

This is the Moment!

"Welcome to *Space Station Nexus*, Captain Argent," Acting Station Commander, Commander Senior Grade Alexandra Romanova greeted Captain Kyle Descoyne Argent, the incoming Station Commander as he walked off the transporter platform.

"Commander Senior Grade Romanova," he replied thrusting out his hand to shake hers, then handing her a datapadd.

Sasha quickly read the datapadd and once she noted that all was in order, nodded her head.

"Well, let's get this over with," Kyle began, "Commander Senior Grade Alexandra Romanova, I relieve you," he stated while all but coming to attention.

Sasha hesitated a split second before she gave her final command as acting the Station Commander.

"Captain Argent, I stand relieved. Computer, please note the time in the station log. As of this moment Command of *Nexus Station* is transferred to Captain Kyle D. Argent."

"*You got it, dollface*," the station computer replied.

Sasha noted the raised eyebrow of the new Station Commander. She leaned over to him and whispered, "Sir, I'll tell you about it later."

When she saw her new boss nod in assent, she took a deep breath and proceeded to introduce the new Station Commander to the Division Heads. It wasn't until she was finished that she finally noticed that an elegant dark skinned woman was quietly waiting in the background. Sasha was concentrating so intensely on not blowing the change of command or her introductions of the Division Heads, she completely forgot about the new Chief Medical Officer.

"Captain Arcadia Argent, I presume," Sasha began.

"Indeed, however, there is only one *Captain Argent* here on *Nexus Station*. Please call me Doctor Argent," Arcadia replied.

Sasha extended her hand. She noted that Arcadia's handshake was quite friendly though she was taken aback by Arcadia's deep voice tinged with a British accent. She also took a good look at Arcadia's hand and noted that the mahogany color of her skin extended to the palms of her hands, as opposed to

being lighter as most Terrans are. Then Sasha remembered that Arcadia was Vaegan and as such, while she looked very Terran, she wasn't.

"Doctor Argent, Welcome to *Nexus Station*. May I present the Division Heads?" she began as she introduced Arcadia.

"Commander," Kyle began as he noted that Sasha was finished introducing his wife around. "If you don't mind, I'd like to go on to my office now."

"Yes, sir." Sasha turned to the Heads and told them in a clear voice, "*Dismissed!*" She turned back to Kyle, "If you would follow me, Captain."

Kyle began to follow her but turned back to give Arcadia a brief hug. "I'll see you later," he whispered to her and mouthed a quick 'I love you' to her as he was walking out the door. Her mouthed reply of 'I know', though equally silent, was enough to draw a smile from Kyle that in turn managed to ease the tension in Arcadia as she watched him leave her.

"Doctor Argent?" a tentative voice rose up from behind Arcadia.

"Yes," she turned to face a rather young man who was clearly nervous who'd she been introduced to as the Acting CMO.

"Ma'am, may I escort you to the Benjamin Pierce Memorial Hospital?" Ensign Jarlath Savin began nervously.

Arcadia warmly smiled at him, which put him immediately at ease. "Thank you, Ensign, I would appreciate that."

* * *

"Your office, Captain..." Sasha opened the door and allowed Kyle to enter. He looked around and noted that while the office was spacious enough, it wasn't furnished within an inch of its life. It had a large desk, comfortable chair, several chairs for visitors, and a large table for meetings with shelves to house various odds and ends.

Kyle walked around to his new chair and sat down, indicating that Sasha should do the same in the chair in front of his desk.

"Commander, I'd like to have a meeting with the Division Heads in a few days. Please arrange for it," he began as he turned on the computer.

"Hi ya Captain Argent! Damn you are tall! Genes or just a hyperactive pituitary?" a disembodied voice suddenly blurted out.

Kyle cocked an eyebrow as he looked towards his XO for an explanation.

"That's Sparky, the station computer. He's a product of a follow up experiment to Doctor Daystrom's attempt to add more sentience in a computer and well, the project was abandoned but Sparky remains. You get used to him... eventually... maybe. If you are lucky... sir..."

"I'm sure I will," Kyle all but purred as he sat back in his chair. "Hello Sparky."

"How are you boss? How's it hanging?"

"Straight and low, as always," Kyle adroitly retorted.

