

Kindred

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by [Pixie](#)

Summary

Janeway and Tuvok remember their long, maybe strange, friendship while working on crew evaluations.

"How many more of these do we have?" The captain and her chief of security evaluated the crew once every three months. Nothing in depth—that was reserved for the annual evaluations run by all the senior staff—just a quick run down to flag anything that needed to be addressed. In between the evals, Janeway often wished she could spend more time on it, and really get to know every member of her crew. But while she was doing them, she found it draining and tedious and just wanted to get it over with.

"Forty-seven."

"So a third?" At Tuvok's nod, Janeway sighed. "I feel like that should be encouraging but I'm too tired for it."

"If you would like to reconvene in the morning—"

Janeway made a face. "Ugh, I must look awful if you're trying to nanny me."

Tuvok cocked his head. "Nanny?"

She waved a hand, dismissive. "I want to finish."

"Very well." He was, as always, infuriatingly calm.

"But I need coffee." Tuvok pursed his lips. "Shh."

"I did not speak."

"I know what you were going to say." Janeway wagged a finger at him as she crossed the room to the replicator. "Coffee. Black." The cup shimmered into existence and she drew the piping hot beverage to her lips to take a sip. "Mmm. I feel better already." Over the rim she smiled at Tuvok's solemn expression, and the twinkling eyes he couldn't quite hide.

"Would you like something to drink, Captain?"

"Hm, oh." Kathryn forced herself to focus on the woman speaking to her. It was her first visit to a Vulcan home and she was fascinated by absolutely everything. "Water would be fine."

T'Pel nodded, she'd prepared a pitcher of cool water treated with added nutrients in preparation for the human's visit. Vulcan's climate was much hotter and drier than Earth. She poured a tall glass and handed it to their guest.

"You have a beautiful home."

"Thank you," T'Pel answered in human custom. Tuvok's eyes crinkled in the equivalent of a smile. His wife was far better at diplomacy than he'd ever been. "I will be serving tea at sundown, will you be joining us?"

Kathryn's eyes lit up. "I would love to." T'Pel nodded and took her leave until later.

Tuvok watched the two women in silence, but his eyes were all but screaming.

Kathryn scrunched her nose at him. "What?"

Tuvok gestured for the captain to walk with him into the garden. "I have never seen you drink tea," he answered.

She burst into laughter. "I may prefer coffee, but I can hardly be an intrepid explorer if I won't try new things. Who knows, I might like it even more."

Curious. Tuvok raised an eyebrow. "Is that what you wish?"

"What?"

"To be an 'intrepid explorer'?"

Janeway flashed him a smile that indicated it was an entirely silly question. "Yes. Isn't that why we join Starfleet?"

Tuvok nodded. "Statistically, yes. Nineteen percent of first year cadets choose exploration as their primary reason for attending the Academy. It is the second highest result."

She chuckled again. "Well, there you go." Her Vulcan friend remained silent. But it was one of those *Tuvok* silences that meant he was holding back. "But...?"

"But..." He glanced at her eyes, giving him her full attention in her desperately human way. "Statistically, you do not often conform to the officer standard."

"And it bothers you when I do?"

"I am unbothered," he assured her. "Merely... surprised."

"Well, I think you'd be used to that." She smiled when he frowned in confusion. "If I don't often conform, I must surprise you all the time."

Tuvok raised an eyebrow. "That is a logical deduction."

Kathryn grinned, but he was too silent again. "But...?"

The Vulcan remained quiet, and still, considering what to say, when nothing he was thinking was logical. Janeway's grin grew, somehow, even wider.

"Tuvok! Thank you."

Tuvok was at a loss to understand. "I do not know to what you are referring."

"You thought you could predict me because you like me being unpredictable," Janeway explained in the singsong voice she sometime affected when excited about something, usually science, but there were exceptions.

"That does not make sense."

"Exactly!"

Still at a loss, Tuvok resumed the walk around the garden. Kathryn fell into step beside him and they walked in silence a while, considering each other.

"I joined Starfleet for lots of predictable reasons," Kathryn offered, quietly, after a moment. "My father was an Admiral. He made it seem like... well, somewhere I wanted to belong."

Tuvok met her eyes, as bright and passionate as his were dark and calm.

"Father? The tea is prepared."

Their tentative connection was broken by the girl's call. Tuvok led the captain over to the table T'Pel and their youngest child were setting.

"Asil, this is Captain Kathryn Janeway. Captain, my daughter, Asil."

Kathryn smiled at the young woman, a smaller version of her mother, though she had Tuvok's intense eyes. "I am very pleased to meet you, Asil."

Both Vulcans' eyes seemed to glow in the low light of the setting sun. "We are honored to have you in our home."

"Who's next?" the captain asked, pushing her hair out of her eyes.

"Crewman Jarvis."

Janeway accepted the PADD and leaned back into the couch to peruse it. "She's one of yours."

"She is assigned to Security, yes."

"And?"

"She is adequate. Punctual, efficient."

