

Exceptions

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Rating: P18 / NC-17 (*very - this is more graphic than anything I've ever written... or ever thought I'd dare to write*)

Summary: Post-Endgame. Kathryn Janeway loved routines. Changes of plans weren't welcome. Usually.

Disclaimer: Voyager is Paramount's. The furniture used in this story was built by Chakotay. Certainly IKEA wouldn't be stable enough... *coughs*

Author's Note: Ah... why do I even bother to make plans for my stories anymore?! It's not like my muse EVER listens to me...

Kathryn Janeway loved routines.

Ever since she was a child, a certain regularity to her life gave her a sense of security; of being in control. Life was hard enough as it was, with all its unpredictability, so everything she was able to control and predict was warmly welcomed in the daily craziness. Added to that, ever since her seven years in the Delta Quadrant, stranded in that unknown region of space with her ship and crew, she had learned to appreciate routines even more, and otherwise tedious everyday life seemed like such a thankful thing now.

Their return about a year ago had been everything she didn't consider predictable or controllable. The whole event they had longed for all that time had not been glorifying and exciting at all, but a mere haze, rushing by at high warp without any one of them really getting a grab of it. One second they were searching a way home from a few ten thousand light years away, and the next, Earth was more or less at striking distance, so to speak.

Speaking of daily craziness.

When the debriefings had started, promising to become long months of sitting in cold, grey rooms at large tables while being questioned - and keeping that promise, unfortunately - ever-optimistic Janeway had caught herself wishing she was back in the Delta Quadrant, on Voyager with her crew, her *family*, exploring new worlds and phenomena, and occasionally fighting off hostile alien species, but otherwise living with this odd feeling of inner peace.

Ten and a half months - in number more months than the years of their journey - it took Starfleet Command to finish the debriefings. Almost as long the former Maquis - and with them, as a gesture of sympathy and solidarity, the rest of the crew - had to fear whatever fate the admiralty had in store for them.

At last, they were lucky to be acquitted of every accusation against them. They were free to do whatever would please them - including returning into service as Starfleet officers for those who had been members of the organization before. Some took that chance, their experience and knowledge gained on their unique journey making them quite popular among commanding officers and other higher ranking officials in research or at the academy.

While Janeway cared about the whereabouts and future of every Voyager crewmember, the senior staff in particular was a matter near to her heart. Proudly she heard the news of Harry Kim having finally gotten his long-due promotion, now already ranking lieutenant senior grade with a rosy perspective of becoming lieutenant commander soon.

Her good friend Tuvok had returned to Vulcan, taking a leave of absence for an undefined period of time - mainly because of his mental state and need of help from his family, but also because beneath the hard, emotionless shell there nevertheless was a man who had missed his wife and children - and growing number of grandchildren - terribly.

Tom and B'Elanna had decided to add another member to their family, bringing a baby sister for little Miral on the way as soon as it was clear that no further lawsuits were awaiting them. Professionally, the couple had resumed

their work as pilot and engineer; developing not only new technology, but new standards with it, and testing together what they came up with. They were such an effective team that no one dared to request their help and work separately.

For the Doctor it had been not as easy. Janeway had to fight hard, together with him, to keep his status as an individual who was allowed to live a normal life like every other crewmember. He was, after all, considered to be a part of the ship, and not supposed to leave it - especially not permanently. Their effort, however, paid off in the end. The Doctor was free. He found himself a nice, cozy apartment in San Francisco bay, a job in Starfleet medical - and a girlfriend. A human one.

Speaking of girlfriends. Seven had soon ended her not-quite-relationship with Chakotay and taken over the task of teaching and taking care of Voyager's Borg children. She was quite popular, her insights an asset to Starfleet as well as the public. Seven was getting used to the attention she got better than Janeway or any of her crewmembers would have thoughts. But maybe that was partly thanks to a young man named Henning Lenhomb. One who stood by her side and helped her. In every way he knew and could.

As for Chakotay, he had been offered several positions at the academy and other universities to teach archeology and cultural studies, but requested some time to himself with the promise to then accept a professorship. His wish was gladly granted, and they all swore to keep the door open for the man who was generally considered highly intelligent, open-minded and very wise, despite his Maquis past. Or maybe because of.

And Kathryn herself? She was the same person as always. She loved her work. She had always loved it, always lived for it. She was born to be a Starfleet officer, and more so a scientist.

Well, almost. There were exceptions to every rule, and every routine. And right now, work and duty were the two least important things on her mind.

She had surprised many people with her decision, but mostly herself when she took, like Tuvok, an indefinite leave of absence right after her promotion to admiral. She desperately needed some time to herself, time to sort out and work through everything that had happened in the past seven, no, eight years, time to relax, to find back to herself. Surely had she opted to throw herself right back into work - and hadn't it been for some very insistent friends, she probably would have done just that. But the openness of those people who didn't want to watch her and her 'live to work' attitude any longer had gotten her thinking.

So she traveled around, visited her former crew members, now and then even calling in favors for them, tried to get up-to-date as to what had changed on Earth, visited her mother and family home in Indiana, met with her former senior officers, babysat Miral - and spent a lot of time with one very special person.

Because, when it came to the routines, there was one she had always held on to on Voyager, and hadn't given up after returning to Earth: her weekly dinner date with her former first officer and still best friend Chakotay. Strictly speaking, the meetings weren't weekly - to be entirely exact, they saw each other more often than just once a week. They talked about old times, took long walks, visited exhibitions, went on short trips and made visits to their crew together. That she came to him one day a week to have dinner which he always cooked from scratch - really *cooked*, not replicated - however, happened only on Fridays.

