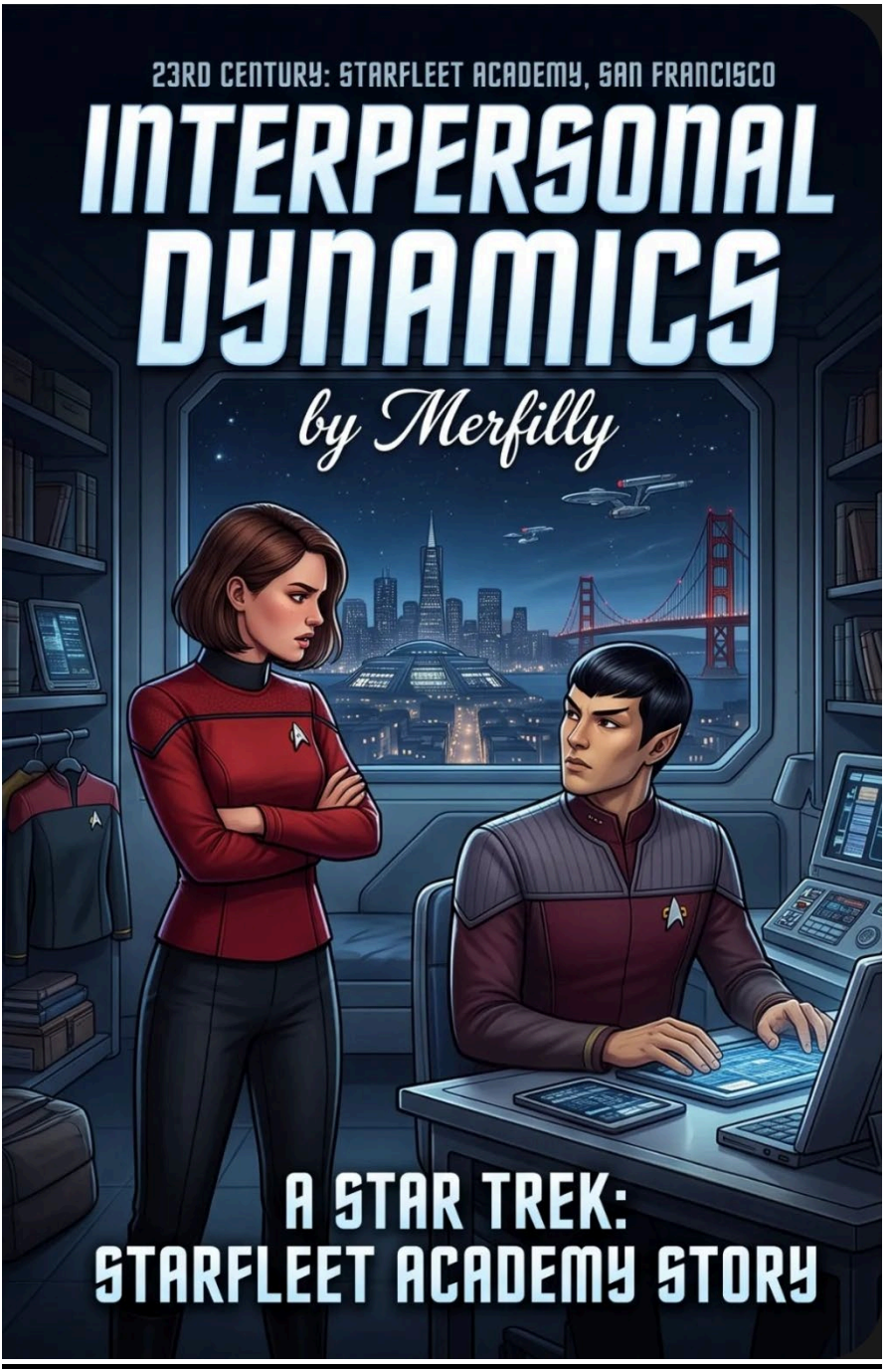

23RD CENTURY: STARFLEET ACADEMY, SAN FRANCISCO
INTERPERSONAL DYNAMICS
by Merfilly
A STAR TREK:
STARFLEET ACADEMY STORY

Interpersonal Dynamics

By Merfilly©

Sarda was in quarters, damn my own luck, when I came back early from shore leave. I tried to ignore the raised eyebrow as I put my carrisak and its items away, but I could feel his focus remaining on me. He would not, however, indulge his curiosity beyond that watchfulness. With a hearty sigh, I lowered myself gingerly onto my bed and tried not to count each abrasion, bruise, and sore muscle I possessed. I was still surprised to find out he'd volunteered to bunk with me, rather than Merete when our assignments came in, confirming us to *Enterprise*.

"Didn't think to see you," I said across the space between our beds. "Scanner and Merete still away?"

