

## Mr Right... next door

Posted originally on the [Ad Astra :: Star Trek Fanfiction Archive](http://www.adastrafanfic.com/works/1608) at <http://www.adastrafanfic.com/works/1608>.

Rating:	<a href="#">Teen And Up Audiences</a>
Archive Warning:	<a href="#">No Archive Warnings Apply</a>
Category:	<a href="#">F/M</a>
Fandom:	<a href="#">Star Trek: Voyager</a>
Relationship:	<a href="#">Kathryn Janeway/Chakotay</a> , <a href="#">Kathryn Janeway &amp; B'Elanna Torres</a>
Character:	<a href="#">Kathryn Janeway</a> , <a href="#">B'Elanna Torres</a> , <a href="#">Chakotay</a>
Additional Tags:	<a href="#">Alternate Universe - No Starfleet</a> , <a href="#">Friends to Lovers</a> , <a href="#">Female Friendship</a> , <a href="#">Past Relationships</a>
Language:	English
Series:	Part 25 of <a href="#">inking it out</a>
Stats:	Published: 2024-06-30 Words: 5,290 Chapters: 1/1

## Mr Right... next door

by [lilly\\_c](#)

### Summary

He's My Hero. A protector, a provider, a friend – he's every woman's hero....

WANTED: ONE GOOD MAN

Kathryn Janeway desperately needed her handsome neighbour's help with a most unusual situation. The sassy single woman had invented a boyfriend, and now her boss was demanding to meet Kathryn's darling. She knew of only one man who could possibly pull off the pretence....

Chakotay was handsome, intelligent and too darned sexy – he could unruffle her high-buttoned blouse with a careless whisper. But how could she possibly ask Chakotay to pose as her beloved without him believing she had romantic ulterior motives? Especially when Kathryn knew, deep in her heart, she'd found her real Mr. Right...right next door.

### Notes

No spoilers. Written for unconventionalcourtship, using the summary from the Harlequin novel Mr Right Next Door by Arlene James. I had to self edit and use Typely to double check some things so any mistakes are my own and unintentional.

Kathryn had been awake for a few hours and was already dressed in her favourite outfit of red hoodie, black jeans, T-shirt, and hi-top trainers. She was sitting in her recently renovated kitchen hoping that her third cup of coffee would go some way towards staving off the murderous thoughts she'd been having since the early hours of the morning when her new neighbour had started using power tools and she couldn't get back to sleep so got up and potted about to take her mind off the disturbance.

B'Elanna parked the car then let herself into Kathryn's recently renovated farmhouse. "Morning," she shouted from the entryway as Mollie and Warrior, Kathryn's dogs circled around her feet wanting attention before she let them into the garden.

"Morning, B'Elanna, there's a fresh pot of coffee on," Kathryn said, sounding as sleep deprived as her friend currently felt after coming off a night shift. "I'll let you sort breakfast out shortly, we need to go next door first."

"Bad night?"

"Power tools," came the grumpy reply.

Sipping from her freshly poured coffee, B'Elanna asked, "who's living close enough to be using power tools that you can hear?" she was confused because Kathryn's home was in a very rural area with more fields and single track roads than people and houses.

Pointing her thumb over her shoulder, "new neighbours," finishing her latest cup of coffee of the morning, Kathryn added, "I need you with me to help me bury the body."

B'Elanna chuckled at her best friend's bad-tempered demeanour, she always made seemingly idle threats when she hadn't slept well or was being deprived of the copious amounts of her beloved black coffee that she insisted was needed to survive a day.

The walk to the next property took them a few minutes and after knocking loudly on the door, Kathryn crouched down shouting, "Is anyone

home?" through the letterbox.

The door opened before she could return to standing on the steps. "I'm Chakotay," came the softly spoken reply from the tall, tanned man with a tattoo on the left side of his head, who Kathryn thought was pretty good looking and probably wouldn't kick him out of bed for anything, even though he did have spectacularly lousy timekeeping and she was here to reprimand him for using power tools in the middle of the night, not start a relationship with him even though he could be a good time for a short while.