If possible, they had become even closer after their return, and were so comfortable around each other that both had door codes for the other one's homes. So when Kathryn arrived at Chakotay's small house just outside San Francisco's city borders this Friday, she simply let herself in without bothering to ring the door chime.

She immediately noticed that something was different. There was... she didn't... Why didn't she smell anything? Why wasn't there the familiar fragrance of cooked food? The intoxicating air that always seemed to draw her to his house even from far away?

"Chakotay? Are you there?"

"Right here, with you in a minute!" she heard him call back - it was coming from his kitchen, all right, so he had to be preparing something. Or so she thought.

"So, what's for dinner today?" She asked while putting her small purse down on the sideboard in the entry area and shrugging off her jacket.

"Nothing yet." Janeway frowned. So she hadn't been wrong.

"Didn't you have the time to cook? You should have called me, I could have gotten-"

"No, that's not it," he interrupted her when he emerged from the kitchen, walked over to her and gave her a brief hug. It had grown between them, this... whatever they didn't want to name and acknowledge yet, ever since they weren't the commanding duo of a starship or in any other official function anymore, but just friends who saw each other on a regular basis.

"Then... what is?"

"We'll cook together today. You're gonna help me," he stated matter-of-factly, as though she didn't have a say in it, and if it was for him, she hadn't. But, this was Kathryn Janeway. Whose biggest personal nemesis weren't the Borg, or the Kazon, or the Hirogen. It was a kitchen with a hearth.

"Oh no, Chakotay, you know I can't and I wo-"

"You will. Otherwise there will only be dry bread and water for dinner." A mischievous grin stole itself onto his face; in that moment, one could have mistaken him for the devil. A very handsome devil, that is.

"You know very well that I rather eat that than try my luck with the preparation of any real food," she challenged him, crossing her arms in front of her chest and giving him a smug grin herself. Chakotay only chuckled; he loved their light banter, the ease they showed around each other since the burden of bringing a crew back home from an unknown quadrant of the universe had been lifted from them.

"That is why you're going to learn it now. You can't rely on replicated food all your life, Kathryn. There is nothing more tasteful than real food, and there is nothing more satisfying than eating a dinner you've prepared with your own hand's work." He considered his second statement for a moment, before correcting himself to, "Well, there isn't much that is more satisfying." Janeway smirked at that, but it faded when he continued with a suddenly deadly serious expression, "Besides, don't you think the man you may marry one day would be happy to get some real food now and then? You know that the way to a man's heart is through his stomach, don't you?"

That caught her right off-guard. She stared at him dumbfounded and actually found herself stuttering. "Wh-What? Chakotay, what are you talking about?" And brave and confident Captain, no, Admiral Kathryn Janeway was claimed by a feeling she had very little experience with - she felt nervous. He eyed her intensely, as if considering in earnest how to make a good housewife of her. She was so taken aback by it that she at first didn't realize that he had broken into a wide grin.

"Your face was definitely worth it," he quipped when he turned on his heel and went back to the kitchen. Her mouth dropped open when her brain got hold of what had just happened. He had fooled her. All those years of a perfect poker face, and only now when no one and nothing threatening her life or that of a crew she was responsible for was distracting her... he had pulled her leg. She shook her head. Admittedly, if someone could do that, it was Chakotay, for she let her guard down when she was around him. And he had made use of it.

Oh, that demanded revenge.

Hope grew within her when she followed him. After all, he may also only have joked when he said dinner wasn't ready, but she has to cook with him.

"Someone had a clown for breakfast, huh?" she remarked, putting her hands on her hips when she entered the spacious, tidy room held in green where they spent almost as much time as in the living room. That was also the moment her hope died - there really was nothing prepared.

"Someone is just enjoying life," he shrugged and grinned happily.

"No kidding," she murmured, so quietly that he didn't hear it over the faint sound of the cooling unit he was rummaging through.

Half an hour later, Janeway found herself standing amidst his kitchen, in front of one of the counters, with an apron around her body and a knife in her hand. And yes, she was actually chopping vegetables. True, she never would have expected praise for it - she simply didn't deserve it. The supposed thin slices looked more like very creative geometrical forms, and by now she had started muttering under her breath, cursing the stubborn food that just didn't want to take the form Chakotay had demonstrated her earlier.

But she could do it. She had to. She shied away from nothing and no one; in all those years, she had taken up with every challenge. And that before her were no hostile aliens, only vegetables. How hard could preparing food and cooking be, anyway? No, she would fulfill her task, proudly. She could-

"I can't do it," she sighed quietly, her mouth suddenly deciding that her mind was only fooling itself. Frustrated, she put down the knife and her hands on her hips, glaring at the colorful nutrition. She heard Chakotay chuckle behind her, but ignored it the best she could. Yes, she had failed; no need to face the humiliation.

Her host, however, never said a single word. Not until he came over and murmured four words that she knew would be burned into her mind forever: "Let me show you." He stepped up behind her and - well, he *showed* her.

His body was practically wrapped around hers from behind, with his back pressed against her and his arms lined up with hers; with his hands enclosing hers and his cheek next to her ear. While her mind tried to ignore the sensation caused by the heat radiating from him, her stomach was already doing somersaults, jumping up and down and to and fro, and Kathryn had to do her very best to not let her head lull back against his shoulder, lean into his strong embrace too much. It surprised her that he was still able to explain calmly what she had to do, and work with hands not even trembling the tiniest bit, because if she wasn't entirely wrong and the bulgy pressure in her lower back was any indication, he wasn't unaffected by their little teaching session either.

