

Arrhythmia

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Arrhythmia

by [kalima](#)

Summary

Uhura learns the fundamentals of the Vulcan lyre. Spock learns other things.

Notes

A take on the relationship that never aired based on this scene cut from "Elaan of Troyius" S3E13 Star Trek TOS (but not from my heart...)

Uhura: Mr. Spock, that music really gets to you.

Spock: Yes. I find it relaxing.

Uhura: Relaxing? It's... I don't know what to call it, but relaxing's not the word.

Spock: Most interesting. I suppose it works differently on non-Vulcan nervous systems.

Uhura: I'd certainly like to learn how to play that.

Spock: I'd be glad to give you the theory. The mathematics are somewhat complex. To my knowledge no non-Vulcan has ever mastered the skill. You see, we Vulcans have natural rhythm.

Uhura looks interested.

Chapter 1

Uhura presses her interest over the course of weeks, and soon he's letting her hold it, handle it, stroke glissandos out of it. He shows her positions and proper fingering techniques. One chord progression. Then another. She pushes him for more and more with an eagerness verging on greed. She *will* make music.

The sex, it seems, is secondary. The sex is... messy. Not merely the slick, slippery, sticky puddle *human-ness* of it all, but the mental sensation it leaves afterwards. Like a thistle stuck to the fabric of his mind. Every time they pull apart there's another worn rough patch on his intellect.

They are discreet about their sexual activities, of course. He'd expressed the necessity of discretion after their first engagement assured mutual interest in more. But it is *discretion*, not subterfuge. He is Vulcan. He wouldn't lie if confronted.

(No one asks. No one suspects at all, apparently.)

Still, he had anticipated more push-back from her, some show of resistance before she inevitably surrendered to logic. Instead, she'd snorted a laugh.

"Discretion. Oh. Yes. *Definitely*." Her emphatic agreement had been reassuring at the time.

He watches now, as she wrestles her breasts into her brassiere until they are constrained, contained, un-moving sculptures. He had, at one time, admired their symmetry in an abstract sort of way – before he'd seen how they swayed and bounced when she was astride him. Before he'd cupped them in his palms and toggled the nipples with his thumbs.

She steps into her uniform. Zips up her boots. Washed clean of him, cool and dry as talc. Checks her appearance in the mirror, pats her hair.

She's fine with their arrangement.

He's less and less fine with her being fine about it.

"Mr. Sulu tells me the yubosie tree we are transporting to Gnora V is near blooming phase. I intended a visit to the arboretum when we had concluded our business here."

Uhura arches a brow at his reflection, says nothing.

"Would you care to join me?"

She swipes the pad of a finger over a tiny smudge in the otherwise perfect outline of her lipstick. "If you were anyone else, Mr. Spock, that would *almost* be an invitation to romance."

She still addresses him as 'Mister' in every conversation that does not occur in bed and even then, it's implied. It occurs to him that Leila Kalomi had done the same thing. Is he a person who somehow compels the use of a title?

"It is only a tree, Miss Uhura. And does not the term 'romance' often refer to an exciting and enjoyable affair that is not serious or long-lasting?"

"Are you enjoying yourself, Mr. Spock?"

"I am. Instructing you in the Vulcan ka'athyra has been uniquely rewarding."

She chuckles, a low rumble at the back of her throat. Between his legs, a distinct, anticipatory twitch.

"Until next time," she says.

He does not go to the arboretum. He spends the next seven hours meditating. *Hard*.

^^^

On the bridge they're the models of competence and efficiency. Two officers going about the performance of their duties.

Until one day they aren't.

"The reports you requested, sir."

He starts at the sound of her voice. How had he not noticed her come up behind him?

"Yes. Thank you. Very good. Carry on, Lieutenant. You are dismissed." His words are clipped, sharp-edged, too loud. And there are too many of them. Uhura draws back, eyes wide with undisguised amusement.

"Yessir, Commander, sir." She salutes him then spins on her heel, back to her station. Away from him.

The captain shoots him a look. Confusion? Disapproval?

He bends to retrieve a stylus that clattered unnoticed to the deck, then buries his face in the hood of his scanner.

^^^

“What the hell is going on with you two?” the captain demands one morning over breakfast in the officer’s mess. His chin jabs in the direction of Lt. Uhura currently chatting with Engineer Scott, cup of coffee in hand.

Spock’s entire body seizes up. For a fraction of a second, he can’t even blink. “What have you observed that leads you to conclude there is something ‘going on’ with us?”

