

In the Moonlight

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Summary

Spock gets a surprise on a diplomatic mission.

Notes

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The Minister's daughter is beautiful.

Spock notes this abstractly, as he would a pretty flower or a work of art, but he suspects Kirk's appreciation is less detached. Tall and slender, her pale blue skin seems to glow in the light as she throws her head back, both sets of hands clapping in appreciation at something Kirk has said.

After their years working together Spock is well aware of Kirk's 'type'; intelligent, attractive, charming. Much like him. Qualities that the Minister's daughter has in spades.

His stomach twists as she leans in to whisper something, two of her hands resting affectionately on Kirk's arm, and he turns away, making his way out of the ballroom and into the gardens.

It is hours past sunset, but luckily Vilaria's three moons give more than enough light to see by as he moves further into the gardens. He is surprised to find himself alone, but he assumes everyone else must be inside, enjoying the party.

Whatever the reason, the solitude is calming, and Spock closes his eyes briefly, letting the silence of the night flow over him. It is not logical to be jealous, he tells himself firmly. Kirk is not his.

But it seems that, in this matter, the logical part of him is no longer in control.

He wanders for some minutes, lost in his thoughts, before his attention is caught by a particularly unusual tree. Its size indicates great age, the long branches covered with red and white blossoms over dark leaves. The trunk is the same colour as the leaves, and when Spock reaches out to touch, is perfectly smooth, almost unnaturally so. Curious.

A bench curves around the base of the trunk, surrounding it on all sides, and Spock glances around before taking a seat. It is peaceful here, and he closes his eyes and breathes in deeply, quieting his mind as best he can.

"Beautiful, isn't it?"

Spock's eyes fly open to see Kirk sitting next to him, his gaze focused upwards, at the stars. He turns to look at Spock, a look of affection on his face, and smiles in a way that makes Spock's heart ache.

"Jim," he says, barely able to form the words. "You should be at the party. The Vilarians-"

"Aren't important right now." Kirk cuts him off, waving a hand. "This is about us." He reaches out, brushing his fingers over Spock's knee, and adds, "I see the way you look at me."

Spock briefly forgets how to breathe. He thought he was being so careful, keeping his feelings hidden. Has Kirk really known all along? "I-

"Shh," Kirk replies, smiling. "It's okay." And before Spock can react, he leans in and presses their lips together gently.

The gesture is so unexpected that Spock just sits there frozen for a second before it occurs to him to kiss back. The sensation is everything he has dreamed of, but he cannot shake the idea that something about it feels off. When Kirk reaches up to cup his cheek he realises what it is – he cannot read Kirk's emotions. It is as if his mind is a blank.

The realisation makes his eyes fly open, just as the sensation of Kirk's lips on his vanishes. He is alone.

He turns in his seat, looking in all directions, but Kirk has vanished. Spock frowns, reaching up absently to touch his lips, where the feeling of Kirk's kiss still lingers. It should be impossible for anyone to vanish so completely that quickly, and yet, it appears that is what has happened.

Disquieted, he rises from his seat and makes his way back to the ballroom.

He is not entirely surprised to find Kirk already there, in the process of accepting a drink from one of the waiters that dot the room. His previous companion is nowhere to be seen, a fact that Spock would be thankful for if he weren't currently so confused.

Kirk smiles and raises the cup in greeting as Spock approaches. "There you are," he says. "I was wondering where you'd got to."

"I was in the gardens," he says. "As were you."

Kirk gives him a puzzled look. "No, I wasn't," he says. "I was here. I've been meaning to take a look at the gardens, but I haven't had a chance."

"You do not remember meeting me outside?" Spock presses. "Under the tree?" It takes effort to keep his voice steady.

Kirk shakes his head slowly. "I don't know what to tell you, Spock. I haven't left this room. I don't know who you met out there, but it wasn't me."

"If I may interrupt, gentlemen?"

They both turn to see one of the Vilarians standing beside them. He looks between them, then focuses on Spock and says, "When you saw this image of your captain, were you sitting under the Galea tree?"

"Do you mean the one with the red and white blossoms?" Spock asks, and the Vilarian nods vigorously.

"Yes, exactly! The Galea tree is a very special tree indeed, sir." He leans in and adds in a confidential tone, "It is said that if one sits under it in the light of three moons, they will see the face of their true love." All four hands clasp together in excitement as he adds, "It is a rare gift, sir. You are very fortunate to have experienced it!"

Spock stands frozen, afraid to so much as glance in Kirk's direction. The Vilarian looks between them once more, then bows deeply. "I shall leave you now. You must both have much to discuss."

There is a moment of silence after the Vilarian leaves, in which Spock determinedly does not look at Kirk. "So," Kirk says. "You saw me in the gardens."

Spock forces himself to remain still. "I... may have been mistaken."

"You seemed pretty certain a minute ago." Kirk's voice is soft. "Would you please look at me?"

Spock startles at a touch on his arm. Even through his clothing he can feel the familiar essence of Kirk's mind, so different from the lifeless image in the gardens.

He forces his gaze upwards, to Kirk's face. He expects discomfort, or even disgust, but finds nothing but warmth and affection. Kirk's hand slides down his arm, brushing across his fingers before clasping them gently. Kirk's emotions flow into Spock in a flood, making him breathless.

"I wasn't in the gardens," Kirk says quietly. "But I'm pretty sure I know what I would've seen if I had been." He holds Spock's gaze for a moment, letting him see the sincerity there.

Spock swallows, feeling as if he has been set adrift. "And the Minister's daughter?"

He regrets the words as soon as they are out, but Kirk just smiles. "Saera is over there, dancing with her own true love." He nods towards the dancefloor.

Spock follows his gaze to see the woman in question with her arms around another, female Vilarian. "I see."

"Our discussion was purely anthropological," Kirk explains. "I'm the first human she's ever met." He gives Spock's hand a quick squeeze and adds, "I don't think she was impressed, honestly. Too few arms."

"Indeed," Spock murmurs, feeling suddenly foolish. "Jim, I-"

"It's okay," Kirk interrupts. "I know." He smiles slowly, intimately, and adds, "How about we go for a walk? I want to take a look at this tree."

His tone holds promises of more, and Spock clears his throat, something suspiciously like joy beginning to well in his chest. "I would like that," he says.

Kirk gives his hand a final squeeze before stepping away, his eyes twinkling. "Well, then, Mister Spock," he says. "Lead on."

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