His voice seemed to become deeper and huskier with every sentence, every word even, as he explained the action again and guided her hands while doing so. His movements were precise and skilled and for the fraction of a second she wondered if this was any hint as to how he would be as a lover. She chased that thought away quickly, practically mentally screamed at it to get out of her head. He was her friend, nothing more, and it was hardly appropriate to think about him like this. Or at least that was what she told herself. If her arousal had been a person, it would have stood before her then, arms crossed over its chest, and glared at her with raised eyebrows, silently demanding her to *do* something. Or him, for that matter.

Luckily, her arousal was only a tingling sensation consuming her, and a wet heat pooling between her legs. At least nothing she would have to 'face' now.

Chakotay, on his part, fought his own battle. A battle with self-restraint, responsibility, decency. No doubt she felt what she and this teaching session were doing to him. He didn't bother to hide it also; what use would it have been anyways? This was a game they both were all too aware they were playing - had been playing for years, though more subtle then - there was no pretending. Just slightly anxious waiting for the other one to agree to what they both knew they wanted.

For now, he knew it was best to concentrate on preparing their dinner. And that he did. He finished chopping the bell pepper he had been working on as a demonstration for her, and then unwillingly stepped back. He didn't miss how she shivered.

"There. Now you can try it again yourself." With that, he returned to his hearth, busily lifting lids, checking and stirring whatever contents he found inside. He more sensed than saw Kathryn looking at him, but prudently ignored her. Finally, after some minutes, he heard her tending to the vegetables again, the sound of slow, but nevertheless energetic chopping filling the room. Someone undoubtedly had to release some tension.

Ten minutes later, she had reduced every food he had given her to prepare to slices and dices, and while Chakotay continued his work with them, Janeway began to set the table. They deliberately kept some distance between them all the time... that was, until Chakotay offered Kathryn a spoon with some of the steaming fluid from one of his pots.

"Do you want to taste?" he asked, not thinking much of it. The gesture was completely innocent; they'd done this countless times before - he would offer her to try what he was cooking shortly before the meal was ready, and she would happily accept, always eager to find out what he'd come up with this time.

But this evening, everything was a bit different. Both still felt the aftermath of their earlier mutual seduction, and longed for an entirely different aftermath, but kept themselves in check for the time being. Or at least tried to. Because when Chakotay held up the spoon, she simply couldn't resist.

She walked over to him, took his free hand and dipped his index finger into the sauce on the cutlery. Then she licked the thick liquid from his digit, gently sucking at it. Hadn't Chakotay thrown the spoon back into the pot and held on to the kitchen counter with his other arm, his legs would have given out.

"Kathryn..." he groaned, sure that this was the moment they both would give in. His hardness strained painfully against his pants again, and it took all his will to remain calm; to wait for her to send him a signal, an approval. There were moments where he cursed himself for being such a gentleman.

She, however, simply cleaned his finger with her tongue, hummed, and said, "Tastes perfect."

Then she returned to setting the table.

Chakotay looked at her incredulously, but she ignored him, just like he had done before with her. Realizing that he'd still have to wait, he sighed deeply and returned his attention to making the last finishing touches. His finger still tingled from her touch, and the feeling crawled slowly into his every nerve ending. He needed to concentrate. On *cooking*. And even though he didn't know where he took the discipline from, he did just that.

Eventually, their meal was ready to be served, and Chakotay filled their plates with vegetables in a light tomato sauce variation and some rice, while Janeway poured some wine into two glasses, and added two with water as a finishing touch.

When both were finally seated, Chakotay raised his glass.

"Well then, enjoy *your* meal," he said, putting emphasis on the fact that it was her work as well, at which she smirked.

"You, too," she responded and toasted him with her own glass of wine, took a sip just like he did, and then turned her attention to the food in front of her.

Somehow they managed to actually eat their dinner without any more distractions - and seductions. At least the major ones. Neither of them could keep from an accidental brush of hands, or a meaningful stare into each other's eyes. They didn't talk, and the silence only added to the tension between them.

"This was absolutely delicious, Chakotay," Kathryn only said when she collected the last bit of sauce with a piece of bread, her voice still coated with hints of arousal, and he had to swallow, forcing himself to focus on something else.

"It is your work as well. Really not bad for your first time."

"Oh, but what tells you it was my first time?" She had barely finished the sentence when Chakotay choked on the wine he'd just taken a sip of. He coughed, and tears pooled in his eyes as the liquid invaded his respiratory system. "Sorry," Janeway added sheepishly and rose to pat his back, then reached to refill his glass with water. Only when he calmed down again, she returned to her seat.

"I survived... seven years in the... Delta Quadrant, and now... that I'm... home... my captain will be... the death of... me," Chakotay complained between coughs, and his friend couldn't help but laugh.

"That I may just prevent. I need you alive, after all."

"Now, do you?" His voice still sounded a bit restrained, though Janeway wondered if his choking really was the reason. Her answer was a simple quirk of an eyebrow and a promising smile. He stared at her and time came to a halt; only the candlelight between them began to flicker more nervously.

The same candle she blew out in a sensual movement only seconds later. Chakotay hadn't activated the main lights, but only a kitchen counter illumination, its soft glow making both human's features blurry in the other one's sight. And still the longing, the hunger in their eyes shone like a blazing fire in the middle of the night.

