

Honor Among Thieves

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Rating: P6

Summary: In the middle of the night, Chakotay wonders whether his captain is pursuing a new career.

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Author's Note: Just because I feel I have a reputation to lose, what with me being the one to write stories with Happy Endings that give you a warm and fuzzy feeling... hope this one does, too ;)

I threw a dice and chose season six as setting - but I think it can be put almost anywhere during the seven years.

Chakotay, first officer of starship Voyager, had always had the utmost respect for his captain. His devotion to Kathryn Janeway, his loyalty and trust, went beyond anything he had ever known before. He would give almost anything for her. He would go to hell and back, and he would serve her till death and beyond.

He loved this woman. He loved her, in every way one could love another being. He was astounded by her beauty. He admired her heart, her compassion for everyone, even those who were supposed to be seen as their enemies. He watched in wonder how she dealt with the most dangerous entities in this quadrant, if not universe, and how she faced them all bravely. She treated everyone the same, wasn't misled by prejudices like most people were. One could even have described her as a saint.

Six years of their journey, and he had fallen so hard for this woman that his love for her was unconditional.

Almost.

Every person had their flaws. Even one Kathryn Janeway. And Chakotay had to painfully find that out now. Shock. Disappointment. And a complete lack of understanding. That was what he felt when he was lying in his bed and staring at the ceiling. He was at a loss as to what to do. How to proceed. How to handle this situation. This was a matter he had to touch with caution, and gentleness. To go like a bull at a gate probably wouldn't work. A diplomatic approach was the best way - if only he wouldn't have to face the master, or mistress, of diplomacy.

But he couldn't go on like this. He couldn't live any longer with this. It was robbing him of his sleep, literally. And it shocked him to no end that she was capable of such an action. She didn't even seem to be aware of it; of course she wasn't. She was her usual peaceful, blissfully unaware self, like she always was then. Deep at night, when everyone was asleep. When they all lay in their beds and were granted much deserved rest from their strenuous everyday life. When they all dreamt of peaceful times, of home and family. All of them except for him. He was tired, and yet wide awake, and all that at the hands of his beloved captain.

Because Kathryn Janeway was stealing blankets.

For countless nights now, Chakotay had put up with it. Had only gently tugged at the sheet, duvet, comforter or whatever it was she had left him *without*, and tried to bring her back to his side. With the blanket. Most times she had complied unconsciously, snuggling back into his body and the covers. But sometimes - like in this night - she was so dead to the universe that his every attempt to get her to move was unavailing.

Sure he could have moved himself. Problem was - most of the blanket was in form of a cushy pile in *front* of her. And her front lay dangerously close to the edge of the bed; certainly there wouldn't have been any space for him.

Chakotay sighed exasperated. If he had ever known that sleeping with Kathryn would result in *this*...

... well, he would probably have done it anyways. Damn him being so helplessly in love with her.

"Kathryn," he whispered, caressing her face and freeing it of some strands of unruly hair that had fallen over it. If nothing else worked, waking her was the only remaining option, even though he didn't like making use of it. The woman beside him, however, only sighed and snuggled deeper into the blanket.

Sometimes he really wondered whom she loved more.

"Kathryn, love," he tried again and kissed her neck, eliciting another sigh - a very happy and pleased sounding one - from her. Leave it to Kathryn Janeway not to be disturbed in her sleep by anything, save for Red Alert blaring through the ship or Tuvok's voice calling her via comm. system. And here he had always thought she had a light sleep and he needed to keep everything from her that would raise her early and not let get back to her much needed rest.

Luckily, several months of spending the nights with her, and by now two weeks of finally sharing quarters and therefore a bed on a regular basis, had taught him also some tricks to get her attention even when she was fast asleep.

Sneaking his hand beneath the cover she was clutching to her nearly naked form - after love-making, she, if anything, only slipped her panties back on - he let his fingers graze her hip, her waist and back up to her ribcage, finding its way to her belly just below her breasts. Ever so lightly he thrummed his fingertips against her skin, then tickled her carefully. As expected, she rolled instinctively to her back, to give his hand better access.

Chakotay would have lied had he claimed that he didn't like the fact how much she responded to his touch, even when she was asleep. They both harbored this uncanny awareness of each other's presence and body, and it had only been intensified ever since they had entered into an intimate relationship. He loved it. They both did - even though it made working together not easier, at least not when they weren't facing dangers, but just another eventless day aboard.

It took Kathryn a few more seconds before she finally covered his hand with hers, a clear sign that she was awake. Rolling further around, she lined herself up with his body and wrapped her arm around him. He immediately took his chance and got back his half of the covers, giving a low, satisfied growl.

"Do you plan a career change?" he murmured against her skin of her forehead, relishing in the feeling of finally being warm again. And having her body pressed against his.

"Why?" she mumbled sleepily, already drifting back to the land of dreams.

"Thought you'd maybe try your luck as thief. You're definitely good at stealing blankets," he retorted. That caught her attention; in the dim light falling into the room through the viewport, he saw her cracking open one eye.

"I told you we should replicate a second one."

"I didn't know you were that bad," he defended his decision to vote against her suggestion a few days before. It had never been that worse; but then, he had barely spent whole nights in her bed or the other way around, for different reasons. Plus, he had seriously thought he would be able to deal with what he had thought of as a rather small larcenous character trait; the benefit of having her skin against his and her body in his arms without any blankets between them too big to forego.

"Don't say I didn't warn you."

"I rather have you *warm* me," he replied, a pouting note in his voice, and she chuckled. Reaching up, she captured his lips with hers and kissed him lovingly.

"I promise I'll try to do better in the future," she said and then started to turn around. But he stopped her, holding her fast in place.

"Oh no, you don't. The moment I'm spooning up behind you, I'm gonna lose this blanket again in no time. You stay like this," Chakotay declared, and she frowned at him.

"But-"

"Shush now," he interrupted her, and laughed at her mock surprise. "I love you."

"You're not playing fair," she complained, and meant his love confession that always cut her every protest, on everything, short.

"I love you," he simply repeated, his eyes already closed, but still not without a good-natured grin in place.

"Now go back to sleep." A tiny huff escaped her; then she relaxed in his arms and closed her eyes as well.

"I love you, too."

Neither of them saw the other one's smile.

END