

Restless

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Restless

by [Maegfen](#)

Summary

"Michael gets up and pads softly to the door, taking a final deep breath before moving to open it, fully intent on letting the man standing on the other side in."

- Set in a future where Discovery makes it back to the Prime Universe and Lorca isn't as evil as Georgiou is making out...

Notes

So, here's my first attempt at a Lorca/ Burnham fic. I'm semi-conflicted about this ship after the revelations of 1x12, but I'm holding onto the hope that the writers have got something more interesting planned than 'Lorca is now evil, look at all the evil things he did in the past...'

Let me know what you think; I'm a bit rusty and I'm not entirely sure I've got either of their voices down yet!

Enjoy!

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

The quiet chirp of her combadge causes Michael to shift in her bed, moving her attention from the slowly drifting scenery of space outside her window to the table at her bedside. It's not her Federation badge she picks up however, but the Terran - one of the few remnants of their time in the alternate universe. She'd kept hers close at hand while everyone else, barring one single person, had returned theirs to Saru to be incinerated, destroyed in a final symbolic severance of their ties to that other world.

Michael, however, had hidden hers away, had altered and adjusted it until there was a single, unique frequency the badge was attuned to, and just one other badge it could communicate with.

Its twin is outside of her door, being held by the one person she trusts more than any other.

She taps the badge twice; an acknowledgment, a confirmation and an acceptance all at once. *I hear you. I'm awake. It's okay.*

She is alone in her new quarters - Culber, newly returned from the dead Culber, had recommended she have her own space to recover. Tilly is processing her own traumas from war and the two friends are on a knife edge - both understanding and backing their actions, but both fully aware that they are liable to snap at any moment.

It seems that no-one came back from that other place with their sanity fully intact.

Michael gets up and pads softly to the door, taking a final deep breath before moving to open it, fully intent on letting the man standing on the other side in. She does not worry about the looks the two of them will receive as he enters her room at 0200 for the fourth night in succession - she is tired of analyzing what others think of her, and Gabriel... well, he has bigger concerns than the gossip that occurs near the replicators.

Besides, it's not that unusual nowadays to see the Captain wander the corridors at night, even less so to see him loitering outside her door before eventually entering - they have been inseparable since the two of them transported back to Discovery, arms supporting each other, both covered in one another's blood.

No one has made a comment though; not since they realized that three people left on their mission and only two really came back (*Tyler doesn't count, he's not a person, he's a klingon, a traitor, a captive in a time of war... Michael stops herself before she falls down the rabbit hole once more...*)

"Captain..."

"Specialist..."

There's a stand-off, a tension that is undeniable. Other crew members, the ones coming off the evening shift, glance at the two of them briefly as they make their way back to their own quarters, but don't let their gazes linger. Michael knows that the formalities are merely for

appearances sake; both of them know the truth about each other now, there is no more hiding behind ranks and designations (*traitor, mutineer, fraud, emperor, imposter...*)

Eventually, Michael shifts and allows Gabriel to enter her room.

He moves quietly to sit on one of the chairs in the corner, away from the harsh light of her bedside lamp. There is little furniture in here; Michael prefers it sparse and dully decorated as opposed to the luxurious and decadent furnishing she had upon the ISS Shenzhou. She sits opposite Gabriel and watches as he leans against the back of the chair, closes his eyes and sighs. There is silence as both of them take a breath. Another. A third.

“Another nightmare?”

It’s a loaded question, one that the old Lorca would be reluctant to answer, but Gabriel doesn’t hesitate to open his eyes and glance at her. He looks exhausted. Michael can empathize; it’s felt like an eternity since she really slept.

“Yeah,” he replies quietly, before looking at her fully. “You?”

Michael shakes her head.

“No. Just...thinking...”

She lets the word linger, not really knowing what else to add to the statement. She *had* been thinking after all.

“Always dangerous,” Gabriel utters, a soft smile on his lips, before he reaches over and places a hand on her bare arm. His skin is warm against hers, and Michael wonders how long she’s been cold. His tone immediately switches from teasing to serious. “Wanna talk about it?”

Michael smiles, and places her hand over his. There is a warmth there, same as every night when he makes an appearance in her room. She should feel threatened by this man sitting in front of her, who manipulated and lied and coerced his way through his life and into hers, but after the horrors they both witnessed, both *experienced*, there was an unbreakable link between them in spite of everything.

“I am... restless,” she eventually admits, lifting her hand away to scratch at her neck. “I am still finding it difficult to reach sleep. I have no dreams, no nightmares, but I cannot seem to rid my mind of thoughts and images.”