“At the food dispensers just now. You practically fell over a chair to avoid proximity. She rolled her eyes so hard at you I’m surprised they made it back to the front of her face. And on the bridge. You’re extra rigid around her recently. Like she’s radioactive or has a bomb in her bra.” Kirk glances askance at the object of their discussion, then up at him.

Spock realizes his current rigid stance does nothing to belie that assessment.

“Sit down. You’re giving me a crick.” When Spock is seated across from him, the captain drops his voice conspiratorially. “Look, I’m not the only one who’s noticed, okay? I caught some of the junior officers speculating. I brought the hammer down hard on that, but –”

“What sort of speculation?” Spock blurts.

“That you insulted her or hurt her feelings or pissed her off or all of the above. That you don’t realize it or don’t know how to fix it.”

“I do not believe I have said or done anything to cause her significant distress.” His mind rapidly scrolls through recent interactions to confirm it.

“All right.” Kirk doesn’t look convinced. “Then has *she* done something that offended *you* somehow?”

“I am not easily given to offense, Captain.”

Kirk makes a rude dismissive noise. “Please. All McCoy has to do is suggest your human panties are showing and you march off in a snit.”

“If the doctor believes his efforts to goad me into reacting have succeeded, he stops. But I can assure you Miss Uhura has done nothing I would consider offensive.”

“Well, *something’s* going on.”

Jim’s on the verge of a gut feeling. Spock knows the look. Like a cartoon hound. It is therefore prudent to surrender a scrap of the truth to put him off the scent.

“I have been teaching her how to play the Vulcan lyre for several weeks now.”

“Ah,” Jim says, sagely, leaning with one arm along the back of the chair. He takes a deep breath to better enable the spewing of wisdom. “Are you, by any chance being extra *extra* Vulcan and pedantic in your instruction, Mr. Spock?”

“It *is* a Vulcan instrument.”

“Uh huh. Probably waving your big-dick intellect around more than usual, too.” The captain, *his friend*, seems to be channeling Dr McCoy’s colorful verbosity at this moment.

“I might take offense at the implications of that metaphor, Captain – were I given to it.”

“Oh?” Jim exclaims, all insouciance. “Which part? Big dick or big intellect?”

Spock walked right into that one. He clamps his mouth shut and shakes his head, aggrieved.

“I’m just saying, that’s a lot of one-on-one time with a human. I imagine it’s put a bit of strain on your... mmm... how shall I put it? Equanimity?”

“I have spent a great deal of one-on-one time with you, Captain, to no ill-effect.”

“Yeah. Well. I’m not a pretty lady,” Jim replies with the patronizing benevolence of the sexually experienced.

The underlying assumption at work here, of course, is *not* that Spock is engaged in a sexual relationship with a pretty lady, but that he is too repressed to admit the desire for one.

The captain leans over his plate once more to shovel the final glob of eggs and toast into his mouth. He talks around chewing. “She must really love the music to put up with you.”

“Indeed.”

“I don’t want it interfering with comportment on the bridge, however.”

“You have my assurance, Captain.”

It was clear he could no longer offer her instruction. They were going to have to stop. His mental control was floundering. He needed more mediation and less ... of the other.

“Is she any good?”

Spock tried to swallow whatever was suddenly stuck in his throat. “Sir?”

“Playing your lyre.”

“She is ... remarkably adept.”

Chapter 2

He would like, very much, to seek the captain's counsel. Confess all, be advised and absolved. Or reassured, at least, that this experience is normal and that he is not, in fact, drowning (however metaphorically) in a river of lust. Jim would know what to do, how to proceed, how to *end* this, instead of what Spock has been doing for the past twelve minutes and ... however many seconds, which is: contemplating the aesthetics of light and dark in the tangle of their limbs.

How would the picture be rendered through Japanese *notan* on Earth as compared to the *atja ha'ge* movement in Kir Khomi on Vulcan? Would the pre-Raphaelites' intense aversion to *chiaroscuro* been quite so uncompromising if they'd used it to illustrate naked bodies in repose after a bout of frenetic fornication?

"This cannot continue."

"What's that, sugar?" Uhura murmurs, drowsy and sated.

This this this.

He'd resolved to tell her when she arrived that evening – no more lessons and no more... *this*. A return to the dignified state of colleagues and crewmates. But instead of wanting to be taught she'd wanted to listen to him play.

