

For The Best

Posted originally on the [Ad Astra :: Star Trek Fanfiction Archive](http://www.adastrafanfic.com/works/813) at <http://www.adastrafanfic.com/works/813>.

Rating:	Teen And Up Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Star Trek: Deep Space Nine
Relationship:	Julian Bashir/Miles O'Brien , Keiko O'Brien/Miles O'Brien
Character:	Julian Bashir , Miles O'Brien , Keiko O'Brien
Additional Tags:	Adultery , Dark , Kissing , Manipulation , Selfish Behaviour
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2023-08-07 Words: 1,029 Chapters: 1/1

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by [nostalgia](#)

Summary

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Notes

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It's getting late, and the seconds tick by relentlessly without any care for the plans of mere mortals. Julian estimates that it's time to move, time to set things in motion. Waiting any longer would be risky, and besides the thought of taking action is appealing for its own sake. He leans across the couch, closing the not-quite-respectable distance between himself and Miles and kissing him gently. He closes his eyes, intent on enjoying the sensation of lips pressed against his own even as his mind spins and calculates the odds of one result or another.

Miles usually loses track of time by his third glass of whiskey, and so Julian has been careful to pour him a fourth this evening, spilling it neatly from the bottle into a glass held by an unsteady hand. It might not be ethical, but hopefully it has worked.

If he has calculated everything correctly – the distances involved, the speed that Keiko walks at, the incidents that might delay her on her journey – then Keiko should be walking across the promenade to the turbolifts right about now. A good distance away still, but heading in the right direction.

Miles called an end to their affair three weeks ago, when Keiko got back from Bajor, but he responds to the kiss eagerly enough, his reaction to Julian's advances doubtless affected by the alcohol in his system but that can hardly be the only factor at work. Miles wants this, just as Julian assumed. He wants to continue this side of their relationship, Keiko be damned.

The odds are very good indeed that Keiko will leave Miles if she ever finds out about all this. So Julian has made plans. He wants Miles and he can get Miles, as long as he's prepared to be proactive and manipulate events. He loves him, there's no doubt in his mind about that, and surely love is the purest of motivations? Miles loves him too, just as deeply, or he would never have taken the risk of starting an extramarital affair with his best friend.

On the couch Miles leans into the kiss, parts his lips to Julian's insistent tongue, tangles his fingers in his friend's hair.

Even if – unexpected and unlikely – Keiko gave Miles permission to continue, it still wouldn't be enough. Julian doesn't want to be the other woman, the lesser priority. He wants Miles all to himself. When laid out so simply it seems selfish, but surely it isn't selfish to want to be with your soulmate? And soulmates they obviously are – they're happiest when they're together, always friends and sometimes lovers; and they rarely argue about anything that matters; and they share that itching need to fix things, to make things better than they were before.

Julian pulls Miles closer, presses against him. It's so very comfortable, like they're supposed to fit together – two halves of the same object, two sides of the same coin. Julian moans against Miles' mouth, wanton, encouraging Miles to turn up the heat and let his hands wander and explore.

Keiko should be on the habitat ring by now. Julian silently tracks her progress in his mind's eye, keeps running through possibilities as he kisses Miles. He wasn't remotely ready for her to return to the station and bring an end to his regular seduction of her husband – while the cat's away the mice will play, and this particular mouse doesn't want to stop playing, ever.

Pulling Miles and Keiko apart might seem uncaring, but really it's for the best. The marriage obviously isn't working for either of them, and if Miles is so devoted to his family why does he still spend so much time with Julian now that they're back on the station? Keiko, too, would benefit from an end to the relationship, because her career has ground to a screeching halt so that she can be with the man she thinks she loves, and anyone with even the slightest interest in the matter can see that she resents that. If nothing changes she'll spend the rest of her life following Miles from one end of the Quadrant to the other at Starfleet's whim, never able to prioritise her own needs and her own ambitions.

Julian shifts his weight suddenly, pulling at Miles so that they end up horizontal with himself underneath. The choice of positions is careful – Julian doesn't want to look like the aggressor, he doesn't want it to look like this was his idea. He adopts a submissive posture even as he turns the kiss hot and needy. They're getting breathless and Miles is tugging at his clothes, and that's good – the further this goes the better, really.

Keiko should be close. Very close, in fact. Julian is just waiting for the final elements of his plan to click into place now, and so he isn't at all surprised when the door to the O'Briens' quarters slides open with a hiss.

The noise alerts Miles to danger – far too late – and he pulls back from Julian as though scalded. He can't move far enough to look innocent, though. A moment ago he was sprawled over his best friend and it should have been obvious to anyone who saw it that friendship wasn't the only thing on his mind.

Julian turns his head towards the doorway, and there she is. He looks at Keiko, with her shocked expression, and he doesn't let himself react. He doesn't move, he doesn't speak, and he certainly doesn't smile. Keiko knows the truth now, and the odds are in his favour. It's just a matter of getting through the shouting and the accusations, of making sure he's ready and available when Miles has nowhere else to go.

And it really is for the best. Anyone can see that, if they look at the matter objectively. All Julian has really done is to hasten the inevitable, and probably not by much. It was, quite clearly, the right thing to do.

It's the happiest possible ending, and Julian deserves all the credit for bringing it about. He keeps his expression carefully neutral, and prepares to pretend that he feels any guilt.

End Notes

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