A Work in Progress

by problemforfuturetech

Summary

The Enterprise's final confrontation with Nero leaves them limping back to Earth without a warp core. Jim is much worse off than he's been letting on both physically and mentally. A well-timed call from an old friend may yield the advise he needs and the thought of seeing his kids again may just be the push he needs to get help. Thank god he has the two best families a man could ask for.
An Old Friend

To say it has been a hell of a time on the USS Enterprise the past week would be an understatement. With their drive gone the pace back to Earth was excruciatingly slow, and it was the slowest for the acting captain of the vessel, Jim Kirk. He has spent what little energy he does have to avoid the sick bay at all costs, which, with Bones in charge, has not been an easy feat. He’s barely slept for fear of what dreams his mind will thrust him in to, he hasn’t been able to stomach anything more than a ration bar or an apple, and he spent a lot of effort masking how every movement sent pain shooting through his entire body. He was barely able to hide a wince as he shifted in the captain’s chair trying to find some position that didn’t irritate what he was sure was his very broken ribs.

He looked over each of his bridge crew, for the millionth time, cataloging their injuries. Sulu’s cuts and bruises seemed to be healing well, though Jim noticed there were times where he seemed to turn to quickly and he would take in a sharp breath before freezing and readjusting. Chekov just looked exhausted, the poor boy looked half asleep at his station and, every once in a while, Jim would catch him shaking himself awake. Uhura has been shooting concerned looks towards Spock all week, he knew they were friends and he hoped someone was keeping an eye on Spock. Spock himself showed very little both emotionally and physically, a less observant man would call it indifference, but Kirk could see through the mask to see the broken man who was forcing himself to go on. He is the master of putting up a mask for the sake of others, plus he had seen Vulcan’s in such a state before, once long ago. Before his mind was able to go down that path Uhura spoke up from her station breaking off his line of thought.

“Captain, a message has come in from a comm number I don’t recognize requesting to speak with you.”

“Is there a name to go along with the transmission Lieutenant?”

“There’s not Sir.”

“Forward me the number please Lieutenant.” The PADD at his side lit up with a number sent from Uhura’s PADD. To his surprise he recognized the number, it was one of nine that he memorized a long time ago and he couldn’t help the dread that set into his chest as he stared down at the number. Jim slowly got up trying (and failing) not to agitate his injuries. “I’ll be in the ready room. Commander Spock, you have the conn.”

He made his way across the bridge to the ready room, making a point not to look at what he was sure was the concerned looks on his crew’s faces. As the door slid shut behind him he allows himself to wince as he sinks into the chair and props up his PADD on the desk in front of him. He stared at the number on the screen for a moment before taking a deep breath and hitting call. It didn’t ring for long before it was answered, and Jim was, for the first time in 12 years, face to face with Thomas Leighton. They stared at each other, neither one wanting to be the first one to speak. As if that would shatter the mirage in front of them and the other would disappear. Finally, Jim couldn’t take it anymore.

“How the hell did you find me, Tommy? let alone my number?” He watched a dry smile creep onto Tommy’s face.

“How the hell was I supposed to miss you JT?” The nickname made Kirk tense up but if Tommy noticed it he ignored it. “Your face is plastered on every news outlet you can find. You think I don’t recognize you just because you gained a couple of years and pounds? You think I’m too stupid to figure out that James T. Kirk is JT after staring at your picture and your name for the past week? As
for how I got your number, I didn’t, I figured out how to comm your ship, much easier that way. Starfleet should really look into their cybersecurity.”

“Tommy! you hacked Starfleet?” Jim asked with an incredulous look on his face as his old just laughed at the question.

“Oh, JT don’t even try to convince me you haven’t. You haven’t changed that much.” Jim looked down and he could hear the smile on Tom’s face. “Yeah, that’s what I thought.”

“Why did you call Tommy?”

“JT, we’ve been trying to find you for years, but nobody knew who you were, we didn’t have access to the files and you got separated from us on the rescue ship. We refused to believe you didn’t make it, but nobody would tell us anything, we were just kids. Imagine our shock when your ugly mug showed up on our TV.”

“We?” Jim asked, confusion coloring his voice as he took in what Tommy was saying.

“Me and the rest of the kids. We all kept in touch, but we were all split up in the foster system. Couple years after we got planetside I aged out of the system and went to university, got a pretty well-paying gig after I graduated and managed to track down the others that aged out. I filled for the adoption of the other three and we’ve all been living together, taking care of each other.” Jim sat in shock as he ran through everything in his head.

“So why did you call now?” Tommy let out a sharp huff at that.

“I called to make sure you’re ok JT. We know you, and more than that we know how you are in a crisis. We know the lengths you’ll go to make sure others think you’re fine, to make sure no one is worrying after you. But someone needs to worry about you, James.” Jim could feel the tears coming so he ducked his head down breaking eye contact with his friend as he rubbed over his eyes with his hands. “How are you, actually?” Jim sighed, knowing there was no way he could lie his way out of this.