"We should clear the table," she murmured, her finger tracing the line of his plate and not-so-accidentally brushed his hand while doing so. He didn't answer, and tried to not think of any possible meaning behind this suggestion, but only nodded, and took both their plates when he rose from his chair. Taking a bowl that had contained the rice earlier, she joined him at the dishwasher. And while he opened the machine, she found herself something else to open.

"What are you doing?" he asked, baffled when she pushed his shirt from his shoulders.

"Helping."

By the time they had finished clearing the table and putting the dishes in the dishwasher, they were both stripped down to their underwear.

There was a long moment of silence between them when Chakotay finally turned to her after tapping the console to start the washer. A moment of clarity in which both were wondering whether this was a step they were both ready and willing to take; or better, to finish, as it was already half-taken.

Never had there been an easier answer to any question in both their lives.

Even a gentleman's self-restraint had its end. Not that Janeway minded it in any way, judging by her response to him when he crushed her against him and kissed her so longingly that both wondered if foregoing dessert had been a wise idea. Maybe with the additional course he wouldn't try to eat her alive now. Though it wasn't clear yet if he could succeed or if she ate him first.

There was something wild and animalistic to their first kiss neither would ever have predicted to show when they would finally cross this last barrier. Doubtless there was a lot that had been suppressed in almost a decade time, but feelings and desires that were pushed back and muted for so long were meant to diminish with time, not to increase. With them, they had increased exponentially with every passing year, it seemed.

Tongues slipped past opened lips and pushed back the other one's in a never ending duel, teeth nibbled and scraped against skin and other teeth, and lips soon felt hot and swollen, bruised almost. Lungs had long since giving up demanding oxygen; the couple they belonged ignored them anyways. Who needed to breathe air when breathing desire and love was so much more fulfilling?

Nevertheless, they parted panting and gasping after countless minutes, lips barely losing touch, bodies still pressed together, as the only purpose to end their kiss was to minimize the dizziness in their heads caused by lack of oxygen, only to then be able to maximize the light-headedness from their feelings overpowering them.

The fleeting thought to ask Kathryn whether she really wanted this passed Chakotay's mind; a remnant of the gentleman in him who always made his woman's, and in this case even more so his Kathryn's wants come first. But the way she hung on to him with her whole body had that thought dissolve before he could even try to get a grab of it.

Chakotay lifted her up and sat her down on the table they'd eaten their dinner at not even half an hour ago, making sure to push her panties down before doing so. He then pulled the flimsy coverage from her as it dangled from her feet, and discarded it somewhere among the pile of their other clothing. Her bra followed immediately after, unceremoniously taken from her body to free her heaving chest and waiting breasts. Kathryn willingly parted her legs for him to step in between, and his hardness was pressing against her - hadn't it been for his boxer briefs, he would have simply slipped inside her. Certainly she was wet enough.

Said garment he had yet to lose was precisely what she, right now, didn't like about him at all. Her fingers slid down his chest, nails scraping lightly and hands admiring the hard plains covered by smooth, golden skin, and her lips kissed same skin, the scarce hair on his chest tickling her. All the while her hands reached their goal, the deep blue fabric of his underwear, and her thumbs hooked under the elastic to get this last piece of clothing out of the way.

Now it was him who held on to her - and the table - when she freed his aching member. He didn't miss how her eyes widened when she saw him, no doubt questioning whether they would fit. He knew it had been years for her - and added to that, he was a considerably large man, in every sense.

Seeking her lips, Chakotay kissed her deeply, then he whispered, "We will be perfect."

He pushed her back to lie on the table and kissed his way down her body along her neck and over her breasts, roamed her belly and dipped into her navel, and then let his head fall between her legs to devour the slick lips he found there, to part her folds with his tongue and drink from her, and to nip at the swollen pleasure nub as a hand accompanied his mouth to have two fingers enter her hot depths.

Even if she had wanted to return into a sitting position then, she wouldn't have been able to. Except for clawing the edges of the table and concentrating on her breathing so she wouldn't hyperventilate - or forget to breathe at all - she couldn't do much. Kathryn had never been that much at the mercy of a man's touch as she was now. Chakotay knew too well what he was doing, how to move his fingers, his mouth, his tongue. He worked her closer to the edge with every second, and if she was sure of one thing, then that her climax would crush down on her with more force than she had known for years.

And yet when it happened, she was unprepared. His fingers, perfectly aimed, curled inside her just when his tongue rolled her clit around, and Kathryn bucked and screamed like there was no tomorrow. She even unconsciously tried to get away from his never ending attention to her over-sensitive sex, but he held her steady while he continued to massage and tease her flesh and nerve endings. She moaned, begged him to stop, but he didn't listen. She had barely come down from her heights when she felt a renewed tingling sensation.

The thing with first times. She didn't know she could be aroused and ready again so fast after her first orgasm. Usually it took a while to bring her body to excitement again; she would need to calm down and relax, and then climb slowly back up. But Chakotay's skilled ministrations showed her how quickly her body was able to come close to just another mind-blowing orgasm.

He stopped, however, before she could experience it this time. Whimpering in loss and disappointment, she collected all her strength to lift her head and look up at him, only to find him fisting his erection, wetting himself with her juices that coated his hand. She groaned when she understood what would happen next. Hoarsely whispering his name in anticipation, Kathryn braced herself for his thick, long hardness.

