

Chapter 10

“Who Am I To Fight The Universe?”



The ship was busy today. The crew had gone in regular shifts to sick bay to get their injections against the dreaded Blurdeosious disease. It rarely killed, but the side effects were uncomfortably horrible. The crew would've been out for at least a week. Sleep would be crucial to their recovery. The disease carried symptoms of a high fever, rash and excruciating back pain making mobility almost impossible.

What was Kitara really involved in this mess? Maybe, if he would've stayed closer to her this might not have happened. But according to Brel, she'd been involved with Garnash for a long time before the war. None of them saw it coming. She promised the earth to him at one point and he believed her. No one ever stabs you in the front!

He remembered vividly how Kitara had overreacted to Admiral Bane's request that Addie Stuart accompany them on their mission. Addie was a Satorian and Kitara hated any race that was against the Federation during the big war that left her without a family. He now wondered what truly happened to her family. Sarantos found himself questioning everything he knew about Kitara. He even questioned his own competence as a leader for not noticing her as a traitor. Sometimes the difference between fear and love is the blink of an eyelash. He had mistakenly considered her to be someone who believed in proper ethics and held her in high regard. Her soul must have drowned in the blood of guilt a long time ago however. She deserved credit for playing the game well. He surmised that this was probably a good time to lower his expectations of people in general. With the wrinkles of time, there is all that knowledge...

To be a Captain of a Starfleet ship he needed finely tuned skills and he honestly had thought he had these. He had taken many classes on behavior and profiling. He thought his schooling had properly prepared him to avoid situations such as this. A lot of good that'd done him. As far as he was concerned, his education had failed him and he in turn failed his crew. Maybe, a class in avoiding the female persuasion would have suited him better. He was close to Kitara and couldn't see what was going on right under his nose. Maybe he should stop sleeping with everybody!

There was no thawing the ice inside his soul at this moment. He might have the eyes and heart of good man but attractive women repeatedly blinded him and simply outweighed his common sense. All these girls were looking for what he already had. Yet, time and time again he was weak. As a Captain, he should be able to put aside the obvious and see the hidden truth behind everything and everyone. If he couldn't, the solution was obvious – he shouldn't be a Captain. It was that simple. He was close to Kitara and could not see what was going on right under his nose. He lived in a boy's dream.

He was beating himself up when his IC went off.

“Captain, Major Cleary here. We’re almost done with the inoculations. I pulled in my whole crew to assist me. Give us another half hour at the most. Cleary out.”

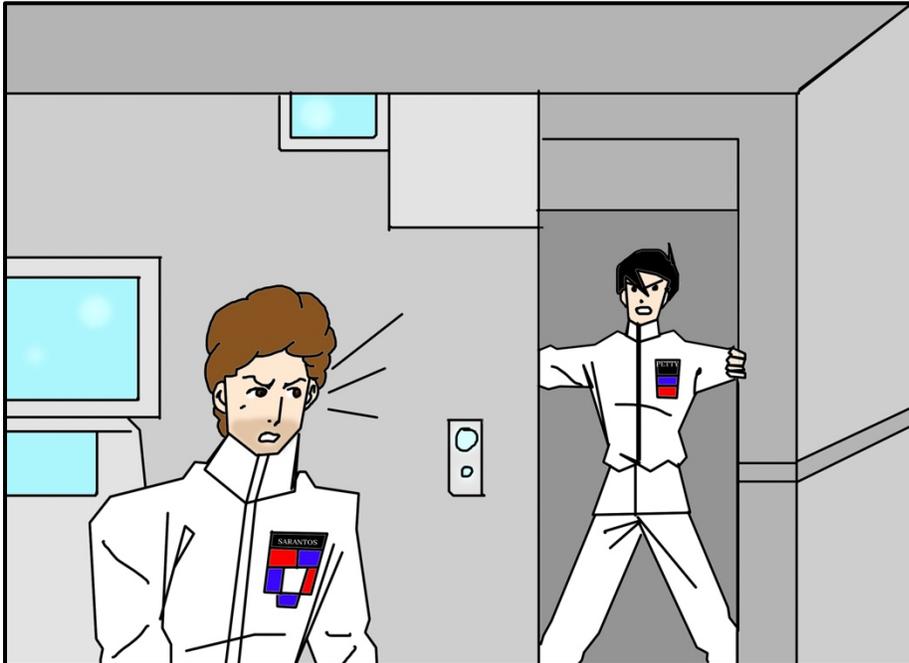
Good. At least she was efficient and focused on her job. Gosh, he’d even slept with her too. Oh yeah, that happened.

In the tick of a clock, his thoughts went back to his lack of conducting himself in a qualified manner. He was half past the point of no return. That’s exactly where he was. He hated himself. He hated his way of living. The struggle to always be good seemed never-ending. He wanted to stand for something because if you don’t stand for something, you stand for nothing at all!

