

## A Family Celebration

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## A Family Celebration

by [InterstellarSiren](#)

### Summary

Before taking command of the new USS Stargazer, Rios arranges for the motley crew of La Sirena to celebrate making it through their mission alive with a dinner with some of Admiral Picard's old colleagues.

### Notes

This was written for the Star Trek Potluck event over on AO3. The initial idea was a what if in my brain: What would have happened if the Old Guard (aka some of the TNG crew) met the motley crew of La Sirena post PIC Season 1 but pre PIC S2, to celebrate their successful mission/Picard's appointment as Chancellor of the Academy, etc, etc.

Also, because they live rent-free in my brain and should have been endgame, (I said what I said) this work assumes Jurati and Rios either never broke up or reconciled very quickly.

Admiral Jean-Luc Picard smiled to himself as he adjusted his dress uniform. For the first time in years, he had reason to celebrate. Laris was taking a trip to Romulus to honor her mate, Zhaban. Seven and Raffi were both settling in to new roles in Starfleet, Agnes had been cleared of charges in the murder of Bruce Maddox, and Rios had a few days before he needed to report to his posting on the new U.S.S. Stargazer. Soon, Agnes and Soji would be leaving on a diplomatic tour, starting with Earth, that would introduce Soji as an ambassador on behalf of the synth of Coppelius.

Rios' Emergency Hospitality hologram, affectionately known to everyone except his captain as Mister Hospitality or sometimes Steward, had been the one to suggest the dinner. Seven of Nine had asked for a brief leave to do some medical missions work for the Fenris Rangers before she resigned and tried to decide on her next adventure.

Ever the helper, Rios had insisted she be the first to take La Sirena, since the freighter was properly equipped for her mission. He planned to merge the holograms for her so she had less to worry about, as well. Rios had already made the decision to let Seven and Raffi alternately look after the ship for him.

But now there was the matter of their farewells to plan. Elnor, Raffi, Picard and Rios were all making their way back to Starfleet. For now, Raffi was to be assigned to an as yet undetermined ship. Rios was almost certain she would go wherever Elnor landed, to ensure he was kept safe. Picard had taken over the Academy. Agnes had taken leave of her position at Daystrom to tour with Soji, who was now an ambassador to the Federation on behalf of her home planet.

Of course, Picard had made a point that he must introduce his new allies to the rest of his former crew from the Enterprise. Upon learning of Picard's desire, Rios' Hospitality Hologram had set to work, planning a meal aboard La Sirena for everyone.

So, they had arranged one last party, with all of Picard's friends invited along; Commodore La Forge, Captain Riker and Counselor Troi-Riker, and Worf had all responded.

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"Fear not, Captain. I will ensure that everyone is most comfortable.", the EHH preened as he walked alongside Rios that week. For once, he hadn't touched the captain's nerves, and they both wanted it to stay that way. Rios nodded.

"Good. We've got the replicators working in perfect order for the food?"

“Aye.”, came the voice of Ian, the engineering hologram. Rios bobbed his head again, looking around wordlessly. What was he missing?

“Computer, has everyone responded? How many people can we expect?”

“My records show that everyone except Dr. Beverly Crusher, her son Wesley, and Lieutenant Tasha Yar have been reached, and confirmed Captain.”, the computer chirped back. Rios almost did a double take at the news. That was a lot of people. Not that he hadn’t pulled off a banquet aboard the ship before, but still, it was also a very short turnaround to prepare for so many people. Beyond that, many of the guests were legends in the same right as Picard, his crew from the Enterprise.

“The ship may not be big enough to carry them all, Captain — especially if Doctor Jurati, Ambassador Asha, Commanders Musiker and Seven of Nine and Cadet Elnor are also here.” Cris nodded solemnly. He wanted them all here. He longed for Picard’s friends and his own motley crew to come together.

“We’ll figure it out.” He feigned confidence, knowing that they would have a task on their hands when they attempted to assemble the old crew. At least they knew that Troi and Riker were safe.

The holograms wanted everything to come together. Still, they knew they would have to work fast. Of course, the ship would have to be presentable. Captain Rios's ship had never been intended for company. He had wanted it that way.

“Are you sure we can figure this out, captain? That's a lot of people to worry about.”

“We have to. I want to do this for the Admiral. With everything he's gone through, he deserves it.” Rios' smile could have out shined the sun. The holograms had never seen him this happy, and it was making them nervous.

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Ambassador Soji Asha waited calmly for her ship to arrive. She was nervous about returning to space. It had been a year since Admiral Picard had arrived on the Borg artifact, and Soji's life had never been the same. It was still difficult for her to wrap her mind around the fact that she had been deceived into believing she was human. She was still learning the ins and outs of her Android capabilities. Along the way, she had found a family that would never forsake her.