"Oh..." Sparky clearly had not expected a response like that.

Sasha couldn't help but smile at the exchange. "Is it now?" she finally interjected.

Kyle's head snapped up towards Sasha. "Errr... You can ask my wife. I'm sure she'll give you a personal testimonial."

Kyle heard Sasha snort while he as he switched off the computer, despite Sparky's protestations of said action being "No Fair!" and turned to her. "Why don't you tell me about *Nexus*. I've read the official reports and though they do say quite a bit about what the station *ought* to be, I've found that most reports are usually utterly devoid of information pertaining to just what the current situation *really* is."

Sasha sized up her new Commanding Officer once again. *Perhaps there just might be something there in him...* she thought. He certainly knew how to get to the point and get to it fast. Thus, she began giving her description of how she perceived things *really* were on *Nexus*. Yes, *Nexus* was in deep trouble, but there certainly was more than enough room for the station and the whole sector for that matter to get back on it's feet -- if only managed properly.

"I suppose this is not very surprising." Kyle paused and decided he liked what he saw in her. Honestly and candor after all, were virtues in his book. "I'm going to level with you, Commander. I've not held a command level post before and being handed a Station such as *Nexus* is most likely a daunting task, even for a seasoned commanding officer. Beyond that, my orders state pretty clearly

that my primary reason for being here is to oversee the rebuilding and re-development of a fighter presence on this station."

Kyle stood and walked to the lone window in his office. "In short, if I was confronted with such a reality, I would most certainly write the person off as yet another political appointee. I'd just try to keep myself out of trouble whilst things are crashing down around me and hope for a better assignment next time." Kyle suddenly turned and fixed Sasha with his gaze. "Is that how you feel?"

Sasha hesitated only for a fraction of a second. "With all due respect, *sir*, you just said that that is how *you* would feel."

"Cute," Kyle flatly retorted.

She knew that he was expecting more of her. He'd either be good in this assignment or this tour of duty would be very long indeed. "My grandmother," Sasha began, "once told me that sometimes we all can expect to slip and fall off a deep cliff and into deep, dark water. That's life. What you do next is what is important."

"You sink or swim." Kyle almost smiled as he turned to face the window overlooking one of *Nexus* four docking arms once more. "Smart woman, your Grandmother."

"Oh, I think so myself," Sasha shot back. "You'll either sink or swim. Ultimately this is just another job like all the other ones. It has its problems and its pitfalls, but in the end it's what *you* make of it that counts."

Kyle turned to face her once more. He had liked what he had heard from Sasha. The final pieces of the puzzle now seemed to be forming up. He had been given the liberty to request anyone Starfleet personnel could spare to act as his Station XO and had already narrowed his list down to a couple of candidates. But when analyzing the reports that had been filed by *Nexus* in the past, it was readily apparent that there was much left unsaid. The previous Station Commanders certain were good Starfleet Officers to the very last, but almost none of them either had understood or wanted to understand the complexities that usually came with administering a self-contained city in space. That sort of experience only came with time and local exposure. Alexandra Romanova had been on *Nexus* for several years now and he was the fourth Commanding Officer she had worked with. She had the knowledge -- Kyle wanted to be sure she had what he knew it would take to work not under but with and alongside him.

"I am here to whip this place into shape as well as build the fighter presence up in this sector. That is my primary responsibility. The latter I've done before and will no doubt do again in the future. However the former will require time -- time for me to get to know this station, this sector and the people who inhabit both. For now I'm going to be spending most of my time trying to play catch-up on all things *Nexus*. Therefore, I would like you to continue as the main administrator for the station until further notice."

If Sasha was surprised by his candor, her face or eyes didn't betray her. "Aye, sir."

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After Arcadia met all the staff, she asked if the Assistant CMO would step into her office.

"Thank you Mister Savin," she began as she pointed to the seat in front of her desk and she herself sat down. As she sat down, her eyes swept the room and noted that while this office was a bit smaller than her Ready Room on her old *USS Stellar Wind*, it was certainly nice and, much to her pleasure, the desk was larger.

"Ma'am?" Savin began hesitantly.

"I looked over the records whilst travelling here to *Nexus* and I must congratulate you and the staff for holding things together as well as you have. Doctor Dewey Millicent mucked up things pretty badly before he was relieved of duty."