Chakotay hooked his arms under her knees, brought her hips closer to the edge of the table and pulled her legs up while parting them a bit farther. He held one leg and lifted the other to lay her ankle on his shoulder; then he used his free hand to guide his manhood to her.

Kathryn already groaned deeply when only the tip pushed into her. He felt her tightness, had felt it with his fingers already before, and part of him worried about hurting her. The problem was that the other part of him wanted nothing more than to thrust into her hardly and possess her.

The second part won.

He left her for a moment, then entered once more with the glans alone. The second he felt her relax, welcoming him, he plunged in as deep as possible. Another high-pitched scream left Kathryn's throat, and turned into a long moan that told of pleasure, but also pain. He held still and waited for her to adjust, his free hand gently caressing her body and stimulating her clitoris while she took deep breaths.

The pain was short-lived, but still piercing. Not that she had expected anything else after years of lacking a man and having to live with the questionable satisfaction her hands brought her. Masturbation had merely been an act of releasing tension, a natural occurrence her body asked for, but nothing she spent much time with experimenting. A clitoral orgasm had usually been enough; toys had seldom been part of it, and especially not of *her*.

Instead, she had ignored her body's desires as much as possible, only to now be 'punished' for it; even more so, as she had chosen the man she had always wanted but who, of all men she knew that intimately, showed physically the most of manliness. He stretched her wider than should yet have been comfortable, and then some more, but the pain was gone so fast and replaced by lust how it could only happen when one desired someone as much as she desired Chakotay.

"Move," was all she said, and all he needed to hear. He withdrew and re-entered repeatedly, at first in long and slow strokes, reveling in the feeling of her narrow sheath welcoming him over and over, hugging him tightly. But when she began to press herself against him, move her hips to match his motion as much as she could in her position, and purposefully gripped him with her muscles, he started pounding harder and faster, so much that with every thrust a whimper fell from Kathryn's lips. She had wanted to watch him, watch them as they moved together, but the sensations were too strong to allow her keep her eyes open, and she let her head fall back onto the table's hard wood, instead trying to find a cool spot there and keep her mind from burning.

His heart thrummed so quickly and pumped his blood through his ears so fast that Chakotay felt it would deafen him in no time if he went on like this and didn't come to an end. If only plunging into Kathryn's wet heat over and over again wouldn't have been so wonderful; that left him quiet indifferent when it came to his hearing abilities. He could have gone deaf and blind and couldn't have cared less; all he needed right then was one sense: Touch. He only needed to feel.

By now he was thrusting so hard that he hit her cervix a few times, making her gasp, but if it felt uncomfortable, she didn't seem to mind, as she rocked even more frantically against him. She had let go of the table in favor of her own breasts, kneading them while she started to contract around him, the ripples of her inner walls gripping and releasing his erection, and his pumping became even more frantic, his movements so fast that they should have, in all logic physics came with, burst into flames.

It was arguable if they didn't do just that a minute later.

Letting Kathryn's leg that lay on his shoulder fall back down on his arm, he used the leverage he had by holding her around her knees to pull her hips over the edge of the table and change the angle of penetration, his pubic bone just barely rubbing against her clit.

It was enough to send Kathryn into sexual oblivion.

Her hands flew away from her own body and gripped empty air before slamming down on the table and pushing herself up and against him. Every single muscle inside her seemed to contract, all of them focusing their energy in her middle, and she clamped down hard on Chakotay's shaft, forcing him into his release as well, and with a roar he flooded her with his seed while keeping his sex tightly against hers.

Still buried within her, he let her legs fall down and leaned forward where he pushed his hands under her shoulders so he could lift her upper body to bring her mouth to hers. The kiss was lazy and sloppy, and interrupted by their heavy breathing and some moans still forcing their way out of their throats.

"Are you all right?" he huskily asked against her lips, and his nose lovingly nudged hers.

"You mean except for the fact that I'll have to stay on this table because I'm not able to walk anymore?" She smirked and gave him another kiss. "I've never been better."

"I'm glad to hear that, and - good thing I'm here and the lady doesn't have to walk."

Locking her arms and legs around him, he supported her weight with his hands on her bottom when he carried her into his bedroom. Only when he laid her down, his softening penis slipped from her body, and made them both hiss at the sensation it created on their still-sensitive flesh.

He stretched next to her and time stilled when he just looked at her for a moment, his eyes practically boring into hers, into her soul. And she let him. She opened herself to him, her mind and thoughts, let him see everything - her regrets, her worries, her desires. But mostly, her love for him.

He smiled at her, at what he saw, and leaned down to claim her lips in a kiss that was anything but wild and passionate, but this time filled with their affection for each other. Seconds, minutes, even years could have passed; they were lost to the world around them, oblivious to everything but them and what they felt, inside and out. When Chakotay ended their mouths' loving encounter, his lips still didn't leave her skin, but found their way over her chin and down her neck, to then end behind her left ear, instinctively knowing where exactly to find one of her most sensitive spots. Kathryn gasped, more than once when he altered between licking that spot and gently biting her earlobe.

The first time had been quick, something they both needed after years and years of waiting, but Chakotay had every intention to learn in detail about the woman he had loved for so long, to cherish and worship her just as she deserved it.

"Kathryn... there is this... fantasy I sometimes had." He smiled to himself for a moment, and then laughed lightly when she saw her raised eyebrows and critical look. "Do you trust me?"

"Unconditionally," she answered without hesitation, and the meaning behind the word made his heart flutter.

"Would you let me take control?" Now her look became suspicious.