“You feeling nervous? I know I would be if I were you.”

“You have more to be nervous about than me. I'm not the one who's about to see her ex boyfriend.”, Soji laughed lightly. Dr Agnes Jurati's face turned three shades of pink. She hadn't thought about the fact that she would come face to face with her ex for the first time in a year.

“What do I have to be nervous about? I'm just going to see old friends.” Agnes tried to deflect.

“Come on! We all knew you and Captain Rios were sleeping together. It was obvious. You two had stars in your eyes every time you looked at each other. And he wasn't normally that kind of guy.”

“Okay, okay. You win. But that was a year ago. A lot changed. Rios has been reinstated. He's got a command to worry about now. Besides, we couldn't make it work. We tried. Or at least. . . I tried.” Agnes sighed and sat back in her chair. She remembered the feeling of relief when she had been cleared in the murder of Bruce Maddox.

“I hear the Admiral wants to invite us to some kind of dinner. He didn't give any specifics. Just that it would be held on Captain Rios's old ship. I don't know that I have a thing to wear for it. ”

“Not sure I do either, Soji. These pantsuits do fine for my role as aide to the Ambassador of Coppelius, but we both know I'm no good at dressy parties.”

“I think you sell yourself short. Whatever you choose will look fabulous.”

“I have no idea what to bring to this meal anyway.” Agnes' eyes danced around the room as she spoke. She'd traveled to so many different worlds now that it was impossible to name a food she hadn't tried. Just as long as no one brought them any Orion delaq, they would be fine. She shivered at the memory. Thank God, Cris was sober now. Or, at least mostly, from what she'd heard.

“If the Rikers are there, we'll have plenty. We saw how much food they can prepare when we stayed with them on Nepenthe.”

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Seven of Nine knew when she'd been approved for leave from the Fenris Rangers that her days would be spent in utter chaos helping her girlfriend get her shit together. The fact that Raffi was coming down from a final — or at least Seven prayed it would be final — brush with her snakeleaf habit hadn't helped the fact that she'd been bitten by a baking bug weeks earlier while high. The incessant sweet making was about to drive Seven up the wall.

“Cookies, that's what I'll make for the next time I see Rios!”, Raffi declared triumphantly. Seven stared at her in her quizzical, “this makes no sense, but I love you.” way, and said nothing. The trailer was covered in some sort of white powder.

“Raffi, what is this stuff?”

“Flour. Rumor is, we're all getting together for some big meal on La Sirena. J.L. wants to celebrate or something. So I'm making cookies.” Seven wrinkled her nose, trying not to dampen Raffi's enthusiasm.

“You're making. . . Cookies?” Raffi couldn't fight a grin. Her girlfriend's confusion was adorable.

“Yeah. J.L.'s coming up with some French concoction or other, Rios is making his mother's humitas, Troi and Riker are bringing some sausage from Nepenthe. . .” Seven's eyes widened as Raffi rattled off the information.

“Can’t we replicate all of that?” Raffi smiled, remembering how insistent Rios in particular had been about the meal. Replicators, he had insisted, could give them the ingredients, but he had demanded that the final dish be made by hand.

“No. Rios’ mother, rest her soul, would roll over in her grave at the thought. So he says.” Raffi laughed. Both the Rikers and Jurati had also insisted that food from replicators didn’t taste the same as freshly prepared dishes. Soji had also experienced the taste of a tomato from the Riker family garden when hiding out on Nepenthe, and the flavor had been a nearly world-shattering experience.

“I mean, I understand it.”, Seven affirmed.

“Yeah, if you remember how things tasted before replicators, or grew up with elders who hated and didn’t use them. . . It’s like a different world.” Maybe that was why this dinner really was important. They needed to go back to the basics, to celebrate being alive and being part of their chosen family. Seven had never had the chance to experience meals like this with people she cherished. The experience would last her a lifetime.

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Rios growled softly as he looked up from his mother’s recipe. Nothing seemed to be going right. If only his mother were here to offer some form of guidance.

*She’d be laughing at me right now, I know it.*, he thought. There was no way he’d be good at making his mother’s recipes. She had a magic touch.

He closed his eyes for a moment, the memory of her singing filling his mind and ears. He recalled the days when he’d stood on a stool in the kitchen beside her. His mother hated replicators and had insisted against them, until it became too much when she got busy with her work for Starfleet.

He had never taken to cooking as she hoped, but he did know enough to make a few decent meals. The problem was, until now, he’d been too depressed to try.

“Things don’t taste the same. You’re much too young to remember.”, she’d told him. She’d gone on to explain that sometimes, things needed to be real — and fresh — to taste right, like the corn and husks in her humitas. Eventually, she had caved for most things, but he’d been taught how to preserve and cook with real ingredients.

