

## hesitation

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## hesitation

by [ussjellyfish](#)

### Summary

Laira hesitates when she could have kissed Michael.

### Notes

written for the prompt - "If you had the guts, you would have kissed me."

"You think something is stopping me from doing that right now?"

thanks tumblr!

Michael glances over at the flames of Ebalu, the centerpiece of the Betazoid festival of fertility. "If you had the guts, you would have kissed me."

A moment ago, they stood next to the bonfire with the leaders of Betazed, joining the blessing that returns light after the equinox. Traditionally, it ends with a kiss. With Admiral Vance, she might have kissed his cheek, but Michael is something else entirely. They're tentative friends, they're not dating, and neither of them have children. She should have sent the vice president and her husband.

Laira looks down, forcing herself to smile. "Do you think something is stopping me from doing that now?"

Michael takes a sip of her drink. "Yes, but I'm not sure what it is."

"Maybe I'm worried that you don't share my feelings."

"I've tried to be as obvious as I can."

"Perhaps I'm concerned about a potential power imbalance between us."

"There's no rules about us dating."

"Rules don't have to be written down."

Shaking her head, Michael turns, leaning against the railing behind them. "That's not it."

Laira finishes her drink for courage. "The press can be relentless."

"I can take it."

Michael can, of course, she's handled everything the galaxy has thrown at her: the DMA, Osyraa, even falling 900 years through time. Toying with the garnish in her drink, Michael meets her eyes. "The flames of Ebalu are a sacred commitment."

Dammit.

Laira chews her lip. "We're not Betazoid, it wouldn't apply."

"You're a member of every planet of the Federation, aren't you?"

Laira's starting to blush, and her face stings. She should look away, but Michael's dark eyes hold her like a gravity well. "I didn't feel right about it."

"Kissing me?"

"I would love to kiss you."

"So it was the other thing."

Glancing at her boots, Laira nods. "That doesn't bother you?"

"It's not like we'd get pregnant today."

Laira chokes a little, hiding it in a cough. "Right."

"I'm open to the possibility."

"There's being open to the possibility and making a sacred commitment in front of the entire Federation that we'll honor the spirit of the festival."

Michael winks at her. "And I thought you were just shy."

"Oh, I am, especially with you."

Flagging down the server, Michael retrieves another drink and hands it to Laira. "Take your time. I'm not going anywhere."

After blowing through space and time as a Red Angel, she's staying here, right in front of Laira, daring her. When did she become such a coward?

Michael sets her drink on the wall behind her, then removes Laira's from her hands, holding Laira's fingers in her own. "You don't have to kiss me tonight. I'll be here tomorrow, and the day after. Eventually, I'll find the right moment to kiss you."

The pollen from the night blooming oza flowers hangs in the air, sweet and soft.

Laira's heart thuds too hard and too loud and her hands are sweaty. "What if that is now?" They wouldn't be committing to having a baby right away, just - someday - and someday with Michael that might be wonderful. She might even want that.

Perhaps.

"I told you, I'm open to--"

Laira's been a careful, cautious diplomat for more than twenty years, but she's been a headstrong, idiot pilot for longer than that. This is an opening, this is a beginning and fuck it, she wants everything. Michael, a future, the bright purple flames of renewal and rebirth and maybe a little child with Michael's eyes and her wonderful hair and--

They kiss roughly, clumsily, falling into the wall and each other's lips like a barrel roll into a comet. Whatever happens, they're in it together now. They'll fly.

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