Jarlath said nothing but his opinion was that of his new CMOs, only, he believed it would have put it much stronger.

"I'm not sure," she continued, "what the bloody hell was going on here on *Nexus*, but it's about to stop. I aim to turn the *Pierce* into one of the best deep space trauma hospitals in this patch of space. But first things first, I've read your report but I'd like to hear it from you directly as to what you'd like to see done."

Clearly taken aback by his new boss, it took a few moments for Jarlath to recover. "Well, Ma'am, these are the areas I have identified...."

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"It's a tall order, Captain," Sasha began as she looked over her notes.

"Tell me about it," Kyle replied as he poured a glass of iced tea and motioned to Sasha who declined a refill on hers.

She paused and looked at the new CO of the Station. "I do have a suggestion, Sir."

"And that is, Commander?" he replied as he leaned back in his chair as he took a sip of the cold tea.

"These are ambitious projects you have in mind and I suggest that we increase the Command Staff. Other than a yeoman, I would also suggest a Chief of Staff."

Kyle groaned inwardly. He had never, ever had as much as one person on his personal staff -- and now a yeoman *and* a Chief of Staff?

"Do you have anyone in mind?"

"Actually, sir, I do. Ensign Melody Marlowe and Lieutenant Jefferson El Safer -- both are very competent officers, work *very* well together and would be well suited for what you have in mind, Captain. El Safer in particular seems to know this station and who does what in or on it better than anyone else. I think he would be a great asset during your 'learning process'."

"Very well. An ensign, you say? I never heard of many officers pulling yeoman duty."

"Ensign Marlowe just seems to be... err...uniquely qualified for the job."

"Oh?"

"So much so that some might say that she is uniquely suited for this job and just about no other in Starfleet today."

Kyle cocked an eyebrow. "Have them here as soon as you can."

"Aye, Captain."

"Anything else, Commander?"

Sasha paused as she considered, "No, sir. I don't believe so."

"Have the Interim Director Flight Operations see me as soon as he can."

"Aye, sir," she responded as she departed his office.

"This is going to be a long assignment," Kyle muttered to himself as he turned on his link.

"I can shorten it for you, Kyle! Just go to Airlock 513 at 1400 hours and..." Sparky brightly answered his hail.

Kyle stared at his terminal screen incredulously. "And then *what?*" Kyle barked sharply at the computer.

"Nothing. Just fooling with ya, Kyle. You know us 'puters can't hurt you humans. It's in our programming and whatnot."

"That's Captain Argent to you," Kyle informed the computer despite the urge to launch into a rather a lengthy discourse of just what he thought of Sparky's alleged programming -- and for that matter, just what he could do with it. *I'm really going to have to get used to a computer that talks back like this,* Kyle mused then smiled as he got an idea.

"Operations?"

"This is Ensign Morgana Reno, Assistance Chief of Ops."

"This is Captain Argent. Schedule a comprehensive main computer memory remapping for..."

"Hey! That'll hurt!" Sparky interrupted.

Kyle began a slow and sinister laugh.

"You're mean!" Sparky cried.

"You learn fast, Sparky and I can do *much* worse if you don't shape up," Kyle told the computer with a wolfish smile.

"You can't!"

"I suggest you read my academy record again. I assure you that I can."

"Gleep!"

"Behave?"

"Yes, sir...." Sparky sniffed.

"Very well. Sparky, I understand from Commander Romanova that if I want to know what's really going on around here, I should ask you."

"Aww... *she's a cutie all right! Well, where should I start?*" Sparky mused.

"Start at the beginning," Kyle told him as he sat back to listen to what Sparky had to say.

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"Thank you, Mister Savin, that was most informative." *Unfortunately*, considered Arcadia as she had just listened to her Assistant Chief Medical Officer give her the run down of what really had gone on around here during the tenure of Doctor Millicent. Apparently, the reports she read about him were much too kind. As far as she knew, Savin held back no punches.

