

beta shift

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by [ussjellyfish](#)

Summary

It's a quiet night on the bridge when the president comes up with a question.

Notes

in which they're all procrastinating, and flirting.

Joann glanced back again at Michael in the captain's chair and shrugged at Keyla. Everyone needed a chance at alpha shift, so that meant everyone needed a chance at gamma shift, quiet and dull as it was. To be fair, the bridge didn't really need any of them. Zora could handle this. They were at warp, which was dull. The boards were all green and yeah, that was good, but dull.

"How's the space dust, commander?" she asked Joann.

"Within accepted parameters, commander." Joann grinned a little, because being formal meant Keyla was really bored.

Even the space dust was dull. Michael had her holopadd open in privacy mode, which meant crew evaluations, which were hell to get and even worse to write so they...sat. The turbolift opened, which meant more routine, anyone in a hurry would have used their transporter.

"You're early," Michael said without turning around. "Engineer said it would take at least another hour."

"I'm afraid I'm not from engineering, captain." President Rillak's voice was soft, gentle even. Keyla turned a little, not all the way because one didn't just stare at the president, even if she and the captain had something.

"Madam President, good evening, can I help you with something?"

A message from Joann appeared on her console. Oh-two-hundred is hardly evening.

Keyla sent back. What's she supposed to say? Happy middle of the night?

Joann smiled and started straight ahead. She was so good at that. Keyla wanted to turn but she couldn't, so she listened.

"Actually, yes, perhaps you could, I'm sorry to bother you with this, captain."

"It's no bother, ma'am. I'm sure I can help."

Joann caught Keyla's eyes. That tone was new.

"I am having some trouble with a mission report from the Mitchell."

Why would the president need to read mission reports? Was it classified? Was it a mystery? That was more fun than sitting, but look ahead, pretend not to be listening. Michael was classy enough not to ask why the president was reading reports in the middle of the night, or why she came up to the bridge.

Did she know Michael was here? Was she looking for some lower ranked officer or had she specifically come for Michael?

"May I, ma'am?"

"Be my guest, captain."

Michael read it in silence for a moment. "This is very formal."

"Captain Soren-Cheng is Illyrian, she has a way with formal."

"Ah." Michael read awhile longer. "They opened trade negotiations with the inhabitants of Verdant IX."

"Negotiations I'm fairly comfortable with, Captain, it's this note about the plant life."

Michael chuckled, her voice warm with amusement. "Worried a sentient truth-compelling plant will make your life difficult, ma'am?"

"Are you insinuating I have a problem with the truth?"

"Only when you're forced into it, ma'am."

"And I need to be?"

"From time to time."

Keyla glanced over at Joann, who tilted her head towards her console. "Commander, could you help me with this?" Joann walked over and they stood elbow to elbow, studying a stellar map that did not need to be studied.

Behind them Michael laughed, then the president did and they weren't even looking at Rillak's holopadd any more. They were looking at each other.

Really intently, like—

Rillak reached for Michael's hand, and Michael had her fingers on Rillak's arm and —

They wouldn't kiss on the bridge, would they? Surely they were—

"You have the bridge, commander."

The transporter popped like the tension in the room and they were gone.

"Guess I have the bridge then." Keyla raised her eyebrow.

Laughing, Joann shook her head. "She choose me."

"Oh no, it's me."

Joann shook her head. "I don't know if she had any idea what she was saying, looking at the president like that."

Keyla smirked. Hopefully Michael and the president were having fun somewhere with good sound dampening. "No wonder she picked you."

"Oh, she meant me."

"Of course she did."

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