those Nausicaans were chasing us down.”

“Ooooo... don’t rrrremind me!”

“Remind you?! Girl you rocked it.”

“I collided with an asteroid!”

“Like I said, you *rocked* it. Ha! Bah, merely a scratch. The *Rabbit* can take that and she forgives you, don’t you, girl, don’t you?” Tabatha Chase was known for being eccentric among many others but not so much to her crew, except when you spoke directly to the ship as this. Even then, as now, Meetra found it sweet. “Besides, we were in the midst of an asteroid field! That sort of thing has a high probability of happening.”

“Yes. Maybe we should rrrreconsider just how often we use them as a hiding place.”

“Chase, Hex states in rhyming prose that we are green across the board.”

Tabatha repressed the laughter at the fact Nesquith clearly refused to repeat the rhyme to the cockpit. “Good to know.”

“Why the poetry?”

“They found an old book shop ashore. Hex can never by pass a book store, especially one that pertains to sell old data cells on FTL engines. Amid the shelves, there was an old tome of Trill poetry. Like an actual *actual* book. I never got to see it up close, so I can’t say for sure if there’s any of Hex’s stuff in it or not, or if it is just the love or association of poetry. But the beeline they made to it ... I’m figuring there was something familiar about it.”

Together they went through the pre-flight, Meetra flicking the switches from memory and taking direction as necessary with a look or a pointed finger from Chase. “Hex was a poet?”

“Lyshanna was. I think that was ... ooo ... four hundred years ago. Quite famed at the time.” Meetra shook her head. And then for a moment, both women shared a moment’s silence in sympathy for Hex. Tabatha preferred not to be morose on the matter and offered a distraction. “Mind you, with enough drinks my old mate Meora was prone to recite the rather bawdy shanty or twelve.”

“Actually, it was Meora who use to always say ‘Fair weather and clear skies, before every take off or indeed space port departure. I guess I just picked it up from a lifetime of hearing it.”

“Captain Chase? Are we destined to ever take off at a scheduled departure time? You assured me that we would keep to the timetable.”

Without even looking round, Chase scolded the Vulcan. “Ajshae, is your tight little ass standing on my deck?”

Standing tall to appear her most imperious, Ajshae responded, “It is.”

“Ha! Made you admit you had a tight ass.” Meetra turned her face away to hide her reaction but without even seeing the Vulcan’s face, Chase was revelling in knowing the woman was repressing something in the moment. “Have I made it not abundantly clear that my passengers are not supposed to cross that demarcation?”

“You have but as a great many other things have been stated and completely ignored by you in the short time I have been aboard your vessel, I opted to believe that a rule that was not fixed.”

“It is.”

“Why is Commander Bora not in his chair?”

“He is not a commander.” Chase rolled her eyes and shook her head. “He’s my first mate. And he’s down below.”

“But who is going to assist you in taking off?”

“Assist me? I can fly this boat one handed with my eyes closed. It is *I* who is going to assist Meetra to take off.”

“She’s the chef.” From the Vulcan it was almost an hysterical statement.

“She’s a chef. She’s also my comm specialist, my helm and navigation technician. Actually, a seamstress extraordinaire.” Tabatha patted her Rigellian leopard print jacket in proof of that. Apparently its purple and black attested to the skills of Meetra. “She is also our medic. So ... I might have her see if she can remove that stick from your tight...”

“It is ok. I do not have to do this.”

Chase quickly refocused back on Meetra, forgetting the riling of her Vulcan passenger. “This is my boat. Yes you do. If our last few adventures have proven anything, I need to rely on more than just me and Bora to fly us off a rock. If anything, I have been remiss in not doing it sooner Meetra.”

Reaching across she patted Meetra’s arm with warm affection. “You’ve flown and handled *Rhapsody’s* controls before. This is a little different, by all means, but as space ports go, this is an open port, no walls, no domes, just a few towers and lightning rods to watch out for. Other than a little rain, we have no cross winds or any other weather to worry about.”

“I am not sure if I am paying for you to apprentice pilots on my coin.”

“Your coin is paying your fare. It does not dictate my coming, going or direction. You have selected to stay aboard to our next stop. That is all. Now, kindly take a seat.” There was a harrumph from the Vulcan – an actual harrumph! – and Chase heard the woman’s boots turn on the grating of the deck. “Meetra, we’ve discarded the lightning lines, so I don’t want to sit around building any charge. Let’s get on with this. Just do as I say and you know most of this. You usually are sat just there behind us...”