"If that's truly the case, we have our work cut out for us. I'm bringing in a new Chief of Staff who I *know* will assist me. He considers himself to be one of Starfleet Marines' oldest Second Lieutenant...." noting the look of confusion on Jarlath's face, she clarified, "Dwight Ivanan is a career Marine Corpsman who decided in his late career to become a commissioned officer. He's seen combat duty with me during the One-Year War and believe it or not, worked with Captain Argent in the past. Trust me when I say he'll be an asset to the staff."

Jarlath tried to disguise the disappointment in his face but it was too late as Arcadia had already seen it.

"I really need someone to be in charge of our satellite clinics as well as our secondary hospital, the Saks. I can't afford to spend my time just getting the Pierce up and running to standard without having the other medical facilities still lagging behind. Therefore, I'd like to put you in as the Administrator of all adjunct medical facilities."

Jarlath's face brightened at this prospect. This was quite a bit of responsibility for a mere ensign.

"A lot for a mere ensign?" she spoke the question that was on his mind. When he looked at her as if she could read minds. "No, I don't read minds. My Talent doesn't work that way, but I've been at this long enough to know the signs." Her smile put him immediately at ease.

"Good, now that this is settled, why don't you leave me to finish up what niggly bits need to be done and I'd appreciate it if you would schedule a Department Heads meeting. Might as well get this show on the road."

"Aye, ma'am!" Jarlath responded as he bounced from his chair and off to take care of business.

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Acting Director, Flight Ops, LtCdr Lars Lysander cautiously entered the Old Man Argent's office all the while thinking that it had been years since he was a trainee and Argent was the instructor. They had called him "Old Man" then and the name seemed to have stuck with him through the years. Lars paused to look at him. All in all, the Iceman looked just about the same as he had when he was drilling his Nuggets to within an inch of their sanity. The gray at his temples might have gotten a bit larger, perhaps a few more lines on his face, but ultimately he looked just like the same man Lars had known about ten years ago. At this rate, Argent would be calling *him* "Old Man" before long.

"Good to see you again, Commander," Kyle began indicating that Lars should take the chair in front of Kyle's desk. "I thought we'd get down to business," Kyle started as he began to tell Lars what he expected.

"...And Captain Blair will be coming in a few months," concluded Kyle, "I'll expect you to continue as acting DFO until he arrives. The new Shadowhawks will be here around the same time as Blair arrives, so you've got a reprieve on that. I'll want to tour the Hangar Deck later in the week. Any questions?"

"No sir, no questions," Lars finally managed to reply before he was dismissed from the office.

Lars considered what he had just been told. The new DFO, Captain Terrence Blair was just as untested as the erstwhile Station Commander. No matter, as the call sign he chose, "Viking," he would persevere. On the other hand, morale might just perk up with Argent around. It wasn't every day that one got the opportunity to strut one's stuff in front of one of the more renowned Aces in the Corps.

The great Ultimate only knows that something was needed to pick up morale around here.

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"Is Captain Argent finished for the day?" Arcadia asked Sasha as she had just come out of the Captain's office.

"Err... actually, he's busy, Doctor. Would you care to wait?" she responded.

Arcadia cocked an eyebrow. "Tell me Commander, did he have lunch?"

Sasha hesitated, not sure how to answer the question. "I'm not sure, Doctor."

"Why aren't you sure?"

"Because, Doctor, I wasn't with him the entire day," Sasha smoothly replied.

"I'll accept that," Arcadia answered in a serious tone then looked to the door of his office. "Is what he's doing that important?"

Before Sasha could answer, a tall, elegant dark skinned woman bounded out of the office and made a beeline for Arcadia.

"You must be Doctor Argent! The Captain has told me all about you!"

"Indeed?" Arcadia responded wondering exactly what Kyle told her -- whoever she is. Before she had a chance to ask the woman who the bloody hell she was, Arcadia was interrupted.

"Doctor Argent, may I introduce you to the Captain's yeoman, Ensign Melody Marlowe," Sasha smoothly interceded.

"Ms Marlowe, pleased to meet you," Arcadia began as she shook Melody's hand while giving her a close look over.

"The Captain has told me *all* about you! I can't believe you were actually a starship commanding officer and he was your wing commander! And you both got married after he won the Rigel Cup! That is just *soooo* romantic!" she gushed.