What possessed Kitara to hang out with a creep like Garnash? She must know him very well for him to offer her membership into the private club known as the Drifters. This was a clandestine club that was full of ruthless usurpers. The fact that the Drifters belonged to no family made him wonder if Kitara was working with them all along from the very beginning. Could she have killed her own family to earn her membership to belong to that horrifying club? He shook his head. How could he think that way about a woman he dated at one point and made love to? Oh, my God. What if she had killed her family? That made him feel sick inside and he just might need to throw up. The wrecking ball kept hitting him.

The image of her using him so effortlessly created a new world in front of him. A new world that made him appear traitorous himself as well as anemic, naïve and easily manipulated. How could he face his own image in the mirror? How could he face his crew?

It felt like going to Mars – lonely, red, dusty and unable to survive without a suit. His stomach churned violently. The walls were on fire. He ran to the bathroom where he threw up all the vile discrepancies of his personality. It did not make him feel better though.



“Captain are you all right?” Chief Petty was standing in his ready room.

“No, Petty, I think I might need to go to my quarters. You’re in charge, if you need me I’ll be in my private quarters.”

“Yes, sir.” Petty turned to leave the room.

“Before you go, Petty, was there something you wanted? Sarantos could hardly speak without doubling over.

“It can wait sir. It wasn’t important enough to concern yourself with. It was about your concert, that’s all.”

“Okay, sure. Contact me later, Petty.” Sarantos hurried towards the door. “Contact me later please when I’m feeling better.”

Sarantos bumbled and stumbled his way to his quarters until he finally threw his battered body on the long bed. His head was pounding. How long had it been since his skin felt the sun?

He managed to enjoy the blank and spacious dark universe that filled his massive windows in his quarters. It stared back at him silently. The universe was incredible,

and the tiny stars twinkled with magic making the possibility of dreams feel like a reality just for a moment. For the briefest of moments, he got out of his head. The mistakes he made several years ago should not be as relevant as the ones he was going to make tomorrow.

He let go of that moment though too soon. It wasn't working out for him anyway, no, not at all. This was his curse – he was always optimistic and tried to see the good in people. He would even make an excuse for them when he shouldn't. He forgave way too easily. People always took advantage of him and he always let them. He's a dreamer, always dreaming about better days and always wanting to take everyone along for the ride, not just himself. He wants everyone to be happy. Forget dreams though, because believing was part of dreaming, and he no longer believed in many things or maybe even in anything. What should he believe in anyway? When even the best friendships turn into shattered slivers of glass shards that make him bleed, why should he keep on believing?

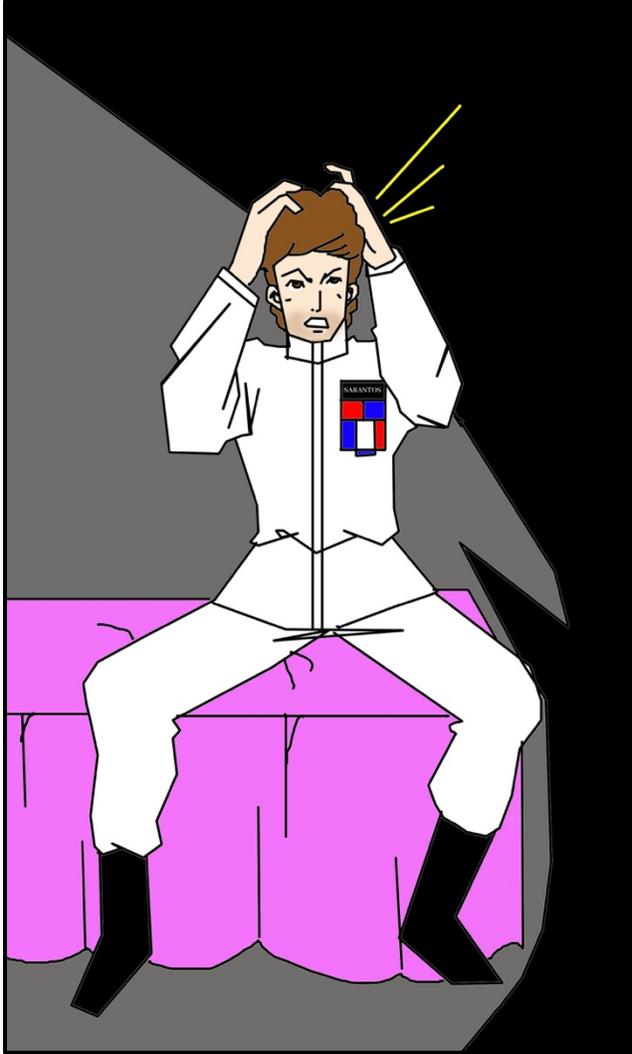
His stomach ached. He knew he was causing it himself, but the pain was too real. He didn't care. The windows gawked back at him with a weird anguish, almost as if they were ready to weep themselves. He was always too hard on himself. Another curse.

He looked past them almost as if he was looking for a sign from the universe. There were so many splendid stars sprinkled across this solar system. His anxiety with himself was overwhelming. How could he have been so dense? The lifeless stars stared back at him, offering him no solace. What good were they anyway? The rhythm of their twinkle screamed for him to accept his destiny. Accept his destiny, or be forever lost in a house of pain.

“Kitara, how could you do this to me...to our friendship? I hate that I still love you, at least as a close friend.”