B'Elanna stayed by the gate watching on in amusement as Kathryn unloaded her ire on the sort of handsome neighbour, who wasn't her type, but she could already see an attraction forming between him and Kathryn.

She tried to be unaffected by the curious glances he was aiming at her, she believed that the scars on her forehead were ugly and a source of curiosity but she had also only recently started to come to terms with the accident and subsequent mistakes the doctors made when they did the skin grafts after her accident.

"Well, Chakotay, you woke me up at four o'clock this morning with those wretched and inconsiderately loud power tools of yours," she stated, all thoughts of killing him and burying his body going completely out of her head, only to be replaced by more libidinous thoughts of what his certain parts of his body could be doing to her.

Tugging on his ear, slightly smiling at the comments but not showing his dimples, he said, "I am sorry, I thought that you were at work. Your car wasn't in the driveway when I passed on my way home last night."

"It was my first night off in almost a month." Looking towards the gate, "B'Elanna was on night shift last night. She borrowed my car while hers is in the garage for repairs."

Chakotay nodded at her explanation but wasn't quite buying all of it. "You do keep odd hours though, what do you do?" he asked, curious to find out more about the gorgeous neighbour he'd only caught glimpses of as she came and went since he'd moved to the area a couple of months ago. He definitely wanted to get to know her better now that he'd finally met her even though it was under less than ideal circumstances.

"I usually work doubles and nights. The hours are only marginally better than my last job."

"Sounds interesting," he said, genuinely wanting to know more about her and her mystery job. "I'm self-employed at the moment but I was wondering if maybe we could have lunch the next time you have a day off."

Suddenly flustered by the unexpectedly kind offer Kathryn said, "I'll have to check when I'm free then I'll call you." walking towards B'Elanna she whispered, "let's go."

Returning to the house, Kathryn let the dogs in, refilling their bowls while B'Elanna busied herself with making some breakfast for them.

"You know that the annual fundraiser is coming up at the end of the month," B'Elanna casually mentioned as she started to spread butter and chocolate spread on several slices of toast. "Ayala wants you to be there and to also bring a date."

"I'm not sure that I'm going to the fundraiser this time, B'Elanna." Kathryn sighed at the obvious lack of subtlety.

"It's been almost seven months since Mark dumped you at the altar."

"Don't you think I know how long it's been, besides, who'd want to be my date for it?"

"That Chakotay seems like he'd be more than willing to play along."

Shaking her head, Kathryn said, "I'm not ready to go on a date, real or pretend even if it is just to appease the boss and our financial donors."

Placing two plates on the table, B'Elanna sat across from Kathryn taking a bite from her toast, B'Elanna said, "Kathryn, you're so definitely over Mark by now and clearly ready to start again, especially if the way you were ogling Chakotay earlier is any metric for me to go by."

Kathryn rolled her eyes at the unhelpful observations of her best friend. Flicking bread crumbs from her plate at her, "You are unbelievable!"

~

They had swapped numbers two days after meeting and spent most of the week since their first meeting texting and talking on Facetime, Kathryn and Chakotay had arranged a day and time when they were both free to meet for their lunch date.

Kathryn slowly walked towards Chakotay's home. She was feeling nervous about being alone with him and still hurting from the way her last relationship ended.

She hoped that he would be in, so that they could talk properly, and she could apologise for being rude to him the very first time they met as she had spent a little time worrying that she may have made a bad first impression.

One upside to finally meeting him was that he hadn't used his power tools in the early hours since their initial confrontation. It was something she suspected had been a ruse to meet her but dare not ask. The downside was that she couldn't stop thinking about him and imagined it may be the same for him too.

Closing the gate, Kathryn could see him working with his shirt off. She allowed herself a moment to admire the way he looked without a shirt and how his muscles moved as he used a chisel and mallet on a piece of wood. The temptation to go up to him and press her chest to his back, kissing between his shoulders felt premature so she had to stop herself from doing something foolish, she shouted "Ready for lunch?" making her presence known.