As Chase turned about to point to Meetra’s nav station alcove, she spied the Vulcan sat opposite to it behind Meetra’s current cockpit seat. Before Chase could say anything, Ajshae interjected. “You requested I take a seat. This was available.”

“Chase?”

“That’s ok, Meetra. Fine, stay there and say nothing. Ok, we have good power levels across the board and have a green from Hex so, make your announcement to the rest of the ship...”

Meetra toggled the open com link which buzzed throughout the ship, echoing up from the mess down the steps below. “This is your pilot. We are ready to launch ... Fair weather and clear skies.” She shrugged and deactivated the comm with a nervous tittery smile to Chase.

Chase smiled with affection for the remark.

“An invocation for good weather ...”

“Not a word! Ok, Meetra. Hand on the throttle and have a grip on the controls. You’re going to throttle heavy to begin for initial thrust, then as gain lift, we ease back and then pull back on the controls gently to point skywards. Then we thread the needle of our flight path, adjusting thrust and then throttling again if we meet any turbulence. Ok, let’s give it a whirr.”

“Ok. Throttling thrusters ... oooh, is that too much ...”

“No. Just a tad but we you can throttle off in a moment. See...” They began to ascend vertically with a rocking and jarring ascent. “No. It’s all good. We’re headed upwards. That’s the right direction. Yes. Yes, now pull back, slowly at first, get a feel for how the *Rabbit* is responding to your touch. In smooth conditions, she’s very responsive. That’s it. Yes. Adjust. And again. Now throttle back ... no ... don’t throttle off too much, keep giving her power. Point her to the sky. We’ve no obstacles so you can choose the angle of ascent to your liking.”

As Chase talked her through it, Meetra responded and mimicked what she could remember from watching Bora and Chase when they took off, albeit more smoothly and gracefully than this. “Ok. I am good with this angle.”

“Ok Sweetie then, you stick to it and keep going.” With careful guidance using hand gestures and looks, Chase steered Meetra through the flight into atmosphere. “Ok, now a final push on thrusters and then into the upper stratosphere we switch over...”

“I think I got it. I think. Sorry, it’s shaking more than it should.”

“Doing good, doing just fine, Meetra. Once we attain high orbit and switch to impulse things will soon smooth out. You’ll in time begin to get a feel for it, likewise, you won’t need to rely on the read outs to gauge height and stratosphere... That’s it and there ... stillness. Keep it to low impulse for now, we’ll clear the gravity well and give you a chance to get your breath back.”

Shuddering Meetra took a big breath, feeling that she had been holding it this whole time. She lifted her hands from the controls and they were shaking. “I did it. I did it.”

“Yes. Yes you did.”

Bora stepped onto the flight deck, gave a curious look to the Vulcan and then crouched down between Tabatha and Meetra. “Well done, Meetra. That was a super job.”

“It was a bit rrrrough. It kept shaking and I didn’t know what to do to smooth it out.”

“It’s all good. You didn’t try to over compensate. That’s the temptation. Easier to ride it out. Like I say, with a little practice you will get the feel for it.” Tabatha checked in with the instrument panels as she checked in with Bora.

“It’s all ship shape. But I think we best move some of the stock about.”

“Whatever you think best, Bora. Besides, it will be good practice for Dale.”

“Should I go and help?”

“No, Meetra. You took us this far, what do you think Bora? Should she bring us to warp?”

“Warrp? RRReally? I don’t know.”

“Definitely.”

“Absolutely. Instruments are green across the board. Let’s traverse to the J point and then, we’ll take it to warp.” Tabatha turned to face Bora then, concern beneath the calm surface, her eyes wincing with sympathy as she almost pleaded with Bora, “Check in on Hex, Bora. Just to ... just to make sure Hex is ok. A walk down memory lane is no harm but I don’t want ... I don’t want Hex hurting or lost in the memories.”

“I will.” He gave Chase a quick squeeze on her shoulder and then clapped Meetra on hers. “Great job, just don’t think about going after my position.”

“Neveerrr Borrra.” She giggled as the Denobulan rose. “I’m going for Skipperrr’s chairrr.” That caused all three to laugh. Ajshae merely rose an eyebrow.

“Best I go check in on Hex and make sure Nesquith is not driving them round the corner. Meetra. Again, well done. Proud of you. Fair weather and clear skies. Back later. Doctor.” This last he said with a curt nod to the Vulcan interloper on the flight deck with a look back at Chase and a wonder at the allowance.

After Bora departed, the ship flew on at impulse with Chase explaining to Meetra the stages for transitioning to warp.