By some miracle, he’d found fresh corn from a farmers market on Earth during shore leave. The stall owner, like him, had grown up in Chile and just happened to carry the hybrid variety he needed. When he explained, the stall owner smiled broadly at him.

“Your mamá would be very proud of you, Captain Rios.”

“Cristóbal. Cris to my friends. You’ve just done me a huge favor, and I can’t thank you enough.” He’d made his way back and immediately began working the recipe to get it perfect. The PADD in front of him, holding his mother’s recipe trilled and beeped as he worked, frustrating him. Times like this made him wish he had beamed down sooner, or that she could be there with him to bask in the success of a completed meal. If only the plan had worked out that well.

He was smart enough to know he’d need ingredients for at least a few tries — and help from his friends. Raffi was happy to lend a hand. Little did Cris suspect that Raffi plus kitchens equaled trouble.

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“Cris shouldn’t even be doing any of the cooking. We’re celebrating him.”, Raffi argued as she sat next to a simmering pot of some soup or other that was meant to be their first course. Mercifully, she’d had the foresight to call in assistance from Will Riker.

“From what I’ve heard from Jean-Luc, Rios is a man who dislikes being sidelined. Raffi —watch it, your soup’s about to boil over!”

“Sorry, I haven’t had to do this in a while. But Cris insists that freshly made is better than replicated.”

“So does my wife — and I agree. Food has more flavor when it’s made by hand. We replicate some ingredients, but when we’re on Nepenthe, nearly everything I make has something in it from our garden, or an animal Kestra trapped on our land. My Viveen wild girl of the woods has become quite the aide.”

“I do wish I could have seen her in action.”, came Rios’ voice from the doorway. Riker turned, offering a cheerful smile.

“When you’re done with whatever mission the Admiral puts you on next, Rios, please do us the honor of stopping by. Maybe Kestra would take you on a hunt with her.”

“I may take you up on that.”

“What is this dinner for, anyway?”, Riker questioned. He knew that he and Deanna, Geordi, Beverly and Worf had all been invited, but no one had told them why. He wondered if it were a surprise for the Admiral that no one wanted to spoil.

“A few of us are taking some new positions.”

“Yes, I heard you’re headed back to our ranks, Captain. Taking the new Stargazer.” Rios grimaced, focusing on other thoughts to put it out of his mind. Riker noticed, offering him a cup of tea to calm his thoughts. Rios smiled and explained the reasoning for the dinner.

“It’s really for the Admiral. You see, he’s been asked to be Chancellor of the Academy and we thought everyone would want to join us in celebrating all of our accomplishments together. I’d love to meet some of the crew who served with him when he was a captain.”, Rios offered.

“And to ease some nerves, no doubt. Count us in. I’d be happy to contribute some food.”

“Great!”

“And I’m sure Geordi would be happy to contribute some Somalian cuisine.” Rios grinned. He hadn’t expected that, although he remembered learning about La Forge at the Academy. This was going to be quite the adventure. Now they just needed it all to come together.

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Several days later, Riker contacted everyone and let them know that the plans were set. Most of the surviving Enterprise crew had been contacted and would all be bringing covered dishes. Guinan had agreed to bring drinks from Ten Forward. Raffi and Rios were contributing their own dishes, and Jurati had insisted on baked goods for dessert. The Rikers were bringing a sausage dish, and Will had mentioned something about a pizza, too.

As Rios’ Hospitality Hologram, Steward brewed a proper English tea, Rios himself set about making sure the ship would be presentable for all his guests. There had been a time when he’d thought his life would be free of celebrations, but now, well . . .

“Make sure everyone’s comfortable, Steward. I have food to watch.”

“Aye, Captain. The ship is spotless, per your orders.”

“I brought tea cakes!”, cheered Agnes as she beamed aboard. Rios smiled, offering her a hug. and a kiss on the cheek.

“Always on it. Thank you, love.”, he whispered, dropping a kiss into her hair.

“Congrats, Captain.”, Soji offered. It wasn’t long before he had a ship full of people carrying more dishes than he knew what to do with. Before long, Admiral Picard arrived, a bottle of wine under his arm.

“Thanks, m’ija. Proud of you, too, Madame Ambassador. And Raffi, Elnor, and Seven.”

“Surprise, Admiral. A proper celebration dinner for all of us. Captain Rios thought some old and new family would be a welcome sight.”, Seven announced, watching the old man’s eyes mist as he set down the bottle.

“This is a surprise, indeed. I don’t know what to say.” The others smiled at seeing Admiral Picard speechless. They decided that it was more important to revel in a family reunited, than to focus on words.

As the group laughed, talked and shared stories, they were reminded that in coming together, they were strengthening bonds. Their joys over each other’s successes would bind them in a way that could never be broken. They were a family, united by circumstance, but now inextricably linked. Those bonds would get them through anything.

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