Chakotay looked up from his latest carving project and smiled at her, noticing that she was yet again wearing black and red with her hair tied back in a low ponytail.

“Give me a minute,” he requested reaching for his T-shirt putting it back on even though his skin was damp with sweat from working on his latest wood carving project, he didn’t want to make her wait while he showered.

“It’s in the fridge, I prepared it this morning,” he said when he reached where she was standing. They walked towards the door, he opened it letting her enter before him, “unless you want to go out somewhere instead and I can use it for the next few days”

“Here’s fine.”

While Chakotay busied himself with plating up their lunches and pouring soft drinks, Kathryn used the free time as an opportunity to look around the downstairs rooms that were open. She spent time admiring the brightly coloured sand paintings, hand carved wooden animals and various tribal trinkets adorning the shelves and walls.

Returning to the kitchen, Kathryn took a seat at the breakfast bar. She asked, “Did you make all of these?” curious to know more about the art works on display, what he did and what his business was.

“Some of them,” he replied, placing two plates on the breakfast bar. He took the seat beside hers, their knees briefly brushing together sending a not so unexpected spark between them.

“What is it you do?” Kathryn asked stabbing a couple of slices of cucumber with her fork, taking a bite from them.

Sighing sadly, Chakotay softly spoke, “not what I want to do.”

“Which is?” Kathryn prompted.

“I’m a freelance artist specialising in sculpting wooden animals and sand paintings.” Taking a slow sip of his drink, Chakotay used the action as a brief distraction to gather his other thoughts. “I used to be involved with intelligence and logistics outside of the militia mainstream.”

The sadness in his voice prompted Kathryn to gently lay her hand on his arm, offering what little comfort she could when she was still unsure of how receptive he’d be to a hand on his chest or a hug.

“I like to think that I was good at it but there was some information from the Middle East that seemed too good to be true.” He took another sip, “Turned out that it was and several friends of mine died because I got arrogant and didn’t want to verify the authenticity of the intelligence I’d gathered about a particular target.”

“That must have been difficult.”

“It is.” Chakotay nodded. “When I left, I spent several months travelling not really having a destination or a purpose, helping out where I could for food, shelter, pay whatever people could afford to offer me. I eventually ended up back in the settlement where some of my family still live. One night I was looking up at the stars and my sister reminded me that I used to enjoy crafts, often making small wooden animals and sand paintings as gifts for birthdays, holidays, any occasion that called for a gift really.”

“Some of these are your work” Kathryn finally acknowledged, pushing her plate away from her with just the uneaten tofu chunks remaining.

“They are,” he replied his hand resting on her thigh, thumb brushing patterns against her black jeans.

Feeling flustered at their closeness, and the way Chakotay’s hand felt against her leg Kathryn said, “I’ll do the dishes,” needing a few minutes to compose herself for the rest of their afternoon together. She also needed to work up some courage to ask him to go with her to the fundraiser at the weekend.

Placing his free hand on her other thigh, “stay here, the dishes can wait.” Leaning in closely enough that his lips were millimetres from her ear. “Tell me about what you do.” His breath hot against her skin sending shivers down her spine forcing her to tamp down on a moan.

“I used to work in mechanical engineering with B’Elanna, we only met a few weeks before the car accident that caused her facial deformity. We’ve been best friends ever since.”

“I was wondering what happened to her when you came here to tell me off the other morning.” Chakotay smiled slightly at the information and having an answer to his own unspoken interest about her best friend’s appearance.

Carefully moving her head away from Chakotay’s far too tempting lips, Kathryn said, “I’m a support worker at a local charity, that’s why I keep such odd hours because there is always overtime available and I tend to pick up a lot of extra shifts especially since my last relationship ended badly and I don’t enjoy being alone.”

