

## Written in the Stars

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by [Pixie](#)

### Summary

Five times Kathryn Janeway met Kira Nerys for the first time, and one time she took advantage of a second meeting.

1.

The office is quiet, the light low, her father's shoulders slumped as he rereads a stack of reports. He's been home three days, and spent most of it closed in here. Mom's worried. Kathryn's not supposed to know, but she always does.

She creeps into the room. Her father flashes a genuine, if subdued, smile her way and encouraged, she steps closer to peer over his shoulder. At her approach he sets aside a small pile of PADDs and swipes aside the screen in his hand. What looked like a ship is replaced by a scowling child.

"Who's that?"

Edward presses a button and the corder spits out a shining solid of the image. "Little girl I saw on Bajor," he explains, and hands her the photograph. "She reminded me of you."

Kathryn frowns. She learned about Bajor in her geo and civics classes, but not in detail. This Bajoran doesn't look like the ones in her lessons. She's not a waif. She's mean. Kathryn doesn't want to be either.

"She looks so... angry." Kathryn likes to think of herself as tough, but not mean, not angry. And she definitely doesn't want Daddy to think it.

Edward sighs, his eyes focused on something past his little girl, and the one in the picture. Kathryn's taller by two or three inches than when he last saw her. He feels tired, and old.

"She has a lot to be angry about," he murmurs into the night.

2.

Cadet Kathryn Janeway has wanted to visit Bajor since she was a child. She's heard— or more pertinently, overheard— too much about the planet, its people, and the conflict that has engulfed them for so long, to stay away. She'd leapt at the opportunity to volunteer with Starfleet's humanitarian outreach program. She hopes to find some answers. Or at least something true.

The transport point doesn't look that different from home. More dust than grass, but the sky looks just like an Indiana summer. A young Bajoran woman appears to be waiting over by a fence. Kathryn approaches her with a bright smile.

"Hello I'm looking for—"

The woman's eyes flicker over Janeway's uniform in distaste. "We're not interested."

Kathryn blinks. "Sorry?"

"Whatever it is you brought, we don't want it here."

The Bajoran peers at something past Kathryn, raises a hand to shield her eyes from the bright sun. Kathryn tugs at the sleeve of her uniform. She feels foolish and she doesn't like it.

"I have medical supplies," she explains, gesturing to the small group of crates she transported in with, "and food rations and—"

"Weapons?" the girl interrupts, finally looking the cadet square in the eyes.

"Of course not."

The Bajoran flashes Janeway an expression somewhere between a scowl and a smirk. She leans back against the fence, crossing her arms. "Are you here to fight Cardassians?"

"...No."

"Then you are in the wrong place."

Kathryn presses her lips into a flat line. The sky is suddenly very foreign, and home is very far away.

"I'm sorry," she says, knowing it's not adequate and maybe not appropriate. But the silence was too much.

The Bajoran doesn't answer, doesn't move, just watches with a vaguely familiar look of defiance. Kathryn swallows, and turns to walk away.

"Hey."

She glances back at the quiet call. The young woman juts her chin to the west.

"Starfleet's set up over there."

Kathryn nods. "Thank you."

3.

"This is my second in command," Sisko introduces the Bajoran woman as she appears in the doorway, "Major Kira Nerys."

"Captain Kathryn Janeway," she tells the other woman as they shake hands. "Pleased to meet you."

Ben smiles. "I told the captain you could give her some insights into the Maquis."

Kira cocks her head, a wary expression lighting her eyes. "...Maybe. It's not a centralized organization, most cells work independently and follow their own rules."

Janeway raises her hands in a kind of surrender. "I understand." She offers a small smile. "I'd still like to pick your brain if I may?"

Kira glances between the two captains. Sisko's eyes encourage, Janeway's vaguely plead. "Of course." She nods and gestures for Janeway to follow her to the promenade.

Kira gets them settled at a semi-secluded table in the bar, two of whatever special Quark is peddling today between them— something purple and sparkling and honestly ridiculous, but he insisted— before broaching the subject.

"May I ask what your interest in the Maquis is?"

Janeway takes a breath. "I've lost contact with one of my officers who'd been watching them."

"Watching?" Kira repeats, raising an eyebrow.

Janeway lowers her eyes a moment, nods, and glances back up to meet Kira's quiet judgement.

"I take it you are sympathetic to their cause?"

Kira raises her chin. It's more complicated than that, but. "I'm sympathetic towards anyone working against Cardassian oppression."

"I understand," Janeway answers, nodding again.

Kira's eyes narrow. "Do you," she asks in a flat tone through her teeth.

Kathryn feels her stomach twist. "Well, I..."

She sits back to consider. Slowly takes a sip of Quark's concoction, coughs, and sets it aside with a look of disgust before taking another breath and returning her focus to Kira's angry eyes.

"No." She swallows. "But I do have some personal experience with ...Cardassian oppression."

The Bajoran waits.

"...I was part of a reconnaissance mission." Her heart flutters at the irony. Watching, again. "We were captured. Held. Questioned." Kira understands her to mean tortured.

"This was during the war?"

Janeway nods. "My first deep space post, I was barely out of the academy." She looks away, shakes her head. Her throat is dry, but Quark's sickly sweet offering is the only thing at hand. Kira waves down a server, Janeway doesn't hear the exchange but a deep amber liquid is placed in front of her. Its heat soothes her nerves.