"Chakotay...?" Instead of answering, he got up and walked over to a commode to retrieve something from the bottom drawer. When he returned to the bed, she recognized the objects as silk scarves. Her eyes narrowed. "Are you serious?" She trusted him, and she didn't fear what she knew he was intending to do with the scarves, but... this was virgin soil for her, so to speak. She was used to being in control, or at least to being able to take control at any time. This would mean giving it up.

"I know you would never surrender completely unless you have no other choice. And I'd like this to be a wonderful, unforgettable experience." He emphasized his words with a gentle kiss to her lips, and she knew she had lost.

Offering him her arms, she said, "I can't believe I'm really doing this, but obviously, as an explorer, curiosity will always take the upper hand in your decisions." They both chuckled and Chakotay took her hands in his, showering them with light kisses.

"Thank you," he murmured against one of her wrists before he wrapped one end of a scarf around it, securing it with a knot. Then he fastened the other end of the cloth at the bedpost above her. Gracefully gliding across her body, he knelt next to her head to fix her other wrist to the second post at the bed's head - and Kathryn realized that his flaccid penis was just within reach. One easy movement, and she gave the tip a lick, and Chakotay almost fell backwards from the bed in shock and surprise.

"Kathryn!" he exclaimed and looked at her wide-eyed. His heart stopped when he saw her mischievous smirk. He had expected a lot of this woman, but not her being so... he didn't even have a word for this. Since this evening had begun she had proven once and again that beneath that controlled and solemn exterior waited a sensual, passionate, and sexually confident woman. The stirring he felt inside wasn't only aimed at his groin then; it also moved his heart. Because it was him who she let see this side.

Taking one of the thick pillows with him, he retreated to the middle of the bed and her body, and foreseeing his plan, she lifted her hips before he could say anything, allowing him to place the pillow beneath her. Her legs were yet closed, and her body a perfectly formed plateau of white marble, dotted with two rosy tips on the upper half and a small dark triangle in the middle. Piercing blue eyes and lush red lips finished the picture, framed by reddish-golden tresses. Her hair had grown quite a bit since their return; since she stopped keeping it short for practical reasons that no longer applied.

For the first time now Chakotay took a long, unobstructed look at the beauty before him, the beauty of a woman who had possessed his heart for years, who still held it, how many flings and affairs there may have been during the time. The moment he had laid eyes on this fierce little woman almost eight years ago he had known that at some time or another, and whatever would happen, he would fall for her. Fall for her compassion, her intelligence, her humor, her bravery, her... being her. And he fell - although it was much faster and much more severe than he could ever have predicted.

Kathryn did her own studies of him while he watched her silently. As alert and attentive as always, she noticed his distant look and had a pretty good guess of what he was thinking about. Over the past months, she had not only once reviewed their journey and particularly her relationship with Chakotay. The man who had meant to be her enemy, someone she was expected to catch and bring to justice, had become her best friend, closest and most trusted confidant, and ultimately also the man she loved with every fiber of her being. Knowing that he felt the same didn't make it any easier to hold back for seven years. How often had she longed for his warm embrace at night?

Her own shiver brought her back from the realm of her memories at her last thought - a warm embrace. Speaking of which.

"Chakotay?" she asked for his attention, her voice low. Instantly he returned from his faraway musings and smiled at her. "Getting a little cold here." Her teasing complaint brought a joyous glint into his eyes, and he leaned down to place an open-mouthed kiss to her lips.

"Time to make fire then," he murmured promisingly and nipped gently at the tip of her nose.

"Your idea of making fire is eating me?" The man above her growled.

"Don't push me, Kathryn, or I let you simmer on slow heat," he threatened playfully, one hand now descending on her shoulder. It wandered torturously slow downwards and found its way between her breasts to come to rest on her belly.

"You wouldn't do that."

"Try me."

"You know my revenge would be-" It was as far as she got before he claimed her lips - and ability to speak - in a searing kiss, enough to send a rush of heat through her. The hand on her belly wandered deeper yet to slip between her willingly opening thighs and cup her womanhood. Kathryn moaned into the kiss and pressed against his hand; and gasped when he pulled it away again.

"Trust me, I rather pleasure than torture you," he whispered seductively into her ear after he ended the kiss, causing her to take a calming intake of breath.

His lips went on a journey down along her neck and to her shoulder then, objecting the delicate skin there to feathery light caresses, before he made his way over her clavicles to the other side. Meanwhile, he positioned both his hands just below her breasts and tickled the soft tissue right under the swell of the soft mounds, eliciting a giggle-like sound - though not quite a real giggle - from her. One fleshy cushion became subject to his mouth's attention, and Chakotay began to lazily swirl his tongue around the red pebble standing out. When he turned to the other breasts after only a short time, he changed treatment by nipping, even biting gently the peak there, only to suck at its companion when he returned to his first object of interest. What appeared like a routine was unforeseeable for Kathryn, and she couldn't gasp and moan and groan as often as he found just another way to tend to her bosom.

His hands were allowed some exploration of their own, and glided from her ribcage to her waist, where they remained, hot and steady, and Kathryn was sure that at the end of this night, she would have his handprints burned into her skin. That was, until his head descended further down her body and his hands filled its place at her breasts, cupping and kneading them deftly and distracted her from his lips strewing kisses all over her belly - but when she realized that he was heading towards her center, her excitement and arousal increased to a level where she came even closer to losing her mind than she was already.