Realising that Kathryn had disclosed a recent breakup, he decided not to ask if she was still single because he hadn’t seen her with anyone else and he was also getting over a bad break up.

He realised that he didn’t want to rush into anything with Kathryn. He could see them being together into their old age.

“Which charity?”

“Ayala Aspyres.”

“Is that the learning disabilities one? Do you know Mike?”

“Yes, it is. I mostly work with children. I like it because it’s so different to what I used to do.” Kathryn answered before repeating “Mike?”

“Mike Ayala. He’s an old friend of mine, it’s his charity. He set it up after his sister, who had Rett Syndrome, died several years ago,” he paused for a split second, “He has been trying to get me to go to a fundraiser this weekend, but I didn’t have a date,” clearly dropping hints at his intentions of asking Kathryn to go with him even though the thought of asking her out on an official date inexplicably scared him.

“He’s my boss,” Kathryn tried in vain to avert her gaze when she realised he was trying to ask her out on another date yet seemed anxious to go through with it. “B’Elanna has been trying to persuade me to go to it for weeks too but I’d rather not.”

“Why not?” Chakotay asked, intrigued by her reluctance to socialise and potentially go on an official date with him.

Trying not to cry at the painful memories she’d only just begun to tame, Kathryn whispered, “I was supposed to go to the fundraiser with Mark. It seems pointless to attend it alone.”

“Mark?”

“My ex-fiancé. He’d been cheating on me and had the audacity to dump me at the altar on our wedding day for my bridesmaid, who it turned out, was more his type than I ever was.”

“He doesn’t know what he’s given up.” His hand on her neck, drawing her closer to him, Chakotay quietly added, “You deserve so much better.” desperately omitting *I can be the better that you deserve*.

Kathryn wiped an errant tear away, “As far as I know they’ve already split up. I heard she got bored and left him in Aruba without cash, credit cards and ID to get home with.”

~

B’Elanna had finally managed to persuade Kathryn to attend the fundraiser with her rather than making an effort to arrange dates for both of them to bring to the event.

Taking in the décor of the ballroom, they were impressed with how the various coloured fairy lights gave off a twinkling starlight effect against the removable dark coloured drapes adorning all of the walls and windows of the venue. They spotted Mike and Chakotay chatting by the DJ booth, putting the final touches to the venue.

Easily finding their table, Kathryn retrieved two glasses of champagne from the table nearest to them, handing one to B’Elanna as they took their seats.

“Oh, he came alone,” she commented as she inadvertently caught Chakotay’s attention from across the room.

“Mike?” B’Elanna asked, taking a swig of her drink. Knowing that Kathryn was referring to Chakotay and she was pretty sure that Mike’s wife was terrorising the kitchen staff while they finished setting up.

“Chakotay.”

“So that’s his name.”

“He told me that he wasn’t coming tonight,” Kathryn said trying not to be disappointed with the apparent deception of her next door neighbour and the man that she had started to believe would bring her around to love again. “He sure does look good in a suit,” she mumbled hoping that B’Elanna didn’t hear the admission.

B’Elanna put her hand on Kathryn’s elbow moving their seats closer together. She was already starting to get a bad feeling about how the night was going and that was before the other guests and financial benefactors had arrived.

From their seats at a table in the corner Kathryn and B’Elanna had a good view of the whole room and all of their exits, they chatted amongst themselves until Kathryn became anxious over something she had spotted by the main entrance and tried to leave.

“What?” B’Elanna whispered, her hand on top of Kathryn’s preventing her early escape when they spotted Mark starting to approach their table. She silently signalled to Mike and Chakotay that trouble was imminent.

Mark quickly reached their table. “I made a mistake. Let’s start again”, he bluntly offered, currently unaware that the two women already had back up organised just in case things got out of hand with her cheating ex-fiancé.

“Leave!” B’Elanna warned, scowling at him.

Mark ignored the threat. “Kath! It’s so good to see you!”

Kathryn glanced at B’Elanna vainly trying to start an inane conversation and completely ignore the man she once had planned to spend the rest of her life with, who’s infidelity had hurt a lot more than she ever let on to anybody even her best friend.