She was in an odd mood, indecipherable to his unpracticed sensibilities and so he'd indulged her with an archaic composition from before the Awakening, all passion and death, betrayal and mistaken identity.

Her eyes were rapt on the swift plucking movements of his fingers, chromatic shifts she could not yet accomplish (and, he suspected, never would), whole tone harmonies she likened to jazz. A rumble of bass made her shudder deliciously.

As soon as the last notes faded, she straddled him in the chair, lapping at his earlobe, the instrument abandoned on the carpet at his feet. She pulled at his shirt and the flies of his trousers. Slid to her knees between his legs—

He tries again. "We cannot continue in this manner."

"I suppose you're right," she says and peels herself away from his side so suddenly, his heart trips and falls out of its natural rhythm. He had not anticipated an immediate cessation, let alone immediate agreement. But instead of rising from the bed, she stretches across his lap with a soft grunt, breasts on one side, pubis on the other, buttocks jiggling and tensing, hand outstretched for the *ka'athyra* standing sentinel just beyond her reach. "I need to practice."

"Now?"

The shifting, squirming movement across his lap causes his penis to stir and attempt to rise, trapped against her belly. It disturbs him how easily his body surrenders control to stimulus now. A sudden urge to strike her bottom with the flat of his hand disturbs him even more.

"How did you get that deep bass tone?"

"I adjusted the *elat*." He presses a palm onto the tempting flesh, flattening the cheeks slightly. "Stop."

A breathy squeak comes out of her, but she ignores his command. Her toes dig into the mattress for purchase as she elongates her body, reaching for the ornate knob – the *elat* – at the base of the strings.

"You do not have the physical strength to manage it," he growls. But Miss Uhura is undeterred, focused on a single, impossible goal, glittery nail-tips waving wantonly at the object of her desire.

Another punishing compulsion possesses him. He slides the knife edge of his hand between the cheeks of her buttocks, down and down, dragging his fingers through sticky labia until they are slick again. His fingertips brush her clitoris as her fingertips seize and pluck a taut string. A discordant pling wavers in the air. He plunges two fingers inside her.

She gasps, rises to her knees, rocks back into his hand with soft little cries of, "oh, oh, oh, oh please please *please*."

His gaze fixed on the *ka'athyra*, he brings her to climax, reveling in the sound of his name drawn out long and low from her lips.

"My *goodness*," she exclaims afterwards, breathless and lolling across his lap once again. Face up this time with one arm thrown across her eyes. Her mouth is soft and slack and smiling vaguely.

His satisfaction is short-lived, however.

She hums a little pondering tune. "I wonder what kind of bass tones I can get using the lever keys?"

Spock stands abruptly. Uhura rolls off his lap onto the floor.

"Hey! What'd you do that for?" she yells after him as he enters the bathroom. He locks the door and stares at the fool in the mirror who has just done battle with an inanimate object for the attention of a woman. And lost.

Logic has clearly forsaken him.

His hair sticks up, clumped together in odd tufts. As he reaches to smooth it over his forehead again, he's stopped by the scent on his fingers.

Fortunately, the Enterprise is occupied for the next three weeks with a stellar anomaly, the evacuation of an embassy on Nastronope VII, an incident with Klingon spy, and an exploratory mission on a planet in an uncharted system that goes spectacularly sideways.

When there is finally a lull in activity, Spock asks Lt. Uhura to meet with him so that he might discuss her continued instruction in the ka'athrya.

Upon her arrival he can see she's made assumptions about her continued instruction.

"You've altered the styling of your hair."

"I didn't want to lose anymore hairpins." She looks up at him from under the sweep of her lashes. Her eyelids are painted soft metallic gold. Her lips are painted dark red. Her smile is designed to elicit a very specific response in him.

But he is prepared to do what needs to be done and stands well away from her, hands behind his back, studiously avoiding direct eye-contact. "I have taken the liberty of procuring a ka'athrya for you to use."

"Really?" Her voice is alight with pleasure. Thinking it a gift, no doubt.

"It should be at Starbase 17 when we arrive for scheduled maintenance in approximately two weeks. The tone of the instrument will not be as rich as mine. It was made for use by a child, but you will be able to depress the *ozh gonaf* and adjust the *elat* with less difficulty."

"That's so sweet of you, Mr. Spock!" He flinches inwardly. "I know they're not cheap. Let me at least—"

He cuts her off before she offers to pay. "I have also acquired an instructional module so that you may continue lessons without my assistance. It is in Vulcan, but you are moderately proficient in the language, and as it is technically written for children ages six to ten..."