Kathryn shot him a look over the PADD. "High praise."

"I..." Tuvok swallowed a sigh. "If it were possible I would suggest a transfer," he admitted. "I do not believe she is ... happy."

"Hm." There was always someone unhappy on *Voyager*, but the longer they were out here, the better they adapted. But if Tuvok, of all people, was concerned, she would do what she could for the girl. "Perhaps a different position? I could have Chakotay discuss options with her." He was the duty officer, and also their de facto counselor. "Unless you'd prefer to do it yourself?"

"I believe the Commander would be better suited."

Janeway nodded. That's what she assumed. But Tuvok was not a bad counselor himself, and it did seem he cared what happened to this crewman. She leaned over to touch his hand.

"Don't worry."

He raised an eyebrow. "Worry is illogical."

Janeway smiled. "I know."

"Would you like a brownie Mr. Tuvok?"

Kathryn pursed her lips. "Mom, he's a Vulcan." Gretchen Janeway was known for her baked goods, and the brownies were award winning. But way too much butter and milk to be healthy was part of the secret recipe.

"I know. They're vegan." her mother answered, clearly pleased with herself.

Kathryn looked askance. "You made vegan brownies?"

"Well, I could have replicated them, but I wanted your friend to feel welcome." She flashed a smile at the Vulcan. "It's not difficult to accommodate guests."

"Thank you, Mrs. Janeway," Tuvok answered as etiquette dictated.

"Oh, call me Gretchen."

"Apologies, Mrs. Janeway, but that would not be appropriate in my culture."

Kathryn's mother blushed under his scrutiny. "Oh. Well, then, that's okay." She placed the plate of brownies on the table and looked between her daughter and her intimidating friend with some awkwardness. "Would you like to see the garden?" Her corn was also award winning. And vegan.

Tuvok glanced at Kathryn. She shrugged to indicate it was up to him. He nodded to Mrs. Janeway. "Thank you."

"Oh, it's an honor!" Gretchen answered with such joy Tuvok knew he'd chosen wisely, at least as a guest. "Right this way." She led the Vulcan down the porch steps and into the garden, chattering excitedly about each plant they passed.

"What is it with you and emotionless rocks?"

Kathryn looked daggers at her sister. "Phoebe!"

The youngest Janeway rolled her eyes. "I'm just kidding."

"It's not funny," Kathryn stressed. Tuvok was a Vulcan, hiding his emotions was cultural.

"Okay! I'm sorry. I just... notice a pattern in the men you bring home."

Kathryn's mouth dropped open. "He's not a — he's *married!*"

Phoebe nodded. "Yeah, and 'unobtainable emotionless rock' is exactly your type."

Kathryn's cheeks were burning and she felt tears threatening. How was her sister so good at making her feel so bad? "I'm seeing Mark."

"Oh, please, that's rebound nostalgia if I've ever seen it." Phoebe realized how insensitive the comment was the moment she'd said it, but it was too late. Kathryn's eyes were full of angry tears.

"I'm going to marry him," she hissed, and shoved fists into her eyes to regain control.

"...ugh, Kathryn, don't cry. I didn't mean— I'm sorry." She pulled Kathryn's hands down so she could meet her eyes. "I am, I'm sorry. I don't know how to— not do this, and." She bit her lip. "He really is..." Kathryn's expression told her not to finish that sentence. "Look. If you're happy, I'm happy. I want you to be happy. You know? Okay?"

Kathryn crossed her arms, glaring. But the tears had dissipated. "I'm happy," she said, clearly and definitively. "And I hate you."

Phoebe grinned. "You love me." She pulled her sister into a hug. "And I'm happy you have such a good friend on your ship. Even if he is an

unobtainable emotionless rock.”

"Last one?" Tuvok nodded. "Hit me!" She swatted at his raised eyebrow. "I'm tired, Tuvok, don't pretend you don't know what I mean."

He hit two buttons and held out the PADD. "Lieutenant Commander Tuvok."

Janeway raised an eyebrow of her own. "Easy." She swiped the PADD and dictated, "Practically perfect in every way." With a playful smile she passed it back to him, but he frowned. "Do you disagree?"

"I do not believe it is appropriate for me to comment."

"But?" she prodded.

Tuvok swallowed another sigh. "However, yes. I disagree." She waited, watching. "...Perfection is unobtainable."

They held a long, soul-searching, look. Finally, Kathryn looked away, laughing.

"I said *practically*." She set the PADD to the side. "I'll have Chakotay complete yours tomorrow."

"Very well."

Janeway turned back to meet his eyes again, as dark and calm as hers were bright and passionate. "You really are my rock."

Tuvok raised an eyebrow. "Captain?"

She leaned over to squeeze his hand. She couldn't find the words to explain. He was her best friend—the first and only one she really had—and even that wasn't the right name for it.

He was silent, and still, but she could tell. He understood.

Tuvok stood to take his leave. "Good night, Kathryn."

"Sweet dreams, Tuvok."

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