Turning her back to Mark and focusing on B’Elanna, Kathryn said, “Do you smell that? Smells like a rat.”

When Mark roughly grabbed Kathryn’s arm he began trying to pull her to her feet and go outside with him. “We have to talk.” Kathryn placed a foot against the table leg to give her enough leverage to remain seated while he kept being rough with her.

Seeing the altercation Mike stealthily slapped his hand on Mark’s shoulder. “You are banned from all of my events.” Mark turned around to punch Mike when Chakotay grabbed his arm, pinning it behind his back before forcefully pushing him towards the door.

While Chakotay dealt with evicting Mark from the event, Mike crouched down beside Kathryn, carefully looking at the bright red finger shaped marks on her arm that would become bruises in the next few days. "You okay, Kathryn?"

"He wasn't supposed to come." Blinking back tears, Kathryn meekly nodded her head. "It might be better if I go. I've already caused enough trouble for one night."

"His behaviour is not your fault, you haven't caused any trouble," Mike said, offering limited consolation. "I'd prefer it if you could stay, at least for the first hour because you always get the most donations, but I totally understand if Mark turning up has spoiled your evening. You shouldn't let it. He gave you up with his selfish actions."

After escorting Mark to his car and giving him a warning to be always watching over his shoulder, Chakotay needed some time to himself to calm down before going back inside the room and returning to the table.

On his return he saw that Mike was still with Kathryn and B'Elanna, he casually approached the table, asking "Is there anything I can do?"

Mike stood up, guiding Chakotay to just out of earshot of the women. "Kathryn wants to go home, but she's willing to stay for the first hour. If you could also stay for an hour too and when she's ready to go, can you take her?"

"Of course," Chakotay said willingly accepting the slight alteration to his plans for the evening.

~

Chakotay pulled into Kathryn's driveway, turning the engine off he patiently waited for her to acknowledge where they were.

Her home.

Briefly looking up at their final destination. "Sorry," she whispered solemnly, her eyes now focused on her feet rather than her surroundings. "I shouldn't have stayed. I ruined everyone's night, especially yours, Chakotay."

"You didn't ruin anything Kathryn." Chakotay reminded her that it wasn't her actions that put a dampener on things. Realising it would take her some time to let go of her misplaced guilt. "I wasn't planning on staying for the whole evening anyway. I was only helping Mike finish setting up, staying for the first hour, then coming home to complete an order that came in yesterday."

Kathryn took a moment to look at him. "Really?" her own voice sounded so contrite to her ears, yet he sounded sincere when he spoke. Maybe black tie events really weren't his thing and not asking him wasn't a big deal after all.

Chakotay nodded his head rather than speaking.

Kathryn bit back a resigned sigh. "This is going to sound incredibly silly considering all that happened earlier but I actually thought that maybe we have been set up by Mike and B'Elanna."

Chakotay chuckled at her comment. "Not even close and I wouldn't be comfortable with being set up anyway, even though my best friend has tried to before, it always feels forced."

Hearing the dogs barking at her arrival, Kathryn asked, "would you like to come in?"

They got out of the car at the same time. "you're not scared of dogs, are you?" she asked as she unlocked the door.

~

Kathryn and Chakotay were relaxing on her sofa with their drinks and both dogs laying in-between them basking in all of the attention they were getting from Chakotay as he and Kathryn chatted about a variety of topics, both hanging on to each other's words and losing track of time.

"Dogs are good judges of character," Chakotay said.

"They are," Kathryn said as she placed her empty beer bottle on the coffee table knowing that she couldn't use anything as a distraction to prevent her from asking her next question. "Would you stay here tonight?" she opted to leave out *"I don't want to be alone in case Mark decided to turn up here. He scared me tonight."*

"Of course." He understood why she had asked him to stay, wanting to know, "Where will I be sleeping?"

"My bed." Kathryn cringed at the way those two words came out.

