

A good reason to break regulations

by mazaher

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*Second written in the "Why? series, also including Alternative uses for apples and You don't get angry at strangers. Each story can be read separately.
In case anyone was wondering, this story is not part of the "Three equal sides" series, nor does it necessarily imply U/McC, but it can be read either way if you want. I have no objection. Established K/S is firmly set in the background, but this story mainly touches on some aspects of S/U; therefore it is not posted at ksarchive.com.*

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"You know, I have been wondering..."

Dr. Leonard Horatio McCoy, arms crossed and a glass of straight bourbon in hand, is leaning over the railing of the balcony, looking down on the flickering night lights of the city from the 115th level of the XiaXianXi Hotel in Forklaut, Risa.

Lt. Nyota Penda Uhura smiles and stretches comfortably on an easy chair three feet on his left. This shore leave, the first in their five-years' mission, is a treat she is savoring with the same care Bones has for his drink.

Conversation between them has been flowing slow and easy in the cool evening. From the inside come the muted voices of the others. Jim and Spock are playing chess and Sulu, Chekov, Scotty and Chapel comment loudly on the moves. Especially Chekov.

"Wondering about what?" she asks.

"Tell me if you'd rather not discuss this. But you broke about fifteen regulations when you left your station to go and talk to Spock in the lift after his mother was lost. This is not usual for you. I wonder why."

Uhura frowns, trying to find the right words. A few seconds tick by.

"Listen, I'm sorry, let it go, I..."

"No, it's all right. Just... I didn't even think about it at the time-- it felt right, and I did it. It still felt right afterwards, so I never asked myself why until now, not really. I guess it's... You see, he had just lost his planet and his mother. No backup for either. Lost, wham, just like that. And he was holding up as much as possible like nothing had happened, because he had a duty to perform, and duty before personal matters is an article of faith with him. I wanted him to know that what had happened *was* sufficient cause for bending the rules a bit. That what had happened did matter. That what he was doing, keeping his head on and dealing impeccably with whatever it was he had to deal with, was not ordinary or expected behavior on his part. That he was doing something very special, which honored his planet, his race, and his mother."

"You could have been punished."

"I couldn't have cared less. It had to be done. I felt like, if I took his strength as a matter of course, then I was somehow giving legitimacy to Nero's actions. As though a crazed-out son-of-a-bitch destroying a planet was a normal occurrence in the universe." She pauses a beat. "I do hope it is not."

"Check!"

Jim's shout of triumph coming through the open door is covered by Pasha's clapping and Scotty's cheers, mixed with Chapel's and Sulu's boos.

"I believe your celebrations are untimely, Captain," Spock's quiet voice follows. "Checkmate." Nyota looks up to Spock's straight-shouldered silhouette, etched in black by the warm lights inside.

"He looks like he feels better, doesn't he? I still worry about him, but Jim is taking really good care of him."

"You are too."

Nyota lowers her eyes, blushes a little.

"It's easy to take care of those you love."

Bones doesn't answer, but they both know he agrees.