I wonder what else he told her, Arcadia considered before she answered. "That's all quite true." Arcadia narrowed her eyes before she asked her next question. "Ms Marlowe, do you know whether or not the Captain ate lunch today."

The question stopped Melody cold in her tracks. "I.... err..." Melody looked to Sasha for assistance and received none. "Doctor Argent, I don't believe so."

Arcadia smiled as her eyes swept the two ladies. "I see. In that case and because the hour grows late, he must have his sustenance." She smiled a wicked grin, "Doctor's orders." She paused to consider, "And since these are

doctor's orders, I'll deliver them in person. Is there anyone with him?" she asked the two woman standing before her.

"No, Doctor," Melody finally managed to answer.

"Excellent, in that case, I shall take my leave."

Arcadia knocked on the door and walked in.

Kyle immediately looked up and was about to read the riot act to the person who dared enter his inner sanctum when a smile broke out all over his face.

"Arcadia!"

"Not so fast, Captain," she started as she took a seat in front of his desk.

"Something wrong?" he asked noting the look of concern on her face.

"Did you eat lunch?"

"Lunch?"

"Lunch. That meal that one has during the middle of his or her day."

"I know what lunch is Arcadia," Kyle grumbled.

"Tsk. Captain, as the CMO of *Nexus* it is my duty to ensure that all personnel receive adequate nutrition... and you didn't answer my question." Kyle sighed. "No, I didn't have lunch."

"In that case, Captain...." Arcadia stood and walked over to his terminal. "Sorry Sparky, the Captain is leaving for the day."

"*Doctor Argent!*" he snarled.

"*Captain Argent!*" she barked in return.

His answer was to cross his arms in defiance.

"Don't give me that. Look, you've been here for long enough. What ever you have to do will wait. You have a staff. Let them do their job. Besides..." she began with a smile on her face, "*I'm* hungry."

Despite feelings to the contrary, he felt a smile cross his face as he stood up. "You win. Sparky, log me out for the day."

"Aye, aye, Captain! Good night Kyle. Good night Arcadia."

Kyle was about to say something to Sparky when Arcadia interrupted him.

"By the way, Kyle. Nice desk, I foresee many uses for it," she replied with a wicked grin.

"Oh? Perhaps we could have a quick... appetizer?" Kyle shot back with a boyish grin that indicated his mind had latched onto something he *really* liked.

"Hey! Hey! Excuuuse me!" Sparky interjected indignantly. *"You two aren't alone here. I have to work on that desk, damn it!"*

Arcadia raised an eyebrow in amusement. Kyle, on the other hand, stood and shook his head while covering his eyes. The stream of obscenities that followed indicated that Kyle's working relationship with the station's computer had proven itself to be more than just mildly interesting so far. Before the situation got any worse, Arcadia decided to take charge.

"Dinner," she said in a resolute tone.

"Dinner," Kyle echoed with a sense of resignation in his voice.

"By the way, I met your yeoman," she told him with a bit of an edge to her voice as they left his office.

"Oh my!" He teased as he offered her his elbow, "you can't possibly be jealous?"

"Not in the least. Besides, I know what kind of shorts you like to wear," she smiled as they stopped near Sasha who was standing next to Melody's empty desk.

"Well, now, she is rather pretty," Kyle retorted wryly as he eyed the empty desk. "Actually, now that I think about it -- I think 'Stunningly Beautiful' is more like it. Or maybe 'Drop Dead Gorgeous?'"

Arcadia paused long enough to stick out her tongue at her husband. "And old enough to be your daughter, I might remind you."

"You married a younger man...."

Arcadia scowled at him, not having a ready response.

Kyle simply flashed her a warm smile as he gently stroked Arcadia's left cheek. "And I'm so glad you did."

"Commander, I'll be back tomorrow," Captain Kyle Argent told his Executive Officer on his way out of the Command Center.

"Good night, Captain. Good night, Doctor," Sasha called after them.

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"Kyle?" Arcadia began asking the question that had been on her mind ever since Kyle told her months ago that he was taking over as commanding officer of *Nexus*.

"Yes."

"Why?"

"Why what?" he asked as he pushed away the plate that once held his dinner. They decided that they were both much too tired to go out and dine, so they ate in, consuming the best that the replicator could muster.