"Only if you are comfortable with this arrangement."

"What I meant is that if you're comfortable to only sleep my bed, not the other things." Shaking her head at how apprehensive her words sounded. "Please tell me you know what I mean." feeling self-conscious that she was babbling and being ridiculous.

Chakotay laughed at her sudden uncertainty over their potential sleeping arrangements for the night. She always came across as confident, this was an unexpected revelation for him. "I do know what you mean."

"That's good," she answered, worried her babbling might have scared him off.

"What about B'Elanna? Where does she stay?" he asked, unsure of their living arrangements.

"She has an apartment near to work and she also has her own room here, but I doubt we'll see her until sometime tomorrow. She often makes

the fundraiser the start of a night out.”

Chakotay nodded his understanding.

~

Once the dogs had been secured in their cages with enough food and water for the night, Kathryn and Chakotay made their way upstairs.

“My room is at the far end of the hall, there is an en suite if you want to use it,” she said as she opened the door to the bathroom on the landing. “I’ll be in shortly.”

Chakotay followed her directions, opening the door to a bedroom that looked to be twice the size of his own and evidently created during a renovation. He saw the full length bathroom mirror from the partly opened en suite door, turning the light on he made his way inside. He was unbuttoning his shirt when he realised that he hadn’t brought anything with him to sleep in, he hoped that Kathryn wouldn’t mind if he slept in his boxers.

A few minutes later Kathryn joined him in the room taking in the sight before her and doing everything she could to distract herself from seeing him in his boxers, he definitely worked out a lot.

Chakotay couldn’t form any words at seeing her for the first time with her hair down, wearing pyjama shorts and t-shirt, he had to use all of his willpower not to kiss her right there and then and declare his intentions for what he really wanted.

A relationship.

With her.

Once they were settled in the bed, Chakotay stared at the ceiling before breaking the comfortable silence that had fallen between them.

“Kathryn, have you thought about it?”

“I’ve thought about a lot of things,” Kathryn replied, only half joking. “What specifically am I to have thought about?” she added, curious about what he wanted to know.

Chakotay turned on his side to face her. “A relationship.”

“With who?” she replied, already having a suspicion that she knew the exact direction of where this conversation was going and what he was going to say next.

“Me,” he said, “I do understand if you’re not ready or want something different.”

Kathryn reached out to softly caress his cheek. “It’s not that I haven’t thought about it Chakotay, I have. A hell of a lot in fact.”

“But?”

“Since I found out about Mark’s affair the way I did,” Kathryn sighed. “I haven’t been able to trust anyone. I really like you but if we were to start something we would have to take it really slowly.”

“I see,” he said, moving closer to her side of the bed that they were almost touching.

“The thing is... I do want to have a relationship with you, but I’m also scared that if I give my heart to you that you’ll hurt me too.”

Chakotay pulled Kathryn into his embrace. “Seska, my ex-girlfriend was emotionally abusive and often manipulated me. You’re the first woman I’ve had any feelings for since we broke up over two years ago.”

“How do I know that you’re not spinning a line for a quick shag?” she asked, snuggling closer into his embrace, relishing the physical contact she had missed over the past several months of living alone.

Realising that Kathryn’s defences were still up when it came to romance, he said, “Ask Mike, next time you’re at work.”

“You’re here, so I’m asking you. Why not right now?”

Chakotay sighed. “Before we met, I told Mike about my mysterious neighbour and when I described you to him, he realised that he knew you. He offered to give me your phone number but I declined, making the first move is something that’s a bit too bold for me.”

“The power tools were a ruse?”

“Sort of,” he answered, gently tugging on his ear. “I didn’t know that you were home when I started using them but when you and B’Elanna came to the house I knew that I’d managed to get your attention by doing something that’s considered antisocial.”

“Do you think they both had something to do with getting us to meet?” Kathryn asked, stifling a yawn.

“It’s possible. We can talk more in the morning.” Chakotay kissed the side of her head when her eyes were closed.