Kathryn's body was barely touching the bed anymore when he finally reached her sodden curls; every fiber of her being developed a life of its own when it rose towards Chakotay and his ministrations. Lifting his head from her center and making her whimper in loss, he instead let his hands rub up her legs in circular motions, caressing the velvet skin on the inside of her thighs with nimble fingers and closing in torturing slow to where she needed him most.

He had barely touched her, only pushed one finger inside her and his thumb against her swollen bundle of nerves, when tremors of her climax took possession of her. The wood of the bedposts creaked in protest when she trashed on the bed and against her restraints, and hadn't it been for Chakotay lying between her spread legs, she would have wound so much that she had ended up on her stomach. Desperately she tried to close her thighs to heighten the sensations of her orgasm, but the man watching her with just a hint of pride on his face rather kept her there himself.

Or brought her back there.

Kathryn had just calmed down again a bit when he assaulted her again. With his own arousal straining close to being painful, he was too far behind letting her have a chance to relax. She was panting heavily, her breasts shaking invitingly when her body continued to shudder slightly, and he was raking his hands across her body, as though he wanted to rub her warm where she was sweating and glowing from her inner fire already.

And then he parted her thighs just a bit more so that her feet almost hung over the edges of the bed, and leaned down to bury his head between her legs. His lips found her clit and closed around it, applying light pressure and rolling it around while nudging it with his tongue. Two fingers returned to her hot sheath, entering her quickly; only for a moment, though, like they were preparing the passage.

After that, his hands had no other purpose than have their thumbs open her to him so his tongue's way free to delve into her core. Just then Kathryn realized that back in the kitchen, he had only showed her half of his skills.

Her hips' movement was out of her control when she bucked off the pillow, his explorations driving her mad. Her eyes rolled back into her head when he teased her opening with the tip of his tongue, then pushed in as far as he could get and proved to her just how much of a muscle it was. Kathryn made a mental note to ask him later - if she then was still able to form a coherent thought - where he had acquired these skills she had never been met with before. The way he moved his tongue at least felt humanly impossible.

With his nose and upper lip against her clit, Chakotay lapped at her hungrily, devoured her sex so much that she began to doubt the survival of own sanity. He knew exactly how to bring her up high agonizingly slow, the tingling she felt, giving away her approaching orgasm, spreading from cell to cell, one after the other with torturous precision. She was groaning, close to screaming, needing to feel the force of her climax badly by now, but it wasn't to be rushed. It seemed to have a mind of its own, taking as much time as it wanted.

Kathryn trembled badly, only now understanding what the silky restraints did to her - they actually added to her fever, with her body literally stretched before him, her skin, *her whole body*, even more sensitive thanks to the stretching, and her hands neither able to touch herself nor him. All she could do was wait - although what was happening to her was a lot less harmless than simple waiting.

No doubt she was going to crush. She was going to be run over by rapturous delight and for the first time in nearly half a century of living, she brought together sex and passing out in one thought. Surely it was a possibility.

Later she would wonder whether it was good or bad that she didn't faint, only to decide that she would have missed a lot had she lost consciousness. The electricity shooting through her body was beyond everything she had ever dared to dream of when it came to sexual fulfillment. Now what she had dreamt of seemed so small in comparison. The feelings consuming her were addictive, so incredible that 'pleasure' didn't do them any justice.

While she was still writhing and winding, bathing herself in her body's reaction, Chakotay lifted her legs, both this time, onto his shoulders, and his hips closed the distance to hers, his steely erection sliding through her nether lips as he wetted himself thoroughly. Discomfort was the last thing he wanted to cause her, especially after their first time earlier.

Pulling the pillow from under her hips away, he held her level with his hands and began to push his member into her. Kathryn moaned, eyes tightly shut and head pressing back into the mattress, openly presenting him her breasts. For the fraction of a second he regretted having thrown the pillow aside, as now both his hands were busy while they longed to follow her silent invitation to her soft mounds that demanded his touch.

Kathryn didn't seem to mind in any way. His hardness inside into her was obviously stimulating her so much that she was close to losing her mind without much further ado. His pumping he began then didn't help the matter also. For just a second he stopped, but only to lean forward, and she didn't get the chance to protest before he started his thrusting again; her legs on his shoulders as he lay above her pushed her thighs down so that they were almost parallel to her upper body.

With jerky movements he teased them both, skin slapping against skin, his pelvis rocking against her engorged pleasure nub, and she moaned at the stimulation of her flesh around her pleasure center and the repeated fullness that felt, now that she was used to it, unbelievably fantastic. She strained for just another height, although her body was already tingling, already feeling weightless; feeling alive from the continued ecstasy.

Sensing her readiness, Chakotay brought mouth down to close around one of her breasts, finding just the missing piece to her satisfaction. She came with a long moan on her open lips that turned into helpless whimpers when her orgasm continued to send jolts of electricity through her body, leaving her arching off and shaking on the bed beneath him. Her head rolled from one side to another and back, and Chakotay watched in amazement for a few seconds, his own arousal forgotten - but her clenching muscles around him soon reminded him of it.

Quickly he stopped his movements and leaned over her to release her hands. She groaned in protest when he withdrew from her; her protest, however, died down when he turned her around and pulled her hips up.

"Leave your body lying flat on the bed," he instructed, although it wouldn't have been necessary - it wasn't as if she had had the strength to pull any artistic stunts right then. He spread her legs wide with his and then entered her again with a forceful thrust, sliding in easily and deeper than before, and Kathryn outright squealed, gripping the bedding when in this position, he grazed that one certain spot alongside her inner walls that would make her go wild in no time. Well, wilder.

