

Comodidad

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by [InterstellarSiren](#)

Summary

Cris' memories of his mother cause him to call on Raffi for comfort as he debates his relationship with Erin.

Starfleet Academy could use a little color before he flew away. Cristóbal Rios grunted with effort as he dug the shovel into the ground around the building. He'd checked with his superiors before he did anything, and they'd agreed that a few flowers and an extra building for plants would serve to heighten morale around the place.

Mamá would be so proud. I wish she could see me now. Would she see everything, all my faults? Or would she love me just the same? He closed his eyes, imagining her face, calling to him in a warm kitchen filled with the smells of sweet manjar sandwiched between soft, fresh baked sugar cookies.

His mother had never had a fondness for replicators, instead insisting on making them by hand. She'd explained that the flavor was different, and Cris agreed. She had welcomed him into the kitchen that afternoon, smiling as he stood at her side on a stool to reach the bowl.

"Mamá, it smells so good! How do you make them taste so yummy?"

"With love, Cris. Love and the best ingredients I can find. Making the people you love feel comfort when they need it is important. Something tells me you've had a difficult week." Cris hung his head. He hadn't wanted to say anything, but there were constant jokes from the other children on his soccer team about the fact that his father was so rarely around.

"The other kids; they're mean to me about papá." Tears stung the corners of his eyes, but he wiped them away. His father was a freighter captain often gone for long stretches of time, but when he was around, he had taught Cris that boys were strong and didn't cry. He'd told him that it was his job to be the man of the house and protect his mother.

"What they say about your father doesn't matter. He's doing his best to provide for us. My worry is taking care of you.", she'd told him, and he believed it. She began to hum the soft lilting melody of Arroz con Leche, and all at once every worry Cris had began to fade away.

A few weeks after he'd found himself floating in space on his own, he'd gotten a message from Erin that made his heart jump. She wanted him to know that she'd been dreaming about him since he'd left.

“I had a dream that I met your mother. We got to talk about all sorts of things. The things that you loved and what comforted you as a boy. She told me you used to dream of being a soccer player before we set our sights on the stars as ardently as we have now.”

“My mamá was a hell of a woman, mi amor. I truly wish she could have met you. She’d have liked you. She always said I needed someone to keep my head out of the stars from time to time. I think I always thought Starfleet was the only way I could do good.” He remembered the way his mother kissed his scrapes and bruises. He remembered Raffi taking her place for a while after she was gone.

In her guilt over leaving her own son behind, Raffi had done her best to make sure she gave Cris as much stability as she could. Admittedly it wasn’t much, between her own issues and the fact that they were often apart.

“Look, honey. . . I know it’s been hard. But even without meeting your mom, I can tell she raised a good man. She taught you how to listen to others. She showed you that you were important to her. There are so many things she gave you that I only wish I could have given Gabe. She’d be proud of you, Rios. Trust me. Starfleet isn’t the only path to good. It’s one path of many.”

“Y’know, Raff. . . If she’ll have me, sometimes I think about . . . A friend I made, working at the Academy. I wonder what kind of mother she’ll make. I know she’d be wonderful, that’s not it . . . It’s . . .”

Raffi smiled, seeing the light come into Rios’ eyes for the first time in years. She understood. There had been so many times she’d wished it were possible to bring her own family back together. Comfort, however, would not be so easily found.

“Motherhood. . . It’s a gift, Cris. It’s one I squandered. I mean . . . I wanted to do so much better with Gabe, but I was just. . . Back then I was so devoted to my work with Starfleet, and I let my personal life take a back seat. I’ve always regretted not being there for Gabe. Jae and I. . . We were both addicts for a long time. Gabe was the thing that got Jae out of it. This girl of yours sounds. . . Sweet.”

“She is. She’s young, pretty, ambitious. Hey, hang on. Who said she was my girl?”

“If she’s not, you clearly want her to be.” Raffi’s knowing smile gleamed. She was right. Rios wanted this woman to be his, but she had given herself to Starfleet. He didn’t know when she’d have shore leave to meet him, and he was tied to La Sirena.

“Sometimes I think you try to be there for me because my mom can’t,” he laughed. As much as Raffi wanted to wave it off, she knew him, and there was a part of her that wanted to protect him. The Rios she knew had a big heart. That heart often worked against him.

“If not for you, then maybe as a form of penance. I always wanted to do better for my own son. I know you’re not Gabe. I know I can’t fix things with Jae. But I also know that because of the mistakes I’ve made, I know what not to do. So maybe you should stop worrying about what people think and let yourself find comfort in whatever peace you can. Whoever this woman of yours is, she makes you happy, and that’s a good thing.”

“If I have to do that, then so do you.”

“I know, baby. One step at a time. Until we both find comfort.” In the moment, she wished she could put her arms around him, but an imagined hug was the only option. Raffi made mental plans to visit him and meet the woman who had turned his world upside down, as soon as she could. Maybe she couldn’t comfort her son yet. But she could do the best she had for someone who needed the comfort of a mother’s advice.

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