

A Light in the Darkness

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A Light in the Darkness

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Summary

Michael, Saru, and Captain Georgiou are captured on a mission.

Notes

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"I believe the human phrase is 'I told you so'," Saru says as they explore the cell, checking the walls and bars for weaknesses. "Perhaps next time you will listen to me when I inform you of a potential danger instead of insisting that you know better."

Michael lets go of the bars, rounding on him in frustration. "Listen to you? Have you ever heard the story of the boy who cried wolf?"

He frowns, tilting his head at her. "That story is about lying, is it not? I fail to see the relevance."

Michael takes a breath. *Don't get emotional. Stick to logic.* "It's the same principle. You see *every* situation as dangerous, Saru, so you can forgive me for not realising that you actually meant it this time."

His eyes narrow. "Blaming your shortcomings on me might make you feel better, but it is not going to help the situation, or the captain."

The mention of Georgiou sends a pang through Michael's chest. As their admitted leader, she was taken away to be questioned separately, and has yet to return. "And I suppose your 'I told you so' act is going to save us all?" she snaps, before turning back to the bars and tugging at one with all her strength. "Maybe if you'd stop distracting me, I could find a way out of here."

"Unlikely," she hears Saru mutter under his breath, before he thankfully lapses into silence.

Michael tries her luck with every single one of the bars, but finally has to admit they're stuck fast. She's just turning away to check the bricks – again – when the sound of footsteps rings out and Georgiou appears, flanked by two large, lizard-shaped guards. She looks pale, her hair loose and a bruise forming on her cheek, but she manages a faint smile as she makes eye contact.

One of the guards unlocks the door to the cell for just long enough for Georgiou to be shoved through before locking it again. "We'll be back in the morning," the other one says, yellow eyes glinting. "Maybe you'll be more cooperative once you've had time to think." With that they turn and leave, footsteps fading into the distance.

Georgiou stumbles over to the pile of blankets that is meant to serve as a bed and sits down heavily, rubbing at her temples.

"Are you hurt, Captain?" Saru asks.

"Drugged, I think." She shakes her head a little without lowering her hands. "They injected me with... something. To make me talk. Didn't believe I didn't know anything." She grimaces. "It's hard to concentrate."

"You should rest," Michael tells her. Her mind races, trying to figure out what Georgiou could have been dosed with, but there's too many options for her to narrow it down.

"Hmm," Georgiou agrees, shifting to lie down. "Probably."

Michael watches her for a moment, trying to figure out the best course of action. She's never liked being helpless, and her body itches to move,

to do something, but there's nothing *to* do except wait. According to her research, nights are long here, so they should have at least nine hours, probably ten, before morning comes and the guards return. That'll be their next chance at freedom, but how they're going to overpower people who are easily twice their strength is something she has yet to figure out.

She gives one last pull on the bars – still fixed tight – before sitting down on the floor and resting her arms on her knees. *Think*, she tells herself. *There must be some way out of here.*

She can see Saru watching her out of the corner of her eye and turns to meet his gaze. "I don't suppose *you* have any ideas on how to escape?"

"None that are practical," Saru replies. "In my opinion, our best option is to wait for the *Shenzhou* to find us."

"That could take days," Michael tells him.

Saru crosses his arms. "Do you have a better idea?"

Michael doesn't bother answering, instead looking up at their one window, high on the wall and too small to climb out of. It shows a sliver of black sky, dark and empty. Somewhere up there, she knows, is the *Shenzhou*.

"We should rest," Saru says. "We need to conserve our strength."

He has a point, but Michael isn't about to give in easily. "You go ahead. I'm not tired yet."

Saru opens his mouth as if to argue, but then shuts it again and begins rearranging the blankets that are not currently occupied by their captain.

Michael goes back to staring out of the window, only to be nearly hit in the face by a blanket. She bats it aside and glares at Saru, who meets her glare expressionlessly for a moment before curling himself into a corner and settling in. For someone so tall, he can squeeze himself into some surprisingly tight spaces.

She looks from him to the blanket and back, then leans back against the wall and closes her eyes, reaching for the meditation exercises she first learned as a child. If she can just get some mental clarity, maybe she can think of a plan.

She's jerked back to reality some time later by a noise, loud in the quiet. She looks around frantically, searching for threats, but they're still alone. The noise comes again, a soft moan, and she realises it's coming from Georgiou.