The moment he said it aloud, he instantly knew it wasn't about him but about this evil person who now engulfed Kitara's main identity. He never did anything because it was easy but he never ever would've befriended or trusted her if he knew what secrets she hid underneath her skin. He didn't see it because he trusted this manipulative woman who used him to get what she wanted. If he found out that Kitara really killed her family, he vowed to make sure she was brought up on murder charges and face prison time. It'd be what she deserved.

Despite the fresh winds of change in his thinking, his mind drifted back to his anger. What about him? A Captain that couldn't identify the enemy doesn't seem like much of a captain. Although it was a catastrophic shortcoming in his eyes, it certainly wasn't deserving of a prison sentence. He knew he'd surely incriminate himself enough to be in a self-imposed prison sentence for many years to come.



He still felt sick. He didn't feel well enough to write or work on his music. A loud moan escaped between his tight lips. He was looking for comfort. Music always created memories that he could hold onto forever but in his moment of need, he just couldn't do it. He was blank.

He had a concert in another day and desperately needed to work on his music but it'd have to wait until tomorrow when he was feeling better. He tried to guilt himself into trying but it didn't work. He just wasn't in the mood.

Music was the only thing that consistently got him off the tarmac, made him fight the fight against the universe. He couldn't allow his consciousness to continue to be

contained within his weakness of crying.

He was unable to attend to his ship though his baby needed him. He let down the others. Enough. So, what! Who cares anyway? Is it that important to his ego to allow what Kitara did to continue to frustrate him and cause him to go into a fathomless funk for the rest of the evening. He needed to tame that ego. Funk her!

Enough was enough. The days of climbing up cliffs with only steep plunging drop offs around every corner and trying to understand what made people tick were over. It went nowhere. He went nowhere. No more wasting his life drowning in his own

self-pity. He was stronger than that. He was meant for something better. His Mama always told him so.

If a query letter went out asking his crew who had it the easiest, he was sure most of the crew would think that the Captain had the easiest job. He was Captain of a Starfleet ship, something most people in the academy only dreamed of achieving. He had the most beautiful woman in the universe in love with him. Most men would give an arm just to touch her once.

He must be mad. Enough.

Maybe, if he quit worrying about what everyone else thought and just enjoyed each minute given to him, he'd be happier. Maybe if he stopped challenging the sun every damn day, he'd be happier. Maybe that meant appreciating the finer details and noticing things like the sun peeking out on a canvas of the universe or Addie's smile shooting straight towards him, like a comet flying across the universe seemingly on a random path but actually knowing full well what its purpose is.

They both warmed people's hearts and gave poets across history something special to write about. Like reflections in the water, artists loved making art and the way their magic moved across their canvas, supplying all of our existence with depth and perspective, inspired many.

He missed the sun when they were in the vastness of space. The brilliance of its light evaded him most of the time.

The sun was inside each of us as well and he needed to make note of that. He remembered noticing the sunlight bursting out of Addie's eyes touching and soothing his tense face and anxious heart. The image calmed him now. He swore to see that spark of sun in everyone and everywhere from this point forward.

The room seemed to light up around him, even though his room hid in the dark shadow of the universe. He knew why. The mere thought of Addie Stuart turned up his sunlight. She was his drug; his addiction and he knew he could trust Addie. There will always be struggle. You just have to pick who you want to struggle with.

In fact, without a doubt knew he could also trust John, Cleary, Brel and Matt. Although, there were others, that's as far as he would go right now.

For the first time since he laid down, he smiled softly. His breathing softened.

The smell of Addie's fragrance lingered on his bed. He grabbed the pillow her gorgeous hair had recently lain across and hugged it tightly to his chest. As his eyes grew heavy, he thought to himself don't look back, because your whole life is waiting straight ahead of you. He took a deep breathe of Addie and fell asleep with the pillow wrapped up firmly in his arms.

Sarantos awakened to the firm voice of Sargent Todd Cam. "Captain, I heard you're not feeling well. Can I be of assistance?"

"Thanks, Sargent. You know Admiral Bane well. Can you contact him and send him to my screen in my private quarters?"