Kira picks up her own glass and drinks deeply. "I hated Starfleet for a long time," she confesses. "I joined the resistance when I was twelve and from that perspective, the Federation seemed to be on Cardassia's side. But," Nerys shrugs, "I've learned it's not so black and white."

Kathryn looks up and their eyes lock. She nods.

"These Maquis aren't my enemy," she murmurs. A truth, if a complicated one. "But I have to find them. I have to find my officer." Tuvok's face flashes in her mind. "My friend."

Kira watches her silently a long moment, then reaches a hand across the table to covers Janeway's.

"I'll tell you what I can."

4.

Dear Kathryn,

Please excuse the familiarity. I've thought about you a lot since that night in Quark's bar. It's hard to explain. Not necessarily hard to understand. But hard to explain.

I enjoyed that evening. I was surprised how much I looked forward to your return. I felt like we were connected. I know a lot of people but I don't have a lot of friends. I felt you could be one and I wanted to find out. So I was saddened, truly saddened, when I heard your ship disappeared. And I was angry, too. Angry enough to come up with wild conspiracy theories. You'd laugh— if we ever get another night at Quark's, I'll tell you and you'll laugh. We both will.

Anyway, I missed what 'might have been' but my world was out of control— again, still— and I moved on, I forgot. I'd apologize, but I'm near sure you forgot until this letter. But, well, my world being out of control isn't the only pattern in my life.

I lose people. They die. Often violently. They leave. Or just don't come back. They forget. They become someone else. Achieve something else. They move on, they move away. And sometimes they disappear.

I was feeling particularly morose one night not too long ago. Painting regrets on my eyelids. A friend, a woman I knew when I was a kid, too young to be doing what I was doing— anyway she used to say that. "Paint regrets on your eyelids, watch them as close as you can, then open your eyes and let them go."

I was feeling sorry for myself, watching closely, watching me lose all those people I loved and ...you were there, red on black, painted on my eyelids. And I closed my eyes tight.

So when I heard you weren't gone, just lost, well I knew if I didn't write this letter, that would be the real regret.

I don't know if you even remember me. But I remember you. And I hope we meet again.

Nerys

1.

"Kathryn Janeway," she tells the young man marking attendants at the conference. He meets the name with a gulp, but she's used to it by now. *Voyager* is famous and she's the face of *Voyager*.

"Captain!"

She turns to see Kira hurrying toward her, a wide smile on her face. "Major."

"Commander, actually," she corrects, slightly, strangely, self-conscious, and Janeway takes in the uniform. It fits well.

"Admiral, actually," she answers, in turn and they laugh together, though it's not truly funny. The young man hands Janeway a packet and they move away from the crowd.

"I saw your name on the guest list but I wasn't sure I trusted it."

Kathryn glances at Nerys, eyes lowered, tentative. "I'm sorry it's taken this long to get here."

The deceptively simple words hang between them. When *Voyager* left, eight years before, they'd thought it would be days, weeks at most before her return. But after all that happened, it could have taken eighty more years. They might never have had this chance.

Kira clasps her hands, takes a breath. "Do you have time to get a drink?"

Janeway nods. "Maybe somewhere a little less public than Quark's?"

Kira smiles and leads her to her quarters, pointing out any changes to the station as they pass. There is a certain frenetic energy to the place.

Janeway smiles; that fits well, too.

"But the more things change," Kira draws, handing Kathryn a glass of honey wine, "the more they say the same." They clink glasses and sip deeply. Kathryn's eyes flicker to Nerys.

"Maybe they don't have to," she murmurs, her lips kissing the rim of her glass, her expression playful, suggestive.

Kira's eyes go wide and her stomach drops. Kathryn smiles, sets her drink aside, and shifts closer to pluck the glass out of Kira's hand as well.

"I got your letter."

Nerys feels her cheeks flush, self-conscious, again, but arousal is building. "I—"

Kathryn closes the space between them, pressing her lips to Kira's, whose eyes go wider still as she sputters against the kiss until Janeway flicks her tongue and Nerys gives in freely.

5.

Phoebe is moving into the house— Kathryn and Nerys don't need it, and really, Kathryn doesn't want it. There are too many memories and anyway, she prefers to live in the stars. But she does want to go through her mother's, and especially her father's, things before Phoebe recycles them. So they take a few days after the funeral to go through it. Daddy's office is her priority, but also holds the most ghosts, and she leaves it to the last morning.

"Kathryn... Where did you get this?"

She glances up from her perch on the floor, by the desk where she'd hide as a small child. Nerys is holding a photoimage, printed on a solid. Kathryn blinks in recognition.

"Oh, my father met her on one of his first missions during the war. He told me she reminded him of me." She shakes her head. She still doesn't see it. Nerys is drawing a finger across the image of the little girl from Bajor. "Did you know her?"

"She's me."

Kathryn looks up sharply. "What?"

Nerys peers at the image, frowning in concentration. "I don't remember him." It feels like she should. It feels like it matters. Some of that wistfulness must have come out in her tone because Kathryn reaches over to grasp her hand.

"Well, it was a long time ago."

Nerys nods. "We found each other."

Twice, she thinks, before and after, and when continued separation made far more sense.

"A lifetime later... the whole galaxy between us... we found each other."

Kathryn smiles fondly. "You have that fate look in your eyes."

Nerys nods, again. Fate and faith. She hands the photo to Kathryn, who places it in the box to take to their home.

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