

Our Farewell

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by [lah_mrh](#)

Summary

Newly arrived in the 32nd century, on the way to make contact with the Federation, Michael remembers who and what she's left behind.

Notes

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They're on their way to Book's courier waypoint, still at least an hour away by warp, when Michael finds it, buried deep in one of her pockets.

It's nothing special to look at, just a piece of knotted rope, but it feels like so much more, a last link to the life she's left behind. She remembers putting it in her pocket when she was clearing out her room on *Discovery*, and in all the chaos and urgency she must have left it there, forgotten.

She turns it over in her hand, feeling an odd ache in her chest. It isn't logical, but for a moment she imagines she can hear Ash's voice in her head. *This is a bowline, it doesn't run. It doesn't slip. It's the first thing I learned as a kid that made me me.* If she concentrates she can almost feel his arms around her, see the pain in his eyes as he told her he was staying behind. *Someone has to make sure nothing like Control ever happens again.* He believed that person had to be him, and her very presence here is proof that he succeeded.

She brushes her thumb against the rope as it hits her that he's dead. Even in the best case scenario – and given what she knows of Section 31 that seems unlikely – he would have died more than eight hundred years ago. The realisation shouldn't shock her, but somehow it still does. Him, Spock, Pike, Sarek and Amanda... they're all dead, have been dead for centuries. Entire lifetimes, gone in an instant.

She can only hope they got the signal she sent back, the message that she's safe, that they won. The future isn't exactly as she'd hoped, but it *is* a future, and that's what they were fighting for.

"What's that?"

She looks up, startled, to see Book watching her curiously. His eyes are a little like Ash's, she thinks; dark and soft.

She closes her hand around the knot, pushing it back into her pocket. She trusts Book as much as she trusts anyone in this century, but there are some things she'd rather keep private. "Just something from my past."

"From one of your missing friends?"

She shakes her head. "Someone I left behind."

"Someone you loved?"

The question hits her like a blow, stealing her breath for a moment. "Yeah," she says, and only Vulcan training keeps her voice from cracking. "Someone I loved. A long, *long* time ago."

She's dealt with enough grief to know that it fades, eventually. But for now she lets her mind fill with kisses and touches and whispered words, fingers tightening on the knot until it hurts.

"What was their name?" Book asks. He looks at her like he sees her, like she isn't alone in this, and she smiles briefly. For all she's lost by coming to the future, she's glad it gave her the chance to meet him.

"Ash," she says, and it feels a little like letting go. "His name was Ash."

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