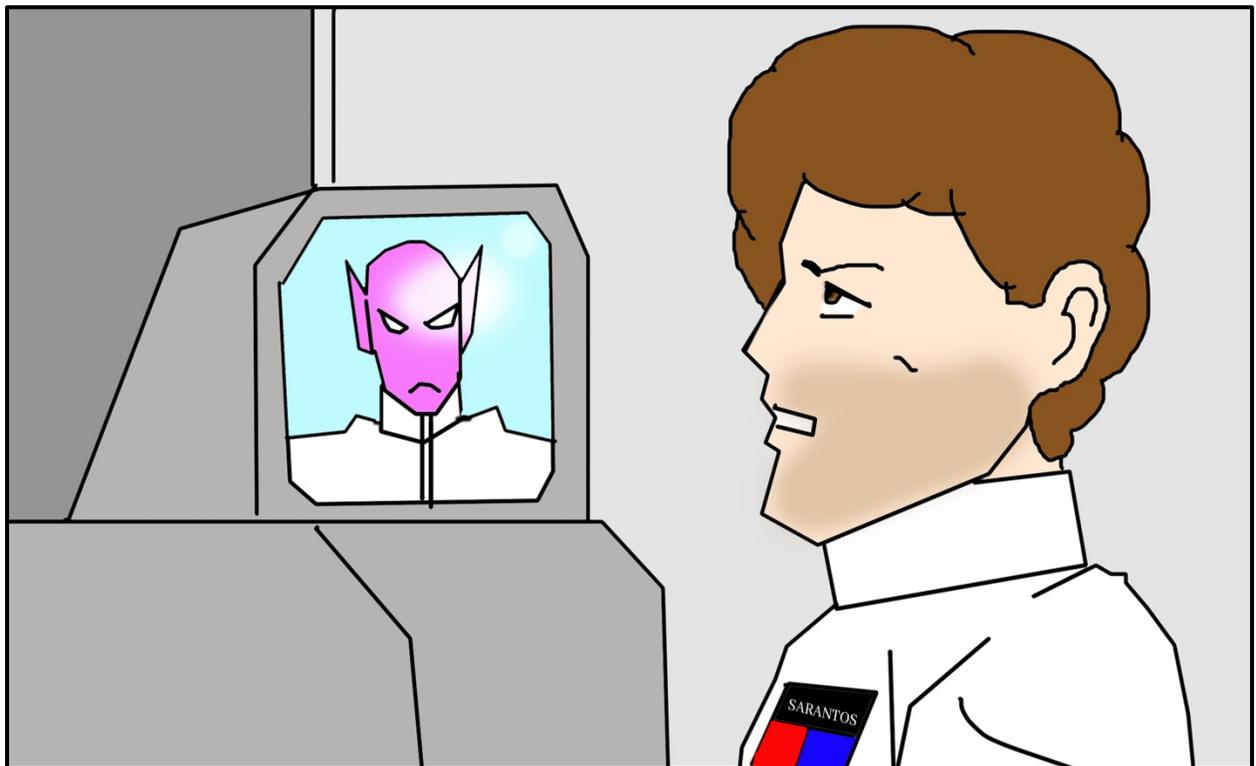
"Right away, Captain."

The time was 21 hundred hours. He'd been asleep for almost three hours. He was no longer sick. He felt are invigorated.

It was okay that Kitara was who she was; he was okay with it. It wasn't good for the Federation or for him but he could deal with it. It was time.

He stood up, grabbed a clean shirt on his way to the bathroom to freshen up before Admiral Bane was on screen.

The computer buzzed. He sat down and logged on, immediately being greeted by Admiral Bane.



The Admiral hadn't changed. The tuft of his blue hair twitched. "Captain Sarantos, what a pleasant surprise. I hope you're not pressuring me to get you and your crew out of there? We're still working on a summary of who's needed where if you know what I mean. Bureaucracy at its worst, right Captain?"

"No Admiral, that's not why I contacted you."

The Admiral shifted positions and looked perplexed. “No? Then why contact me? That’s not like you, Captain Sarantos. Out with it then. I have no patience for evasive behavior.”

“I’m not trying to be evasive sir. Did you assign Kitara to her own mission regarding undercover work with Garnash, the Mangee?”

That was a possibility and thought he would ask that first to be sure.

“What? No! What kind of a fool do you think I am? That Mangee is the worst of his kind. I heard he’s globetrotting around the solar system with the Drifters. Worst kind of Mangee, just the absolute worst. If you know where he’s at, he should be arrested immediately.” He shook his head until the tuft of hair flipped back and forth like a feather in the breeze. “Arrest him, Captain Sarantos. Do you hear me?”

“Well, sir it’s not that simple.”

“What? Not that simple? Two words, Captain. Arrest him. Doesn’t get any simpler than that, does it Captain?”

Sarantos decided to go for the jugular and blurted out the next sentence without any further thought or hesitation.

“Admiral, we have a problem. Kitara and Garnash are constantly indulging in private meetings. We’ve had her tracked and I now strongly suspect her of being a traitor to the Federation.” There. It’s said. It’s out in the open but somehow, he didn’t feel better.

The Admiral's eyes bulged further out of his head and made them look obscene. The pouty lips twitched in the corner, like he had a piece of steak caught in his jaw. His large ears moved like an elephant ready to take off.

“Nonsense, Sarantos. Is this some kind of a joke? I knew her parents. She is first class. What would she be doing with Garnash? Did you ask her?”

“I wouldn't joke about something this serious, sir. I believe she might have killed her parents because she was trying to join the Drifters and you and I both know their motto; no family.”

“Has the world gone mad? Are you certain about your source?”

“Admiral, Brel is my source and his race never lie and as you know, they have an efficiency off the charts. I'm sorry. I've contacted you at the request of Lieutenant Addie Stuart. She wants your opinion on the matter. I want to arrest her immediately along with that louse Garnash but she agrees with Brel's reasoning that a new mission might be able to ensnare all of them also bringing down the Drifters by locating their hideouts. We might have an opportunity to undoubtedly bring to light their whole clandestine underground movement and discover their leaders.”

