

## A Shape With Three Sides

Posted originally on the [Ad Astra :: Star Trek Fanfiction Archive](http://www.adastrafanfic.com/works/266) at <http://www.adastrafanfic.com/works/266>.

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 &amp; Tuvok</a> , <a href="#">Kathryn Janeway/Tuvok</a> , <a href="#">Kathryn Janeway/Chakotay</a>
Character:	<a href="#">Tuvok</a> , <a href="#">Kathryn Janeway</a> , <a href="#">Chakotay</a>
Additional Tags:	<a href="#">Jealousy</a> , <a href="#">Simmering Resentment</a> , <a href="#">Unrequited Love</a> , <a href="#">Repressed Emotions</a> , <a href="#">Angst</a>
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2023-06-17 Words: 1,149 Chapters: 1/1

## A Shape With Three Sides

by [nostalgia](#)

### Summary

Tuvok is unfailingly loyal to his captain, but he is not her only confidant.

### Notes

See the end of the work for [notes](#)

Tuvok is not her First Officer. The decision stings a little but of course he suppresses the unwelcome emotion and remains impassive in the face of this slight. There is the loyalty of the new Maquis crewmembers to consider, after all, and the needs of the many must always outweigh the needs of the one.

He watches from a careful distance as the interloper wins Captain Janeway's trust and becomes a loyal confidant. Again, Tuvok's pride is wounded, because he is no longer the first person she turns to for support. Again, he fights down these feelings, hides them as perfectly as he is able. No one should know about this gnawing bitterness, and no one will. It does not control him, it will not emerge into anger.

Humans are far too easy to interpret, they wear their emotions openly: Chakotay despises him too.

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Tuvok thinks himself the captain's most devoted companion, her most faithful assistant. If she doesn't always see this it doesn't matter, because his loyalty does not falter in the face of rejection.

He keeps a running count of who she listens to when they offer her conflicting advice – they're about even (this is good), though Tuvok is slightly ahead (this is better). Vulcans are not driven by pride, of course, and this tallying of victories is distasteful even to himself. The resentment that simmers between the two men is beneath him, a betrayal of the calm logic his species venerates. Still, it exists.

They make uncomfortable allies when forced to work together, which is always done for her sake. There is a sullen attempt at mutual respect, but it never develops further. They will, it seems, always be in opposition.

Despite what many assume, Vulcans recognise each emotion as they conceal it – Tuvok knows that what he feels is envy. It disturbs him.

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He no longer fears mutiny, but there's a new problem instead.

He hears the name "Kathryn" – a breach of protocol on the bridge – and turns his attention to them. They are leaning towards each other, conspiratorial. Despite his obstructed view Tuvok sees that the Captain is smiling, entertained by whatever preceded her name, or perhaps by that verbal intimacy itself. She says something just beyond the edge of audibility, in a tone of amusement. A joke, most likely.

Chakotay is staring at her mouth – it's inappropriate and it makes Tuvok breathe more deeply to calm the turmoil inside. He fights down the anger before it has a chance to emerge, before it can threaten the fragile peace he has built for himself.

He summons her attention with "Captain," and presents a minor technical problem he had been planning to deal with on his own. She appears at his side to examine the information, and she rests her hand on his shoulder. It feels warm, comforting. He wishes she were more sparing with her touches, in case she gives encouragement to those who don't need it.

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Envy becomes worry – something has changed. The Captain is not looking at Chakotay and he is not looking at her. What would ordinarily be

a welcome sign of disunity is instead an unsettling suggestion of something else. Tuvok knows her well enough to find it disturbing, because it means she doesn't trust herself to conceal her true feelings. Something has happened and it is far too easy to work out what it must be.

He hopes that nobody else has noticed, but it is surely only a matter of time before gossip begins to spread. He should caution her. Will she turn on him if he advises her to undo whatever she has done? She must already know what he'll think, she must already assume that he will disapprove.

He wonders if she will confide in him. That she trusts him to keep her secrets is certain, but will she risk destabilising what little tolerance her men have for each other? Does she trust him not to approach Chakotay with censure? Is she too emotionally compromised to accept criticism of her actions and those of her co-conspirator?

He considers his options, and puts off a confrontation.

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He doesn't need to say anything, as it transpires. He should have had more faith in her.

For a few days her voice is slightly flat, her eyes overcast with a yearning sadness, but then she defeats herself, the way she defeats everything in the end. Her relationship with her First Officer is pulled back to a friendly professionalism, something appropriate and unthreatening.

Presumably she has remembered that she needs to be beyond reproach, that her ship and her crew are more important than her own desires. She is doing her best not to feel – whatever emotions were there are taken apart, analysed, compressed, and repressed.

The captain is far better at it than most humans would be. Tuvok is proud of her.

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It doesn't last. A month later the ship is attacked again and Chakotay is injured. The Captain leans over him on her damaged bridge and touches his face, a worried caress that leaves her hand stained with blood.

It's a strangely intimate moment – Ensign Kim looks away, Tuvok does not. It might be the beginning of the end.

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There is a gathering for Neelix's birthday (not a party, Tuvok does not attend parties of his own volition) and Tuvok stands away from the crowd, watching the Captain. She is talking to Chakotay, one hand holding a glass of champagne and the other touching his arm. They're discussing something, inclined towards each other without concern for unwanted observers. Tuvok worries about their proximity, about what it might imply.

"I didn't think Vulcans got jealous." Lieutenant Paris has appeared at his side, uninvited.

"Jealous of what?" he asks, tightly.

Paris nods towards the captain. "She deserves a little happiness," he says, thankfully quiet enough to be discreet.

Explaining fraternisation rules to Mr Paris is a lost cause, so he doesn't bother, and he stands silent until the other man takes the hint to leave him alone.

Across the room the Captain is laughing, lost in emotion like any other human. She rests her hand on Chakotay's chest, almost possessive, and he leans towards her, apparently enraptured. Tuvok thinks he might be about to kiss her, and for a moment everything slows down, as though time itself were afraid to move onwards. Tuvok waits, tension coiled inside him and threatening to make him impulsive. He should intervene, but he's too far away to make a difference.

Chakotay steps back, the moment passes, Tuvok breathes. The Captain remains unweakened. He watches her from a distance, wonders if he could ever learn to support the choice her emotions seem to have made for her. She is his captain, after all, and he will never leave her willingly.

But she has another man at her side now, and he knows he has lost her.

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## End Notes

I am very into that weird not-really-a-love-triangle that exists between these three. Whatever it is. A loyalty-and-resentment triangle, maybe. This is my attempt to capture that wonderful dysfunction in words. I hope someone else out there is as into this sort of thing as I am.

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