"This assignment." Arcadia knew that Kyle wouldn't answer her right away, so she took the opportunity to allow her eyes to sweep the quarters that they were assigned. Apparently, whoever designed this station actually considered the fact that there would be joint spouse assignments and perhaps the station commander him or herself would actually be married to another officer. Their quarters very were quite spacious with a large sitting room, a small separate dining area, an office, a large master bedroom, and a smaller bedroom. Kyle took the office for his own and Arcadia made due with the slightly larger second bedroom for hers.

"Why? It was a challenge," he finally told her.

"All assignments are a challenge."

"True."

Arcadia looked at Kyle as his expression changed to one of concern.

"You took the assignment to get away from me, didn't you?" she finally broke the silence.

Kyle immediately looked to her but words failed him.

"Kyle, love. I was the CO of the *Stellar Wind* when I saw your new assignment..." she paused to gather her thoughts, "that you received after you got out of the brig. I had to approve it, after all."

"When you didn't come see me when I was in the brig, I thought we had no future together. I was tired of flying and I wanted someplace where I could anchor myself."

"I'm so, so sorry," she told him as she fought to hold back a tear.

"Don't be. What done is done. Besides, this is one assignment where we could be together. I didn't want a ship where we'd be apart. I've done that and I refuse to do that again," he told her firmly.

"Kyle, I promise you. What ever happens, I'll be here for you. One reason why I became re-certified in radiology was to give me another avenue for assignment. Besides, if I had to give up surgery for whatever reason, I could immediately go into radiology. I don't want to be apart from you either."

"You are part of me," Kyle whispered tenderly.

"And you are part of me," Arcadia replied as she snuggled closer to her husband.

Kyle lovingly looked at the woman nestled up against him. He reached over and squeezed her hand. "Thank you."

Arcadia decided that she would savor the moment for as long as possible. She looked at his contented, but tired face and made a decision. "Pilot, we've both had a long day. How about we have a shower and I give you a massage?"

"A complete massage, Milady?" he asked with a wicked grin.

"But of course," she replied while allowing her robe to fall to the deck.

* * *

It took no time for both Captain Argents settled into the routine of running a station and medical facilities. While they made a point of having breakfast and dinner together each day, Arcadia thought perhaps it was time for a midday get together.

Chief Medical Officer Arcadia Argent looked at her chronometer and the pile of work still to be done and decided she needed a break. "Besides," she mused aloud, "if I'm this swamped, Kyle is probably worse off." She leaned back in her chair to consider her alternatives when she came upon an idea.

"Sparky?"

"*Hello toots!*" Sparky responded.

I hate being called Toots. It's so undignified, however, now's not the time to try and tame this computer. "Sparky, query Captain Argent's schedule and see if he has an hour free around 1300."

"He's free, beautiful."

Arcadia rolled her eyes and pressed on. "Excellent. Please make an official appointment with the Captain and send a copy to the XO."

"You got it sweetie!"

Arcadia snapped off her link and wondered how many years in the brig she'd have to spend if she killed the station computer. Too many years away from Kyle she finally decided.

Not wanting to answer any of Sparky's questions, she manually pulled up the list of restaurants on the Mall and noted that one, the Nexalodeon delivered. She put a call to request that they deliver a full picnic lunch for two at her office at 12.30.

Noon-thirty came quicker than she realized as she was interrupted by the delivery. She told her yeoman, Senior Petty Officer Electra Triton that she would be gone until 1400 and to not disturb her unless it was an emergency. Even though the Station was quite large, it didn't take Arcadia long to arrive at the Command Center.

"Doctor!" Melody Marlowe, Captain Argent's yeoman greeted her like a long-lost cousin.

"Good to see you again, Ensign Marlowe, I'm here for my appointment with the Captain. But before that, is Commander Romanova free?"

While Melody was obviously confused, she simply answered. "She's in her office."

"Ask her if she has a moment. I see her yeoman isn't around to make the query."

Melody tapped her link and looked back to Arcadia. "She's free. You can go right in, Doctor."

"Thank you, Ms Marlowe."

"Commander, please don't get up. I won't keep you long," Arcadia began as she walked into Sasha's office.

"What can I do for you, Doctor?"

"A question, if I might."