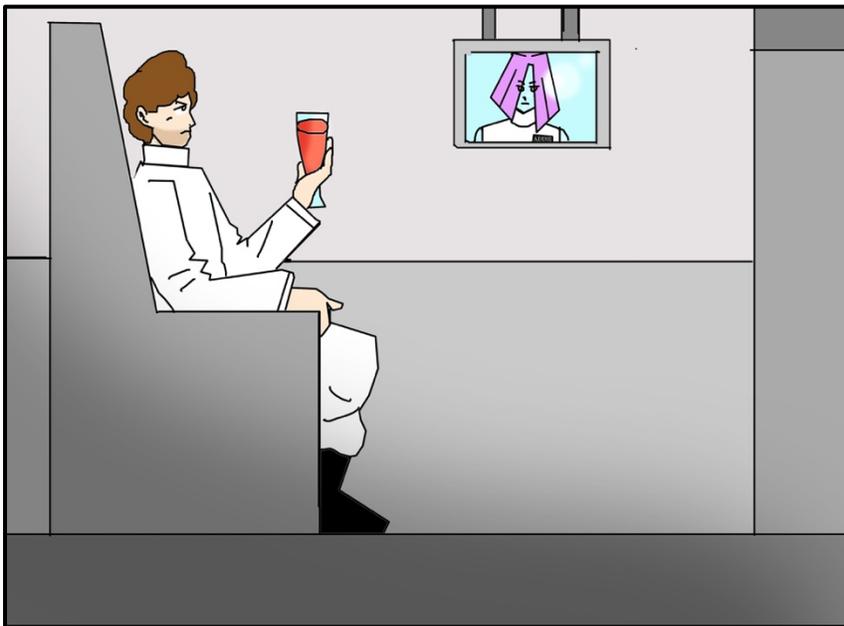
Bane grabbed his left ear and rubbed it like someone might rub their hands together. His eyes moved with his thoughts.

“Right, right you are Sarantos. Good to ask for my advice. Although, I'd love nothing more than to arrest her and that menace Garnash, I must agree with Addie and Brel. We need to eliminate this group once and for all. Oh, it won't eliminate the behavior, but we can certainly make any leftovers start from scratch. If you know what I mean?”

“Yes, Admiral, I do know what you mean. New beginnings take longer to get big.”

“Good, good, Sarantos. Keep me informed and good work to you and your crew. I’m sorry for Kitara. She was a good soldier and someone I thought trustworthy. Out.”

He was gone and that was that. The Admiral had spoken.



Sarantos stood up and got himself a nice red wine. There was no need to make things more complicated than they already were.

His stomach was no longer sick.

“Lieutenant?”

“Yes, Captain?”

“I spoke to Admiral Bane. Two words. Your way.”

“Understood, sir. We’re on it. Out.”

And they would be all over it. They were the two best. If he was ever to feel sorry for Kitara it would be right now, but something in him wouldn’t allow it. He disliked

what she was, or what she'd become. Either way, he wanted her dealt with and there was no longer any conflict within him. Only in momentum do things become clear.

He should've told the Admiral about the Blurdeosious, but he didn't. They handled it, enough said.

Now that he'd spoken to the Admiral and Kitara was handled, he felt a little hungry. He'd missed dinner and decided to stay in and fix something exotic via the replicator. A light pasta with a spicy alfredo sauce would be a good start. His mother's comfort food for him when he was upset as a boy. The fond memories brought a serene smile to his face. It felt good.

He went to the hole in the wall. "OKurian tangle with sweet peppers and white alfredo sauce."

The smell wafted through his home as he gladly picked up the plate and brought it to the table where he sat down and thoroughly enjoyed himself.

Thinking of his mother and his father before their death allowed the considerable melancholy to dissipate further into a black cloud before finally fleeing the room.

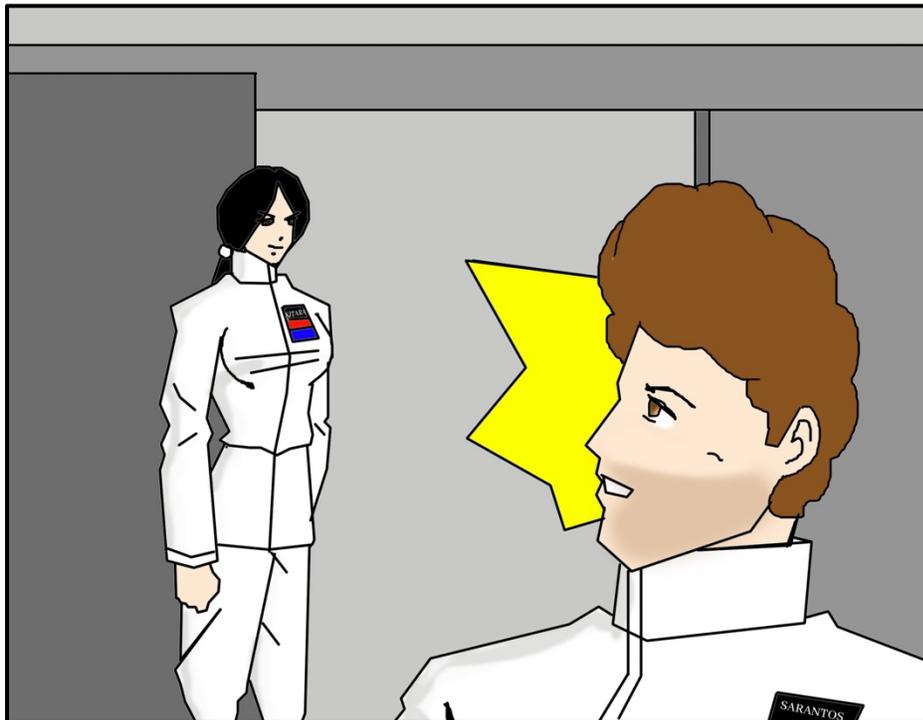
Suddenly, he was mentally back on Okura. His world was free of anxiety and wonderful memories. He was running through corn fields and splashing in the straggly streams that fed the river Starn. He and John Baker used to spend the day moving through these sassy streams in a tube before coming upon their old row boat, which they named Lady Starship. Not a creative name but one they both liked as animated boys.