Ajshae from her seat broke a moment of silence when Meetra was miming her way through the steps. “Is the engineer’s condition a cause for concern?”

“Ellioh is of no concern to you.”

“It is of some concern if the engineer of this ship is incapacitated.”

“Now listen here, Doc.” Her tone gave the title no respect at all. “Hex is a matter completely off limits to you, your questioning, your wondering, your anything. You’re a Vulcan. You know better than most the toll of living a long life. Hex is perfectly entitled to ... get a little unstuck in their lifespan. All you need know is that Hex has our backs and ... and I don’t need to justify anything. Ok, Meetra, we are ready to go to warp.”

Ajshae stilled her tongue as the learner pilot was put through their paces and the ship then launched into warp. “Ok, hold the course for five minutes. I have to go freshen up. Back in a few Meetra.” Without a word to the Vulcan, Chase bypassed her and descended the few short steps down into the common area.

“You rreally shouldn’t.”

“Pardon?”

“You shouldn’t rraise the matter about Hex. You might mean well orrr you might not. Howeverrr, the Skipperrr is very prrotective of Hex. The prrrevious host was like a motherrr to Chase. It was she who allowed the stowaway child to stay aboarrrd and become a member of the crrew. Meora, the host before, gave Tabatha a home and taught herrr the ways of being a merchant traderrr.”

“I can appreciate the emotional connection. I merely wondered as to whether the bowels of this ship’s engine rrrrooms was the best place for the Trill. I once did a trimester in Trill. I understand some of the difficulties of symbiont and host in the later life of a symbiont. They have systems for those showing such possible symptom. They have places suitable for those with such difficulties. It is not well known, something the Trill keep rather guarded. However, they would be a kindness to the Hex symbiont and to the host.”

Meetra was quiet in response to that information, not knowing it but suddenly it felt very likely that the Trill society would have course developed the supports to aid any and all symbionts and hosts with a variety of difficulties.

“To keep the Trill here, it is tantamount to a form of cruelty. Captain Chase should return them both to Trill where they could be cared for. What reason has she other than a selfish attachment to the prior host, not to.”

“Because ... Ellioh cannot go home again. Ellioh cannot go home. Cannot step foot on Trill. To do so, would be to forfeit his life. A life he sacrificed in order to save Hex!” Meetra and Ajshae turned to Chase stood behind them with her hands on her hips.

For a moment, it almost seemed as though she were incandescent with rage but she breathed heavily and then with a voice quivering with raw emotion, she informed them, “Don’t you think I would want the best for Hex?! To spare Hex any anguish. Of course, I would, of course I do. To preserve not just Hex but the memories of Meora, of Lyshanna and the countless others? Hex. Meora. They offered me a home. A universe. A family. When I had nothing but the wits to hide away on a cargo freighter. I owe them everything. And if you think for a second me that heartless, that I would not sacrifice anything to see them safe, then my God, you might be a Vulcan but that is beyond the pale of caring a whit.”

“I was ... unaware of ... the circumstances.”

“Because the circumstances were none of your business. Now, get off my flight deck and thank your lucky stars I don’t confine you to your quarters. I might yet. Go. Get!”

Ajshae for a wonder stood and then slowly passed Chase by and retreated without a word. Chase shook and Meetra looked upon her with concern. “I’ll be fine. Just ... just, hold the conn for another while. You can call Bora up if you need to excuse yourself.”

"Of courrrse Skipper. Chase. Sorry. I did not mean to ... I just thought it was easierrr to explain..."

"It's ok, Meetra. You did nothing wrong. I'm ... I'm going to be with Hex in the engines for a while. Ok, hon?"

Meetra nodded her head.

Engine room

Nesquith took a look at Chase and at her nod, stepped up and away. He bobbed his hammerhead shark like head before departing without a word, a fretful glance back at the trill engineer crouched down on the deck plates before the thrumming warp coils of the ship.

After he departed, Tabatha screwed closed the door to seal the hatch and stepped towards the engineer. Slowly and carefully, she lowered herself down to sit cross-legged before the Trill, trying to catch their eye.

Tears spilled down Ellioh's face then as he rocked forwards and back, cradling the poetry book. "Hey Ellioh. Hey ... Hex. What you got there?"

Ellioh responded only by rocking harder and faster. Chase retracted her reaching hand, face churning in pain. "Oh Hex ... Oh Hex. It's going to be ok. It's going to be ok."

Hex merely bows their head and sobs. Chase leans in, bowing her head atop Hex, her curls falling over the Trill and together they huddle and sob, with Chase matching to the rocking and hushing into Hex's ear, whispering empty assurances that it all will be ok.

