

The Worst Days

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by [nostalgia](#)

Summary

On the worst days it's the Captain who takes him to bed, and never Kathryn. It sounds like semantics yet it's anything but – the Captain is harder, sharper, less yielding. She could break him easily if she put her mind to it (and she just might).

Notes

This isn't an Equinox post-ep but it was inspired by that episode.

On the worst days it's the Captain who takes him to bed, and never Kathryn. It sounds like semantics yet it's anything but – the Captain is harder, sharper, less yielding. She could break him easily if she put her mind to it (and she just might). When the Captain visits he has to be careful with his heart.

He knows the differences between them – he was with Kathryn on New Earth, and he knows he loved her. Kathryn is difficult to see these days, emerging in ever briefer flashes – blink and you'll miss her. Kathryn can be stubborn and reckless too, but she has nothing on the Captain.

There are a lot more worst days now than there used to be. It's been at least a year since the last time they were together like this and it wasn't the worst of days.

She always arrives at 1.47am precisely. She always says "I can't sleep," and he always stands aside to let her in. Inviting her in with words would be superfluous, and this entire ship is hers in any case.

He isn't surprised to see her here tonight: she almost started a war this afternoon.

He waits for her to move first. That he might move first when she's the captain is unthinkable. He is loyal and obedient, after all, up to and well past the point of those being faults. (She has asked him to mutiny when the very worst day finally comes, and he has promised that he will and knows that he won't.)

That she comes to him at all is welcome proof that she must still want him, though maybe it's just that she trusts him to keep these meetings confidential. (And who else would she go to anyway? Tuvok? Paris? Seven of Nine?) Once he hoped they might get home in time to love each other, but that was long ago and, besides, he's not sure if Kathryn will ever make it back or just the Captain. She has been eroded by the Delta Quadrant.

Kissing is a passionless formality. She does it for his benefit, because he'd like to pretend that she loves him. He is depressingly grateful that she makes the gesture.

Her uniform never really comes off. Her clothes are removed, her skin is revealed, but she somehow remains fully dressed as his superior officer. His own armour is less resilient and he feels exposed by her scrutiny.

In Borg space she visited often, driven to him by her fear that she wasn't terrified enough – confidence is an unacceptable weakness when you're facing the Collective. Back then even Kathryn still came to him sometimes.

It's not like he calls her 'Captain' in bed – he finds it safer not to call her anything then. Whatever she finds the need to say he does his best to forget, because she doesn't need anyone else to remember her worst days.

There is no comfortable afterglow: she has to flee and doesn't want to stay anyway. She picks up her clothes without hesitation and because these are the worst days she doesn't stop to make a pretence of affection.

When she has finished dressing she says, "Thank you," as though they were exchanging pleasantries in the street.

"Don't thank me, it makes me feel cheap." He's been meaning to bring that up for a while.

"Then I won't." She nods, moves to the door. "Goodnight, Commander."

"Goodnight, Captain."

He watches her leave and then he finds something to drink.

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