"Supplemental. Good idea." But she is far too skilled at interpreting minute changes in his expressions. Her brows furrow delicately. "You'll still be teaching me though, won't you?"

"It is no longer feasible for me to do so."

"May I ask why?"

Something in her vocal inflection elicits an odd twinge in his side. He draws in a breath to give her his carefully rehearsed response—

"Wait, are you still mad at me? That was weeks ago."

He squashes the impulse to tell her precisely how many days, hours and minutes ago.

"I wish you'd tell me what I did that that made you so angry."

"I am Vulcan. Vulcans do not—"

"Get angry. Right. Of course. Then why don't you want to teach me anymore?"

Spock is suddenly *acutely* conscious of the hot blush of dilated blood vessels rising in his cheeks. "The nature of our arrangement has become more... transactional than I am comfortable with."

"Transactional?"

He swallows his discomfort, adjusts his demeanor. "Yes. I did not realize until our last encounter that you may have misinterpreted my initial... reciprocation to your overtures as a requirement for continued instruction. I take full responsibility for the misunderstanding. As your superior I —" He stops. "Your expression alarms me."

"It should. It's taking all my willpower not to slap you right now."

"Yes. An understandable human impulse. I betrayed your trust."

"No, Mr. Spock. You've implied I'm a prostitute. For *music lessons*."

"That— *that* is not *at all* what I meant. If anything, I took advantage of your genuine desire to learn how to play a challenging instrument."

"So now I'm a helpless female under the spell of a powerful man? Do you have any idea how offensive that is?"

He believes it is a rhetorical question and wisely keeps his mouth shut. She paces back and forth before him, clenching and unclenching her fists.

"How dare you? I'm an accomplished musician in my own right. I play six instruments. I sing in twenty-seven languages. And, I'll have you know, understanding the music of non-human cultures makes me a better communications officer!"

He *does* know, knows all this. His mouth goes dry. She's quite stunning in the throes of righteous indignation.

She stops pacing, lifts her chin defiantly so that he is forced to look her in the eye or be shown a coward.

“I also happen to like sex. With you. Sex with you has been surprisingly... *satisfactory*.” To a Vulcan there’s no higher praise than satisfactory.

She closes her eyes, takes a deep breath and releases it slowly, opens her eyes again.

“Spock.” No appellation, simply his name. “If the level of intimacy is putting too much strain on your Vulcan sensibilities, we don’t have to do it. I’d be perfectly content with the music lessons.”

She *would* be. It’s like a blow to the chest.

“Therein lies the issue.”

Her eyes widen in sudden comprehension.

“Oh.” She looks down, licks her lips. “You know, we *could* be open about what’s going on. See where it takes us.”

“I cannot go where it takes us. Not without cost. As it is, I find myself raw and jagged each time you leave.” He glances at her with a quick quirk of his lips. “And a little stupid. Yet I crave the very interactions that cause such rough discordance within me. It is not healthy for a Vulcan.”

“I’m sorry. I had no idea I was causing you distress.”

“You bear no blame. It is the result of a long, ongoing conflict between my disparate halves. Our affair disrupted the natural rhythm that kept at least one half of me in line.”

She will assume it is the human-half. Humans usually do.

^^^

“Well, well, well, Lieutenant. It appears Mr. Spock has relented.”

“Sir?” She placed her palm over the strings to still their vibrations.

The captain had just bitten into an apple. Mouth full he made a circular motion with his hand to indicate the ka’athrya on her lap. McCoy provided translation.

“He’s letting you play that crazy Vulcan lyre without micromanaging the placement of your fingers.”

Had either man been paying close attention they might have seen the flash of irritation on her lovely face before she graced them with a bland smile.

“No, Doctor. He acquired this one just for me.”

“Oh yeah,” Kirk noted, swallowing noisily. He pulled his hand across his mouth to catch the juices. “I guess this does look a little different.”

“It’s significantly smaller, sir.”

“So, it is. Still, that was generous of him.”

“Not at all, Captain. It was a completely logical decision.”

Kirk huffs a laugh until he sees she’s not being snide. “What?”

“He didn’t want me using his anymore. Apparently, I play too rough.”

Her fingers plucked delicately at the strings but it was a sad and angry discord that perforated the air.

The two men exchanged a glance then moved away, toward tables with cheerful drinkers and casual games of spades.

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