"Ssssh now, ssssh. There, there. We're flying now. Green across the board."

"Green across the board..."

"Yes. Green across the board. And guess what, Meetra flew the ship, took the controls. She did good."

"The girl can fly."

"Well, with a little tutelage. Yes, she will."

"A natural, she is. Let her fly. Let her have the controls and watch – just watch her soar."

"Well ... maybe in time Hex. But she's a fast learner."

"She was born to fly ..."

Chase's heart stills. "Meora?"

Hex's fingers curl and grip onto Tabatha. "Let Little Red, fly, Jonesa. She was born to fly."

"It's ok Hex. It's ok Meora. You did. You did let me fly. Jonesa let me fly. You watched me soar."

"She was born to fly. Into the skies ... let her fly. Let her fly."

"Ssssh Hex. It's ok. You did. You let her fly. And she thanks you every day from the bottom of her heart. You watched her soar. Into the skies."

"Tabatha?"

"Yes, Hex. Yes Meora. It's me. All grown up now, remember?"

"You were only ... you were only little." There was a keening then and they went back to rocking. Tabatha held Hex tight to her.

After a time, the keening stopped, soon the sobbing too. The rocking became a trance like state, lulling them both into quiet and then Hex yawned. "You should sleep Momma Hex."

"Yes Poppet. My little Tabby..."

Chase cleared her throat. "Meora, don't call me Tabby."

"No, no, of course not, child dearest. My little sparrow. Lemme sleep now. I think I should. In the morning, we'll take you flying."

"In the morning." Tabatha kissed Hex on their forehead, laying them down in a makeshift cot of blankets and cushions in an alcove. As she brushed Ellioh's locks of lanky hair from his face, she bid them to sleep well and free of nightmares.

Through closed eyes and a yawn, Hex bid Chase, "Fair weather and clear skies."

Tabatha kept back the tears and nodded. "Yes. Fair weather and clear skies."

When it seemed at last Hex was fast asleep, Chase stepped out of the engine room and sealed the hatch shut and turned around to find Ajshae before her.

"I had come to offer some assistance to your engineer."

“And what help, do you think you can offer?”

“Some Vulcan meditative devices to soothe the mind and aid an emotional balance.”

Her curls danced on her head as Chase found herself irrationally upset, tears brimming and being fiercely held back. “Hex is not a Vulcan!”

“No. However, they are a joined Trill and the parts as I am come to understand do not always mesh.” Ajshae cocked a brow before leading on to explain, “It is in its own way, an imbalance. I thought only to offer assistance.”

Yet Chase was not about to accept such assistance. “I’m not sure such assistance is necessary! Not from someone who thinks Hex should be shipped off to rid of a problem.”

Ajshae clasped her hands behind her back, standing ram rod straight against the verbal assault and the wash of anger coursing off Chase. “I stated only what might logically have been considered the best course of action, operating within the facts known to me.”

“If that is your way of trying to apologise, Doctor, then consider not apologising.”

“An apology implies a state of guilt or sorrow. I assure you, I feel neither. I merely am attempting to state, that I do understand some of the difficulty you spoke of. As you pointed out, Vulcan longevity is a known fact, however, with that longevity certain problems, certain syndromes can present in older age.”

“I hardly think that means anything! Now if you’ll excuse me,” Chase brushed past the Vulcan, caring not for any touch sensitivities in that particular moment. “I have to find a poor ass excuse of my own.”

“Bendii Syndrome.” Ajshae stated the condition and then froze up, saying nothing further for a moment. “It is devastating to a Vulcan mind. Especially if it is not ... if it is not detected in the early stages. The degradation of the mind, the emotional state, the onslaught of memories and emotions ... crippling. And irreversible and if not treated early the decline is rapid and ... you lose them in mere months. Mere months. But months of extreme mental and emotional anguish.”

Chase turned to study Ajshae then, however, the Vulcan presented with her back to the skipper, conveniently hiding any trace of emotion from her face. However, the voice was too perfectly controlled and the stance too perfectly poised to be anything other than the supreme effort of will.

“Someone you knew?”

“My own mother presented with Bendii Syndrome. She was a magnificent mind. A difficult woman. Singular and laser focused. In latter years, she lived a rather solitary life of research. I was ... not present for her when – when the first symptoms surfaced. By the time ... as I said. It is irreversible. The decline rapid if ... undetected.”

And mentally and emotionally extremely agonising. That went unsaid.