The reliable yellow boat would carry them out onto the fast-moving river. They'd bring out simple sandwiches for lunch. After their adventures, they'd grab a sweet

bangle off the bangle tree for a healthy and satisfying dessert. It was similar to an apple but much sweeter.

Walking home in the dark was a perk, because the stars over Okura were spectacular and the three bright orange moons were forever a wonder. He missed those uncomplicated days. He allowed the memories to heal him and wash over him, just what they were supposed to do. You might love or you might hate your youth but you will never forget it!

He finished his dinner when the door of his quarters swished open.



“Kitara?” Oh, this was not good. How did she get past security and end up in his quarters? He studied her face. It was masked. She was good at that.

“Sarantos.”

“What are you doing here? Did we have a meeting I

forgot about?” He lied.

She looked gorgeous, but it was clearly a deception. Nothing gorgeous about who she was inside, not anymore. He thought of ugly fruit; a fruit located on earth, deformed and about the size of a grapefruit, ugly to look at but open it up and a juicy delicious fruit greets the one smart enough to never judge a book by its cover. She

was the complete opposite. The juicy fruit on the outside but the ugly shape of a heart on the inside. What was she doing here?

“I wanted to speak with you. We haven’t had a chance to talk very much lately. In fact, I think you’ve been ignoring me. I can’t guess why. We used to be so close.”

Her voice whispered seductively as she moved sensuously towards his weak male body. It responded, of course it did. He had no control over his manly reactions. They both knew how this would end.

He instinctively thought of Addie. Big mistake. That only made it worse. Kitara closed in on him and noticed his bulging pleasure with her eyes, smiling wickedly sexy at the imminent undertaking. What was he going to do?

Kitara and he had history. No, not just a history but an extremely pleasurable history. The memories of her wrapped around him allowed his shoulders to relax, releasing the tension throughout his entire body. He couldn’t count the number of times after their studies that they couldn’t wait to get to his room to make love but instead found release in elevators, parks and empty classrooms. Hell, they even managed to fit into a small janitors’ closet at school one time, much to the surprise of said janitor when he returned to find his space occupied. They were given a warning to never use his closet again and he wouldn’t report them. Kitara had giggled the whole time.



Sarantos was glad to get quickly dressed with some of his pride still intact, but as the two lovers headed down the hallway, he’d turned back to throw one last look at the janitor. Much to his surprise the man winked at him and smiled.

Kitara had given the older man a show, never putting on her shirt until they were almost out of the building.

Looking into her eyes now made those days flood down hard on him. The sideways smile on her face, as she looked over at him while slinging her shirt over her shoulder. Her firm youthful breasts barely bouncing as she walked casually down the corridor of their alma mater. The air of the cool room had her nipples hard and eager. Her jeans were already unbuttoned, and her wild dark hair bounced around her flushed face. She was a picture of pure seduction.

She was barefoot when they left the janitor that night. Her painted nails highlighted her perfect feet. When he pointed out to Kitara that she'd forgotten her shoes, she'd playfully replied that she knew and winked at him, a wink that drove him wild. "Always leave a part of yourself behind and men will never forget you."

He remembered wondering if that older janitor would ever forget her youthful enthusiasm, with or without her misbehaved shoes being left behind. Somehow Sarantos didn't think the janitor would need the shoes to hold onto that memory. Yet now she was here, in front of him and the smell of yesterday beckoned him to return to a much simpler time.

How could he have left Kitara? They had such an amazing history. She couldn't have killed her parents, not the Kitara he knew. This was when the darkness of the universe most needed the light.

He shook his head. He tried desperately to shake the trance she had him in; a trap he felt helpless in like a fly captured in the spider's web. He knew all too well she could take him down with ease. Only two women had been able to do that to him in his entire life and one of them stood in front of him right now. However, Kitara didn't have that ridiculous power over him like the woman he truly loved, Addie.