It is the truth. Since their return from the other universe her mind has been flooded with conflicting streams of consciousness and flashes of the horrors she had seen with her own eyes. She had witnessed Kelpians slaughtered for food, she had heard the screams of Gabriel’s sympathizers as they fought the Empire, she had wielded weapons against familiar faces.

She had watched Georgiou die once more, but this time it was at Michael’s own hand. She had taken another life while defending her own, defending her crew... defending *Gabriel*.

It should have been the other way round, Michael sometimes thinks. Gabriel not Georgiou. Gabriel betrayed me, betrayed everyone and yet...

And yet he had fought for her, saved her. Even after she had confronted him about who he was, about their past, about his lies, he had thought, eventually, only of her. It's one of the few reasons why she has not yet confided in anyone who he *really* is...

"I'm sorry."

The apology is quiet, but she hears it. Every one of his transgressions against her is contained in those two words, every single mistake and lie and betrayal. She senses that this is a tipping point, despite the long conversations and fights and threats they have shared since his true identity had been revealed.

"I know you are," she simply says in reply. It is a painful truth but the truth none the less. "What of your nightmare?"

"It was nothing." A pause. A hesitation. Michael says nothing, just waits. "The usual; death, destruction, reliving all that *wonderful* time I spent in the Agonizer, seeing you..."

Gabriel stops, but he doesn't need to finish the statement. Michael is fully aware of what he will say to end it... "*tortured, seeing you bleed, seeing you die...*"

It is the same nightmare he has had since the first night they returned, since the first night he appeared at her door in the early hours, a panicked look on his face that stayed there until Michael had assured him that she was fine.

"I am...okay," she affirms, once again reaching out to him, although this time she places the palm of her hand against his cheek. Gabriel releases a breath he probably wasn't even aware he was holding and sighs once more.

"I know." He closes his eyes briefly before opening them and returning his gaze to hers. "I know."

There is a look of resignation on his face, Michael thinks; the look of a man who knows that time is running short and he wishes, however belatedly, to atone for his sins.

She will bear his confessions and pain, as he does for her. Michael makes a decision, stands and holds out a hand to him.

"Come to bed Gabriel."

He does not reply, merely stands and stares at her, unsure of his place all of a sudden. Michael realises she has never seen him this vulnerable, so unsure of himself. It is a break in their newly formed routine; usually there is conversation and contemplation and assurances then Gabriel leaves in a bid to find sleep. It is clear to Michael that he is as restless as she.

"I need to rest, as do you. It will not do to have you wander the corridors confronting every crew member you see out of tiredness."

And with that the slight teasing they allow themselves has returned. Michael takes his hand and leads him to bed. He shucks off his shoes and jacket and follows her under the scratchy covers. Michael rolls over onto her side, Gabriel hesitating slightly before following her and resting his arm gently across her waist. It is not a possessive touch, nor intimate, but a necessity; for so long they had only had each other and to maintain a distance in circumstances such as these feels wrong.

There is a silence between them as they both try to rest. They breathe in sync in a bid to find sleep and forget the troubles that plague them.

“We could run away together you know,” Gabriel says eventually, his breath hot against her neck. “What a story they’d tell of us; the imposter and the mutineer - legends for all the wrong reasons.”

“Or all the right ones,” Michael replies, ignoring how *Terran* he sounds. “Between us we have halted a war, defeated a regime and saved a universe.”

“Just a shame it wasn’t *this* universe I suppose.” He chuckles softly against her skin and Michael leans back as if it were a kiss. “We should help do that. Fix this universe’s problems I mean. Then there’s a life for the two of us exploring the stars...”

It is a pipe dream she knows. She cannot leave any more than he can - they are bound to each for certain, but their obligation to the crew, to the Federation, to this universe grows with every passing second. To leave now, in the middle of war would surely tear them both apart. And, surely, someone, somewhere, will eventually join the dots, will figure out that he is not this universe’s Lorca, that she conspired to keep it a secret, that she went willingly with him despite all his lies and treachery - they would be chased until the edge of the universe and beyond. There is no happy ending for either of them in their futures.

“One step at a time,” is all she says. It’s not a promise, but it’s not a dismissal. *What’s the harm*, she thinks, *in having a dream to replace a nightmare?*

Gabriel gives her hand a reassuring squeeze before his breath evens out and he drifts off. Michael, finally, overcomes her restlessness and follows him.

End Notes

Let me know what you think; comments and kudos make my day :)

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!