“Perhaps had they been detected, witnessed by someone else, then the proper care might have been given. Instead, fear stole into my mother’s mind and heart and she kept her troubles secret. It served only to bring about her decline more rapidly.”

Ajshae turned about then to face Chase. “Whilst the circumstances are not the same, they are akin. I *do* understand. I merely did not understand the circumstances.”

“Well ... it seems we both weren’t aware of circumstances. Hex is ... Hex is asleep currently. Best not to disturb them. When the waken, I am sure Hex will be glad of any assistance you might offer.”

Chase parted from the Vulcan in the corridor and headed back to the flight deck. The Vulcan turned to face the engine room door, looking back the way the skipper had gone.

The common area

The crew and one of the pair of passengers had gathered together in the common area, most of them about the table as Meetra served up bowls and platters of food.

“This one has fish in it, Mr Oses. I think you should find it to your Cardassian palette.”

“Most kind, Meetra.” Nesquith merely wrinkled what passed for their nasal cavity at the dish. Dale from across the table also gave the dish a wary glance.

“Is Hex coming up for dinner, or will I send down a plate, Skipperrr?”

“Best plate up something. I can bring it down. This is a lovely spread, Meetra.”

“It smells delicious.”

“Hex!” Meetra exclaimed as he climbed the steps from below, arm linked in Ajshae’s. Chase gave the woman a wary look. A large part of it was defensive but then she allowed herself to be caught up in the boon of seeing Hex up and about. Yet from the spirit in their eyes, she knew Ellioh was not entirely present but the Trill was in a better state than before at least.

Bora clapped his hands and steered everyone back to their seats. "Grubs up folks. Come on, let us eat. Enjoy it while we can, since Meetra has designs on the Skipper's seat."

"As long as no-one expects me to cook anything like this once I've been booted. Ha!" Tabatha waggled a finger at Meetra and then hugged Hex in tight against her and bid them to sit in the chair next to her.

"Before we do eat." Ajshae stated, drawing all eyes to her.

"I informed Meetra earlier that I had a trimester of study ... many years ago upon Trill. I visited Hex in the engine rooms. We had an accord, shared with the poetry. And with their permission, I took the poetry book to read. I thought it might be fitting to share a little of it with you now."

"Ajshae... I thought I had warned you."

"Tabatha ... sssh now dear." Chase turned to Ellioh speaking in such sweet soft tones, that clearly it was the voice of Meora speaking through them now. Chase grasped Hex's hand and pulled herself down in their arms as Hex patted the back of her hand with a soothing, "Sssh now dear. Sssh. Sssh."

Ajshae addressed the rest of the room gathered about and setting aside their eating utensils. Her colleague Brahem Oses gave the Vulcan a curious look. "I cannot say that to speak it in the original Trill would serve it any justice. However, if you might permit, I shall translate. Much of the nuance and true beauty of it, is lost in the translation, yet I do think it might suffice."

"For the Journey Before You Child Dearest - By Lyshanna Hex"

Chase turned then in shock, gripping at Hex and brushing at their hair, holding back the tears, knowing now that Hex had indeed recognised the collection of poetry. Hex simply met her concerned look with a soft, sad smile and then turned to the Vulcan poised to begin reciting.

"Child dearest, what do I wish for you in this world and life?"

I wish and beg of the universe, friends to walk with you along your many paths.

Forked and crooked, straight and true, every journey best guided with a friend to your side and kin to return to.

In this world and life, I wish for you a journey of love and peace.

But know too, that it is a universe far from perfect and your place in it and your loves may not always be safe, so I wish for you courage and strength to see it through.

My child, in you I fulfil my dreams and hopes, but many more unbound to you I behave.

For I wish you the ambition and grace to find your path, to seek your purpose true. To live it faithfully, to attend yourself honestly and dutifully, as I have done to you.

I would wish you a world and life free of obstacles and pain but I know this cannot be.

What we hold dear, we hold dearer still, knowing it is fragile and passing, for what is born to this world will in its time pass from it.

I wish then only that you meet your troubles with passion and company and find then compassion and strength.

Child dearest, for all the lives that may unfold, may you always keep your heart, as a compass, steer you home, find your way and struggle on, to keep your head up and your eye on the horizon.

Upon your journey's path, keep your eyes open to the flowers and joys of this world, stop to appreciate and bask in the beauty about.

Child dearest, I can only wish that for every tear spilled, a laughter laughed, a song sung, a poem recited. I wish you adventure and company and though I cannot wish away the hurts and pains that in life inevitable, I wish only this:

For the journey before you

Fair weather and clear skies.

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