Addie. He loved her and wanted her in front of him instead of this demon woman but the more he thought of Addie, the more his body responded to Kitara. Why was he fighting this fight against the universe, against all that was natural, sex? Sex was never bad, was it? Sex was natural. Kitara kept pulling him back into her web.

No, Sarantos, you must not give in. His mind was following his body's lead and his body didn't want to listen to reason, not even at the risk of a harmful reaction.

Oh, curse the universe for making him so weak.

He tried to think of her with Garnash but couldn't imagine it. She slithered closer and then lifted his face with her slender hands, cupping his chin under her delicate fingertips. He could taste the days gone by before she kissed his wanting lips.

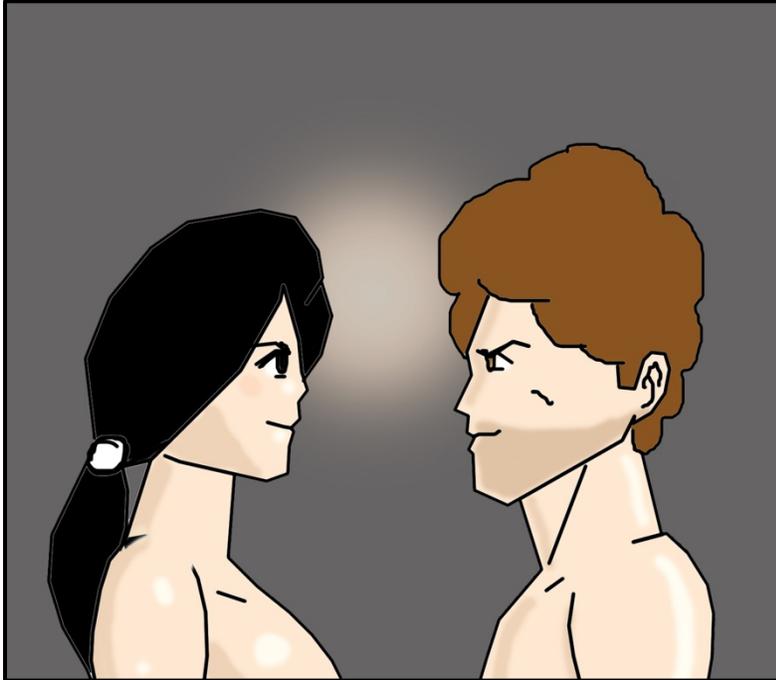
They were exactly what he remembered. Soft and playful.

She was everywhere in that moment. Time had stopped as she ran her nails down his back while nibbling on his mouth and sucking it gently into her own.

No words needed to be spoken.

He grabbed her dark curls and tilted her head back running his tongue down her neck. When he got to the base of her neck and shoulder, he grabbed her skin in his mouth and pulled it between his teeth knowing it would make her moan. She did, right on cue.

He longed for her, for the simple youthful days of long ago when stress was just homework and studying for exams. That was an eternity ago. Yes, simpler and carefree times. She'd always been the rope for him to hold onto. She took his mind back to those simpler times.



As she dropped her shirt to the floor and he felt her firm breasts pressed against his now naked chest, he smiled. He deserved those lips. As he closed his eyes he saw her walking down that long corridor of an almost forgotten past.

He was ready to return to those simpler days and cursed the sun, the moon, the whole filthy universe as he slipped

peacefully back in time. He let go. Why fight the universe?

His mind and body were joined with hers on a slow and intoxicating ride that ended up lasting the entire evening.

Sarantos awoke with a startle. What a crazy dream. He must be a madman to dream such a ludicrous thought. His head felt heavy and he had a pulsating headache.

He rolled over and thought for a moment he detected the gentle smell of Kitara but he was alone.

Pulling the pillow up to his nose, he took a long sniff. It did smell like her and not Addie. My god was his dream that intense.

There was no way in hell he'd let her in his room, much less succumb to her womanly ways, or would he?

He needed a shower.

The smell of her lingered as he turned on the shower and jumped in. Lathering up his mighty shampoo filled his nostrils with essence of wallder, instead of essence of Kitara. Wallder was a masculine scent from the land of Clodra, a place known for beautiful scents that were extracted from a coastline of flourishing plants blooming straight into the ocean's arms. Those plants grew the entire circumference of Clodra, an island on the planet Brong that was at least the size of Illinois from the planet earth.

He stayed in the shower longer than normal.

Sarantos was known for his vivid dreaming at times, but this was carrying it a bit too far. The bad thing was how good he felt physically, if that made any sense. He wasn't allowed to feel so grand after having a dream about Kitara, much less making love to her in that dream.

He could almost feel her lips again, and the worse part was how much he enjoyed the sensation. The saltiness of her skin lingered despite the shower.