When it came to her orgasms and their frequency in the course of one night, Kathryn had never learnt to count farther than up to two. Yet, she felt her fifth - or was it the sixth already? - approaching, crawling closer while the woman herself vainly - though half-heartedly - tried to crawl away from the man pounding into her, what would surely send her into another mind-shattering climax. She just feared her body - and mind - wouldn't be able to take it anymore. Not that it mattered because neither Chakotay nor her own wantonness left her much of a choice.

She screamed into the pillow this time, even biting down into it when her muscles clenched yet another time, and her whole body shuttered with an intensity that, in her exhausted state, shocked her to no end. Chakotay followed her seconds later, his manhood pulsating deep inside her, and with all the space that was there filled up by him, his heated juices mixing with her own soon spilled out of her.

Only slowly he fell, his arms wrapped around her waist, sideways, taking her with him. His shaft was trapped between her now-closed legs, a part of it still inside her, and the pressure wasn't entirely comfortable on his flesh, so he pulled away carefully, leaving a trail of stickiness on her. Kathryn lay limp in his arms, completely drained of all her energy after their love-making, and was about to drift to sleep when he caressed her belly and kissed her neck.

"I'll be right back." She mumbled something incoherent and snuggled into the pillow she hugged to her. She didn't notice him getting their clothes from the kitchen and deposit them on one of the bedroom chairs, nor did she hear him having water running in the adjoining bathroom. Only when he gently rolled her to her back and she felt something wet on her, she opened her eyes again.

Chakotay had, after cleaning himself, gotten a towel and soaked it with warm water. Same towel he now used to roam Kathryn's body and free her skin of sweat and their combined fluids, while she watched him in wonder. Never had a man taken care of her like this. The butterflies in her stomach weren't followed by arousal this time, but only a feeling of an incredible warmth surrounding her, a cocoon she felt safe and loved inside. And she felt wonderfully refreshed when he was finished, waiting eagerly for him to dump the cloth in the bathroom and return to her.

He did so, bringing a glass of water with him and offering her some, which she accepted thankfully, gulping down the liquid so greedily that he couldn't help but chuckle. The glass was empty within seconds, and he quickly got a refill before he put it on the nightstand. Just in case.

"That was a very delicious dinner, Chakotay. Thank you," Kathryn purred when he crawled onto the bed next to her, and she looked so sated and nevertheless seductive at the same time that he felt himself stir again, against what he knew should have been physically possible for him. He ignored it, though, and only let out a satisfied sigh while he pulled her close, molded her delicate form against his strong one, and pulled a sheet over their cooling bodies.

"We should have done that years ago," he then commented and grinned - at least until she shot him a serious, almost angry look. He feared he had crossed a line, said too much; that they'd never acted on feelings they both knew were there had been some kind of silent, but mutual agreement. At least that was what he knew she liked to tell herself. His worries were unfounded, though.

"I hate it when you're right," she scowled at him and pinched one of his nipples - gently, but still with enough force to elicit an 'Ouch!' from him. "So, tell me... was this another lesson of what I should learn before I find my future husband, or was all this," she motioned at their bodies, "included already and you just didn't tell me?"

"I'd say that depends on who your future husband is," he quipped, but inside, he didn't feel this light-heartedness quite that much. The ice he was taking tentative steps onto was so thin he could very well have walked over water only.

This time, her face was neutral, her expression, not even her eyes, giving away anything. She looked at him for a long moment, before she answered in almost a whisper, "I'm thinking it would be a pity if you invested so much work in it, but then didn't get anything out of it." Lying on their sides facing each other, they studied the other for countless minutes. They both knew what she was saying, and neither wanted to waste the chance to react in just the right way to assure both of them the happiness they longed for.

"I already got a lot more than I ever dared to hope for," he murmured, his hand tenderly trailing down her bare arm.

"And yet you can have so much more." It was a clear offer, spoken with an equally clear, and steady, voice. Overwhelmed, Chakotay did the only thing he was able to in that moment when words failed him - he pulled her to him and kissed her with all the love he felt for her.

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Chakotay woke up the next morning with the feeling that something was missing. Or someone.

Kathryn.

Sitting up quickly, he looked around, squinting his still-sleepy eyes. Indeed, she wasn't in the bed anymore - the bed they'd made love to each other in during the night again - and her clothes were nowhere to be seen.

A strange feeling overcame him. Maybe she had thought the better of their conversation, their subtle agreement to stay together and even make things between them official, if not legal, sooner or later. Maybe without the drugging feelings of afterglow, old logic and hesitation had been able to possess her again.

Failing to find his shirt he'd worn the evening before, he made a quick detour to the bathroom to get his robe, before walking out into the living room and-

What was that smell?

Curious, he followed the scent that seemed so familiar - and the moment he entered his kitchen, he knew why. It was his favorite tea, and judging from the steam that rose from the pot, it was freshly brewed. However, he didn't care about that much then. He was more distracted by the woman who, only dressed in *his shirt* that covered her almost down to her knees, assembled several fruits on the workspace before her.

Chakotay had never felt this relieved in his whole life.

"Good morning," he greeted the woman he loved and she turned at the sound of his gentle voice.

"And to you." Her smile - more a beam, actually - made his heart skip a good number of beats. She turned back to her work at hand, and he took a few steps into the room. Only after grabbing a knife, she faced him again, a mischievous grin on her face. She showed him the knife and pointed at the fruits. "Mind helping me?"

When they finally ate their breakfast, his tea was cold.

END