"Yes. Judd is visiting his family, and Merete went with some of the medical staff to attend a conference on Earth." I almost smiled. It was so good to hear him willing to be at least that personal toward the others. "Quieter than mine," I grumbled, both to complain, and to fill in the details he would not admit to wanting. "I am a glutton for punishment to ever go with the Captain on his sailing excursions. This race he took me on? Nice little competition?" I turned my head to see him watching me still, face impassive, but alert to my words. "Weather control didn't quite catch a squall formation from happening. I can't get used to the wind on Earth as it is, and then I had that? Rain coming at me from all sides, wind stealing all my breath, and there he was. Captain James T. Kirk, at the center of the storm, keeping us going." I tried to roll to my side, but that hurt… and I must have shown it.

"You were injured?" Sarda came off his bed to find the small aid kit that was standard in quarters.

"Just sore, Sarda. It's fine; Port Medical checked me over because I did get my ribs hit hard with a boom." I tried to sit up, but he came over and handed me the analgesic. A moment later and there was a cup of water to go with it.

"It is unwise to let muscle stiffness and pain go untreated, given the … energy of your career so far." Sarda's face never really changed, but I could see the slight attempt at humor in his amber eyes anyway.

"I am never going to live down that recording." I did take the medicine, swallowing them down with a healthy swallow of water.

Sarda returned to his bed, settling into a meditative pose on it, closing his eyes. "You will rest," he said, not quite an entreaty, but also less than a statement of fact.

He was going to stay? And meditate while I slept? Oh, I hoped I would not snore or do something too human… because this was a big thing. I didn't want to embarrass myself in his eyes. Not when he was willing to be this unguarded for me.

For? Whoa, brain, back up.

"I will," I promised rather than touch that can of worms.

He remained silent, and I closed my own eyes, easier in my skin to have him there, and wondering at my complicated knot of emotions surrounding him.

I did feel better as I came around, even though I had rolled onto my side. I opened my eyes without making much noise; if Sarda were sleeping, I didn't want to disturb him.

He wasn't, or I didn't think he was. I stayed still, just watching the serenity of his face, glad he'd found some peace during his own shore leave. The events with Perren… had been difficult for him. I wondered if he had found a new teacher, and had to clamp down on the jealousy in my soul over that thought. It wasn't like I could help him attain the training he desired… even needed, if my research and intuitions were right.

"Why do you stare so frequently at me?" Sarda asked, not even opening his eyes. "My facial structure does not change in notable fashion over short durations of time."

I had to smile; of course he knew I was staring. "Still trying to understand how we came to this point."

"If necessary, I could construct a logic diagram, though only based on actions taken. As logic has not applied to the decisions that led to those actions often."

Now I did laugh. "I thought you decided you could trust my intuitions."

"I did. They still fail at any structure or form that can be termed 'logic'."

He did open his eyes then, and looked across the distance between our bunks. I opened my mouth to try and keep him engaged in the light-hearted conversation, but his eyes were… serious. Not Vulcan-shield, but truly shielded.

"You are inquisitive as to why I chose to partner you, and let Merete and Judd have the other side when our quarters were reassigned. You also wish to know why I am here, instead of on leave still, perhaps at Vulcan, to intervene for Perren."

"You know me well."

Sarda did not move, but I felt as he both closed off part of himself and … opened other points. It did not make me feel easy to know we were having a confessional moment at his instigation.

"As you have come to know me, Piper. I… touched you, when your emotions were overwhelming you, because of Perren. You are both receptive and reactive to mental abilities, and my shields were not strong at that moment."

"And…" I brought myself up to a sitting position, wondering just how that furious moment tied to this point, to Sarda being here, now.

"I am seventy-two-point nine seven percent certain that there is a logic in the continuance of our working relationship while further defining our interpersonal dynamic off-duty."

I tripped over the idea that Sarda had just hit on me, discarded the notion, and came back to it anyway. "If you think I'm letting you get away without some strenuous objections, you've got another thought coming, mister," I said to give myself time to address the rest of it. "And… I missed being your friend. Yeah, yeah, Vulcan, friends, got it… but I did miss you. When I screwed up. And I've already said I can't ever fix that."

"No, you cannot, but it is also not logical, as you pointed out, for me to let that incident be part of the present." Sarda's voice was the most relaxed it had been over my mistake yet. "I wish us to be friends, in the human sense of things, just as you do."

"Like you and Judd are?" I tested, watching for the minute flicks of Sarda's thoughts in his face.

Granted, he was getting harder to read as he progressed in his learning, but he was my Sarda.

'My Sarda?' Oh this could get ugly, brain, if you're wrong.

"Perhaps, to begin," Sarda answered, his voice steady, eyes solidly locked on my face.

"And we'll find the ending ourselves," I agreed, heart squeezed by even the thought that he and I were both on track to admitting more than friendship.

"With, undoubtedly, several footnotes and anecdotes created by your energetic career leading us both into uncertain circumstances," Sarda said, to show he did understand the true point of subtle levity.

I laughed, and he let his eyes show the smile that would not cross his lips.