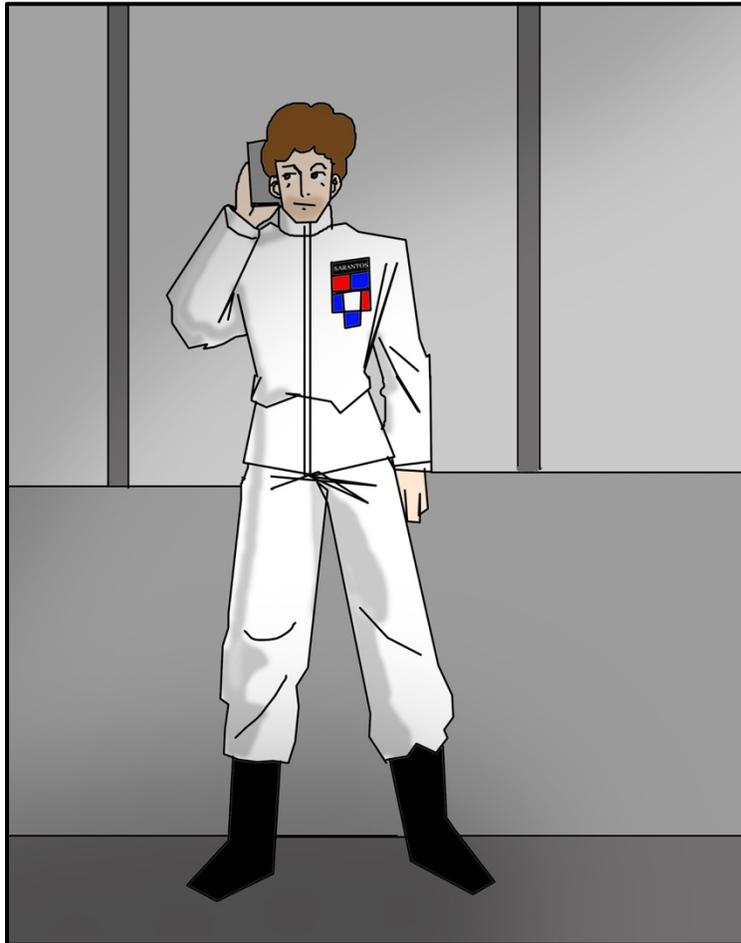
Grabbing a warm towel, he started to dry down his body, but the thoughts of Kitara were haunting his mind. His body was responding to the thoughts of her against his will. What was wrong with him? He wanted her in the shower with him locked in a lover's embrace.

She couldn't have really been here last night because Brel was following her like a hawk never letting his prey out of his sight. There was no way she would lose him.

Maybe, he felt guilty for abruptly leaving her when he met Addie, which could possibly lead to that type of dream scenario. But, he had to admit, what a dream! He hadn't really thought about her in that way since he met Addie. He didn't need to. Addie was the ultimate woman with beauty, loyalty, brains, charm, dedication and on top of that, she was the best lover he'd ever had real or imagined.

He should go see the doc for a physical. He must be run down and stressed over this whole thing with Kitara and might need a vitamin boost.

“Doc?”



He struggled to pull on the pants to his uniform as he activated his communicator.

“Captain, good morning, how can I assist you? Everything went according to plan yesterday.”

“Wonderful. No diseases on our ship thanks to you and your staff. It's definitely appreciated but I think I need to see you now if that's possible?”

“Sure, I'm on my way to breakfast. Would you like to join me in the Diamond Room?”

“I can do that, but this is a medical visit.”

“What? Are you all right, Sarantos?”

He loved it when she used his real name when her concern for him outweighed his rank.

“Yes, Cleary, I’m fine. I’m just stressed and wondered if you might check me over and add some extra vitamins to my diet.”

“Oh, that’s good then. Well, you need breakfast, so I’ll meet you there in about 45 minutes after I leave some instructions with Private O’Malley.”

“Sounds good, doc, see you then.”

He zipped his pants and finished getting dressed when the whoosh of the door alarmed him. After his fitful dream he was on edge.

“Sarantos?”

He walked out of the bedroom and into his sitting room to find a pair of soft violet eyes sinking deeply into his. “Addie am I glad to see you my love. I’ve been thinking about you all night.” Did he just lie?

He moved towards her and pulled her softly into his arms. The smell of her hair was comfort. Her embrace warmly familiar. Her body against his was perfection. She was perfection. That’s how he felt every time she was in the same room with him, and even when thoughts of her name filled his head.

He could never do anything to harm her or jeopardize their beautiful relationship. Hell, he wanted to marry her today, now, in this moment. This was the one woman he knew he couldn't live without. Although, she did refuse to marry him not too long ago. That's okay he reasoned, love was never logical.

Her hair was not going away and sparkled in light silver tones, like glitter against the purple waves.

She pulled off her shirt and said, "Do you have time for a quick run?"

Her breasts were the most flawless thing he'd ever seen and the tiny tattoos of butterflies across her nipples always left him wanting.

"I'm joining the doc for breakfast. You want to come too?"

He tilted her back gently and sucked on her sweet nipples. He ached for her, as always, as it should be.

"I would love to come," she said in a playful whisper that stimulated his nerves.

He lifted her up into his arms and carried her to his bed. Her head tilted to the side, as he bit on her nipples.

Addie's body stiffened in his arms.

"Whose shoes are those, Sarantos?"



His head jerked up and there they were - a pair of red high heel shoes, size seven. He knew it well.

“What the hell, Addie, who am I to fight the universe?” Wait, why in the world did he just say that to her??