~

Kathryn slowly woke up, she was enjoying the way Chakotay had moved during the night to currently lying partly on top of her. She found it far too tempting to pull him fully on top her but he looked at peace, she decided to leave him where he was.

Hearing her phone's message alert Kathryn clumsily reached across to the night stand to pick it up. Reading the message *be at yours in an hour xx* from B'Elanna on the lock screen. Kathryn replied then placed the phone back on the night stand.

"Important?" Chakotay sleepily asked, carefully moving himself away from his current position.

"Just B'El. She'll be over later," Kathryn answered, trying to hide her disappointment that he moved.

Feeling that the bubble was about to burst, Chakotay asked. "What do we do?"

Kathryn chuckled at the question. "Be honest with her, she'll be able to tell if we're lying."

"How long do we have?"

"Maybe an hour before she gets here," Kathryn replied moving to get out of bed.

"Where are you going?"

Trying not to be embarrassed around him, Kathryn said, "I really need to pee."

"Sorry, that was a silly question for me to ask."

Kathryn smiled softly realising he was finding things to be slightly awkward too, although they didn't need to be. "When I go downstairs I'll see to the dogs and unlock the door."

"Any chance of a drink?" he asked, feeling like he was pushing his luck a little more than he normally would when he stayed over somewhere. He'd help out rather than asking for something to be done for him.

Kathryn nodded. "I only drink coffee, will that be acceptable?"

"With cream and two sugars."

Kathryn tried to make a disgusted face on discovering the way he takes his coffee. "Savage," she playfully scoffed.

Chakotay smiled at the comment, thinking that the face she made at his coffee preferences was cute and wanted to see it more often.

~

B'Elanna had let herself in, seeing two pairs of shoes at the bottom of the steps "interesting..." she remarked to the dogs on her way to the kitchen, she laid her head on the table in a vain attempt to ease the lingering effects of the previous night.

Having heard B'Elanna come in, Kathryn and Chakotay went downstairs to see how she was feeling after her night out. "You can say it," Kathryn whispered at the entrance to the kitchen, trying not to giggle at the silliness of it all.

"Have a good night?" Chakotay shouted.

"Fu..." B'Elanna was about to swear when she realised that he must have been there all night.

"Morning, B'Elanna," Kathryn greeted from behind Chakotay, "Good night, was it?" laughing at her friends hungover state.

"It certainly was for you." taking in their appearance, Chakotay was wearing the shirt and trousers he was wearing at the fundraiser last night and Kathryn was still in her pyjamas which was unusual for her, she was usually up, showered and dressed by now.

Opening the cage to let the dogs out, Kathryn suggested to Chakotay that he make breakfast for the three of them, giving him several options to choose from.

Watching Kathryn standing at the door as the dogs ran around the garden for several minutes. Chakotay busied himself with making breakfast for all three of them, then planned to ask Kathryn to accompany him on a new woodland walk with the dogs that he thought they'd all enjoy.

Returning to the kitchen, Kathryn poured three cups of black coffee, leaving one of the cups on the counter for Chakotay to add milk and sugar, she placed the other one in front of B'Elanna, hopeful that the aroma of the caffeinated beverage would begin to help with her hangover.

"What happened?" B'Elanna asked, looking between Kathryn and Chakotay.

"Nothing." Kathryn took a restorative swig of her first coffee of the day. "I thought that Mark might show up here last night, so I asked Chakotay to stay."

"Can I have details?"

"NO!" Chakotay flicked a tea towel against her shoulder.

"Ouch!" B'Elanna growled at him, only Kathryn can flick things at me. Looking sheepish, Chakotay mumbled an apology, returning his focus to cooking breakfast.

"Everything is still new for us" Kathryn started, "and we want to keep this private for a while, if that's okay with you."

"We're taking things slowly."

B'Elanna smirked, content that her best friend had finally found a good man to settle down with even though she and Mike secretly had a hand in getting them to meet and get together.

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