"Of course. Would you like to sit?" Sasha pointed to the chair in front of her desk.

"Yes, thank you. This basket is a bit heavy. As CO of the *Stellar Wind*, I had over ride on all ship's processes. I assume there is a similar arrangement here on *Nexus*?"

She noted Sasha hesitating, so Arcadia added. "Nothing sinister, I just don't want the Captain and I to be disturbed."

It took several seconds for Sasha to understand Arcadia's statement. "To answer your question, he does."

"And that extends to his office?"

"It does...." Sasha hesitated, "though if the Captain uses a command override, I am informed of this."

"I see." Arcadia paused to consider. "Commander, let's just say that if you do receive such an authorization and you *know* that I'm with him or you don't suspect any foul play, let's just say that I'd appreciate it if you wouldn't override the override...." She allowed her voice to trail off in hopes that Sasha understood what she was trying to say.

Sasha had plenty of practice keeping her personal feelings under wraps and she was glad for the skill this day. "I shall... Doctor."

"Excellent." Arcadia stood and grabbed the picnic basket. "Nothing short of a Romulan invasion."

"Understood..."

Arcadia began to leave Sasha's office and then turned back towards her. "Thank you, and by the way, the name's Arcadia," she told her as she left the office.

"Captain Argent told me to tell you to go right in, Doctor," Melody informed her.

"Thank you, Ms Marlowe. See that we aren't disturbed, if you please."

"Aye, ma'am."

Arcadia knocked on the door and entered.

"What's with the formality?" Kyle began as he walked towards her to give her a kiss. "And what's this?" he asked pointing to the basket.

"Lunch. But first...." she leaned over to whisper to Kyle. His response was to cock an eyebrow and smile.

"You sure about this?" he finally asked.

"I checked with your XO. She knows not to disturb you," Arcadia told him.

Kyle walked back over to his desk and sat down.

"Sparky!"

"*Yes, Captain?*"

Before Kyle could issue the command, he saw that Arcadia was glaring at him. "What's wrong?"

"How *did* you do that?" she asked incredulously.

"Do what?" Kyle asked.

"Get Sparky to behave!"

"*Hey!*" Sparky interrupted.

"*Quiet Sparky!*" Kyle commanded.

"*Yes, Captain...*" Sparky meekly replied.

"Captain's prerogative," Kyle smugly told her. Her response was to snort in disgust.

"Sparky, command authorization override for this room."

"Captain! Are you sure?"

"Just do it Sparky!" Kyle ordered.

"Yes, sir. Override commencing."

"Are we alone?" Arcadia asked both Kyle and Sparky.

"Very much so..." Kyle responded while the normally talkative Sparky remained silent.

Arcadia walked over to Kyle's desk with Kyle following her. She moved the datapadds and other material away from the surface and perched herself on it.

"I thought we could have lunch," she began as she removed her tunic.

"Food?" he asked.

"Later..." she replied as she pulled him on top of her.

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"I'm afraid that's the best I can do without a medkit, Kyle," Arcadia told him as she tried to fix the gash that bisected his right cheek.

"At least I don't have to go on the Flight Deck today," he winced while finishing his cup of soup.

"Besides, Kyle, no one is going to dare give you the 'business' like Roscoe did back on the *'Wind'*."

"True enough, but people will talk."

"Oh and what 'people' are you talking about?" she asked.

"My staff for one?"

"Kyle love, trust me when I say this but I rather doubt it. I think they rather like working for you." She paused as she finished dabbing at his wound.

"There, all done." She looked at the chronometer. "I must be off, after all, I don't want people to talk, do I?"

Kyle walked her over to the door, not allowing her to go without giving her one last kiss. "Wonderful lunch. I didn't know you could cook so well," he smirked as he held her tightly.

"Try me again next week, and I may have a different menu," she purred but quickly became all business. "Kyle, I *must* go."

"I know," he whispered.

"See you tonight, Pilot?"

While he didn't answer her, she knew from his smile that he'd be waiting for her.

"Have a good lunch?" Melody all but beamed at her as she walked out of Kyle's office.

"It was delightful. Thank you for asking, Melody," Arcadia replied as she shifted the picnic basket to her other hand and made her way back to her own office deciding all the while what they would have for dessert this evening.

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