Something moves in her peripheral vision and she tenses, but it's just Saru, unfurling himself from the blankets. He blinks at Georgiou before reaching out carefully to lay a hand on her shoulder. "Captain?"

Georgiou frowns, making a sound that might be a whimper, and Saru shakes her, gently, just once. "Captain."

No response. Saru's hand moves to touch Georgiou's forehead, and Michael can see him frown. "I believe she is running a fever."

Michael scrambles over, dropping to her knees next to Georgiou and pushing Saru's hand away. One touch is enough to tell her he's right; she has a fever, and a high one at that.

"It must be the drugs they gave her," she says, mind running over her first aid training. "We have to cool her down. She's far too warm."

She unfastens Georgiou's jacket and begins pulling it off, only to stop when she hears a ripping noise. It turns out to be Saru, ripping a blanket into strips.

"What are you doing?"

"Cooling her down," Saru replies, in a tone that suggests it should be obvious. Michael wants to question further, but she bites her tongue and continues stripping off Georgiou's jacket. She's just pulling it off the second arm when Saru reaches past her and drapes a damp piece of blanket over Georgiou's forehead.

Suddenly the ripped up blanket makes sense, and Michael glances over at the water bucket, seeing a small pile of blanket pieces placed next to it. It's a good idea – one she's sure she would have thought of herself had Saru not got there first. She moves down to Georgiou's feet to remove her boots and lets Saru concentrate on wiping down her arms and face with water.

Despite their best efforts, Georgiou gets worse as the night goes on, thrashing and hallucinating with fever. More than once she cries out for them or other members of the crew in ways that indicate she thinks that they're in danger, and nothing Michael or Saru say to her seems to help. Saru continues speaking anyway, his tone gentle and soothing as he moves through different languages, some of which Michael knows and many she doesn't.

They take turns replacing the cloth on Georgiou's forehead, wiping her down with water in the hope that her fever will break, and eventually, just as the first hints of dawn are starting to show through the window, their efforts bear fruit. Georgiou's temperature drops, and her sleep becomes calmer and more genuine. When she finally opens her eyes, blinking, she seems confused, but Michael can see recognition there.

"Michael," she mumbles, voice croaking a little. "Saru. What happened? Are you all right?" She tries to sit up and Michael moves to help her.

"We are fine, Captain," Saru tells her, handing her a cup of water. "However, you are not."

"The drugs they gave you caused a high fever," Michael adds. "You should rest."

Georgiou takes a sip of water, only to jerk and spill it down herself as the sound of a door crashing open rings out. Footsteps approach, moving swiftly, and Michael tenses; the chaos of Georgiou's illness distracted her from finding a way out of here, and now they're out of time.

She readies herself, preparing to fight, just as Lieutenant Detmer skids to a halt in front of their cell, accompanied by several security personnel. "Oh, thank God," she says, before flipping open her communicator. "Detmer to *Shenzhou*, we have located the landing party."

"The captain has been drugged," Saru tells her. "She will need medical attention."

Detmer relays that to whoever's on the other end of the communicator as Georgiou lays a hand on Michael's arm. "You can stand down, Number One," she says quietly. "It's over."

* * *

Despite Michael's protests, Doctor Nambue insists on giving them all an examination in sickbay as a precaution. Michael and Saru are checked over quickly and released, but the captain – who still has traces of the drug in her system – is ordered to be kept in overnight for observation.

Saru leaves sickbay with quick strides, and Michael has to hurry to catch up with him. "You did well back there," she tells him. "With the captain." She hesitates, then forces out, "I couldn't have done it without you."

She's never been good at compliments, but Georgiou's philosophy has always been that people learn as well from being told what they are doing right as what they are doing wrong. And everything she's said is true; she *couldn't* have done it without him.

"I have had the same first aid training you have," Saru replies, but he seems to relax a little. He looks around them, then says quietly, "I saw you, when the door opened. You were ready to fight to protect her."

"It's my job," Michael tells him, and Saru tilts his head, studying her.

"I should not have blamed you for what happened," he says. "I thought, when the captain chose you as her first officer, that she was making a mistake, but I was wrong. I believe you will be... more than adequate at the task."

Sarek taught her that thanks are illogical. Georgiou taught her they're not.

Michael folds her hands behind her back, slipping into parade rest as she stares straight into Saru's eyes. "Thank you," she says.

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