

Idle

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Idle

by [SLWalker](#)

Summary

Kathryn Janeway was not idle.

Notes

Originally written for the Secret Santa on the Omega Sector for Belanna, many years ago.

The years passed, but they were not empty.

She was never one to sit idle, and age had not made her so. She had always been a firm believer in personal initiative; it was pointless to wait for the universe to decide everything for you. She could decide for herself, and did.

Kathryn went back to Indiana; back to the old house, back to the plains, back to the change of seasons she'd come from. From the first, she farmed. She raised corn, or wheat, or soybeans. She had dogs she ran around the yard with. She founded a book club downtown that was getting more popular with each passing year.

If Starfleet thought that she would wither without a uniform, they were wrong.

They had been shocked by her resignation. But after the war, everything had changed. Suddenly, paranoia was rampant. The kind of individual thought and initiative that had allowed her to build an unlikely family on Voyager was outright frowned upon. The Federation politicians lived in a state of fear. Allies were scrutinized, trust less easily given. Starfleet pulled back into its own borders, away from the unknown.

She loved Starfleet and the ideals the Federation was founded on, but now those ideals were battered nearly unrecognizable. And after trying and finding out that she wouldn't be able to change the system from the inside, Kathryn walked away and took the ideals with her.

She farmed, and what she grew was sent out into the universe to those who needed it. Cardassians, still suffering the scars of war, baked bread with her wheat. Colonies on the borders, where pain was still an everyday fact of life, ground her corn into meal. Outposts half-forgotten processed her soybeans into food or fuel.

It was only a drop in the bucket but it made a difference, however small.

Other farms around Bloomington took up the same cause; land that had been left to grow wild since replicators became commonplace was turned back into fields planted in neat rows, where one could walk by on a summer day and hear the whisper of the crops in the breeze. The bucket became just a little bit fuller.

Kathryn farmed, and when she wasn't farming, she played in the yard with the dogs. She also had a few cats in the barn she had tamed; half-feral cats who loved her and spurned almost everyone else. And when she wasn't farming, or with the dogs and cats, she was with the people. Spirited discussions in living rooms over the books, some new, some ancient. She went to council meetings, made suggestions, got involved.

The years passed, but her days were full.

She wasn't the only individual in the Federation who felt that they had somehow gotten lost. That there was something wrong on a fundamental level, something not quite definable, that needed to be changed. Not violently; the universe had seen enough of that. But people wanted to return to the ideals, the initiative, and Kathryn became their organizer. People came to her with an idea; she put them together with others with the same ideas. Everything from advanced engineering teams to create technology to clean up the atmospheres of industrial worlds, to quilting groups to provide those who needed a warm blanket both that and the knowledge that they weren't forgotten in this universe.

Through all of this, she kept in contact with her former crew, now scattered across the galaxy. Some still in Starfleet, many not, and many who had become organizers for a better cause like she had. There were only a few people she lost contact with; a mutual decision, where communications just quietly tapered off into silence.

The years passed, and her days were full, but she never married. Never dated. Not a choice or a regret; it was simply a part of her, like breathing. There was no drive in her to find someone new to build a life with.

He was one of the ones she lost contact with, and it had been a mutual decision. There were no lies they told themselves, she was certain; age and time didn't allow for such things. And Kathryn believed too much in personal responsibility to put all of the blame on someone else. She had made her mistakes, too. It did no good to get bitter over them; she could only learn from them and live, and live well. And she did.

Of course, she missed him. And of course, she sometimes wondered what could have been, what might have been. But mostly, she only knew that she would not let bitterness taint the memories -- it would poison her inside if she did, and she loved both him and Seven dearly, and would not desecrate her memories of them with regret over her own mistakes.

The years passed, and her heart was mostly full. She filled the spaces left by the resignation of her commission with individuals. She filled the lack of space travel and a ship with the fields of Indiana. She loved them, and accepted their love in turn, and moved forward with a wisdom only time, mistakes and age could give.

Now, it was the day after Christmas, and she took a break from cleaning up from the gathering she had hosted yesterday in the old house. Most of the town had stopped by at some point or another, mingling with her own family and with friends, and she'd laughed and told stories and shared in the good feelings.

She took a break and sipped her coffee and looked out into the world past the frost-trimmed windows; the falling snow, and the blues and grays of the night falling with it. In front of the house, the windows cast a warm light on the snow on the ground. Down the driveway, lost in haze, something moved.

She automatically looked back at the dogs. All three were in, laying by the fireplace. Then she peered back out.

The figure became recognizable. Even after so many years. Even after so much silence. Standing at the end of the driveway, uncertain. Go, or come to the door. Leave, or break the silence. And for the moment, the past and the future met in the present, and there could only be a decisive outcome, either way.

"I know you," her voice whispered, and somewhere inside, he must have known it.

Kathryn was never one to sit idle.

With measured steps, fluttering inside of her gut, she stepped over to the front door and opened it, sending a spray of warm yellow light out into the world. And invitation. A beacon. She opened the door, but she could not make him walk through it. That had to be his decision, and his alone.

For a long moment, they regarded one another. Him, a phantom in the snow. Her, a shadow surrounded by light. But both of them had to know, even so many years later, what the other was thinking right then. His hesitation; she understood. Her mistakes; he understood. For a long moment they stood, regarding one another and the past and the future.

And with steps that became more and more decisive with each one, Chakotay started up the driveway to the house.

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