“I’m shit Tommy,” he let out a sharp breath, “Physically, I think it’s safe to say my ribs have been in better shape, I’m pretty sure some of the bones in my hand are broken, something is wrong with my neck, and I defiantly have a hell of a concussion.”

“Hell JT, don’t you have to get cleared by medical or something?”

“They’re stretched thin as it is, there are people in worse shape than me, it hasn’t been too hard to avoid them.”

“You need to see a doctor James.” Jim tensed as his friend fed him the advice he didn’t want to hear.

“I can’t take the doctors’ time away from patients that need it, you know that.” Tommy didn’t look convinced, but much to Jim’s relief he didn’t push the issue and he changed the subject instead.

“Have you been eating?” Ok, not one of Jim’s favorite subjects either.

“More than I want to, less than I know I need to.” Much to his credit Tom didn’t seem surprised by the answer, instead nodding.

“Just make sure you eat enough, don’t ration it, you’ve got plenty.” Jim couldn’t help the small laugh that came out of his mouth at that.
“You’ve really stepped into this parenting thing well.”

Tommy smiled, “I may be their legal parent but you’re still Dad. Always will be JT. Make it back in one piece, your kids are waiting for you.” Jim smiled as the tears started coming back. “I’ll let you go, Captain Kirk, I’m sure you’ve got plenty to do and a medical checkup to make.”

“Bye Tommy, talk to you again?”

“Course, there’s no getting rid of me JT.”

“Wouldn’t dream of it,” and with that, the screen of the PADD went dark.

Jim got up slowly, allowing himself to let out a groan of pain as his ribs protested the movement. He took as deep of a breath as he could and let the door to the Bridge swing open in front of him. As he sat back in the captain’s chair, his mask back in place, his mind wandered as he looked off into space. He thought over what Tommy told him over the call, he thought about his kids, about how he could have lost them during the mess with Nero and not even known. He thought about all the people lost today, the Starfleet officers and cadets that flew right into a trap, their own crew members, the Vulcans they couldn’t save, Spock’s mother. God, all those people gone, families split apart, he could have done more, he should have done more. He could have thought faster, acted quicker, been one step farther. He could have beamed down to Vulcan with Spock, he could have done something, anything.

He didn’t even realize his breathing was getting erratic as the dread and panic set in. It wasn’t until Spock spoke up from beside him that he noticed his breathing had gotten away from him, and how much it hurt. God, his whole body was on fire.

“Captain are you unwell?” Get out, he’s got to get out, find Bones, Bones can fix this.

“I’m fine Spock, nothing to worry about, just need to go check in with Doctor McCoy about medical supplies.” And that’s when Jim made his mistake, he knew it the minute he did it. He got up from his chair as if nothing was wrong and as soon as he stood pain flared in his body and his vision went dark, he felt like he was falling and could vaguely hear the cries of his crew. He was out before he hit the ground.
Jim didn’t actually hit the ground after he collapsed on the Bridge. Spock was already standing at his side and was able to catch his Captain before he hit the ground, causing more damage. Spock lowered him to the ground as Nyota jumped up from her station and ran over.

“What the hell just happened?” Nyota said, panic coloring her voice, as she bent down and rested her fingers over Jim’s wrist checking his pulse.

“I do not know. I suspect the Captain was not as well as he was leading us to believe. Lieutenant Uhura please alert medical that the Captain has collapsed and request Doctor McCoy to the Bridge.”

“Of course, Sir,” Nyota replied clearly understanding that they had to keep their emotions under control for the sake of the rest of the crew, something Spock was grateful for. As he waited for the CMO to arrive Spock to the time to assess the rest of the Bridge Crew. Thankfully many of them, though their concern for the Captain was clear, understood it was under control. The exception was, to no surprise, Chekov. The young human was clearly very concerned for Kirk as evident by the panicked looks he kept sending the man on the ground.

“Ensign Chekov,” Spock addressed the young boy startling him. He continued as the Ensign’s worried gaze turned on him, “The situation is under control Ensign. The Captain will be taken care of.”

Chekov gave a sharp nod as he turned back to his station, still tense. Spock saw that Cadet Sulu was now aware of the boy’s distress and as the older man put his hand on Chekov’s shoulder Spock decided to let the man deal with the younger boy. It was just as Spock turned his attention back to the Captain that the door to the Bridge slid open and Doctor McCoy all but ran to the man on the ground, two nurses on his heels with a stretcher.

The Doctor ran a Tricorder over the Captain once, a look of concern then anger coming over his face, before turning to the nurses. “Get him to the Med bay, I’ll be down as soon as I figure out what the hell happened up here.” McCoy ordered at the nurses who started to put Kirk on the stretcher.

“Does anyone want to explain what the hell happened?” McCoy snapped as he turned his attention to the Bridge crew. The crew was silent all looking towards Spock waiting for the explanation he would give the doctor.

“The Captain took a call from an unknown number in the Ready Room. When he returned to the Captain’s chair he was unusually vacant, and his breathing started to increase to levels that would suggest a panic attack. When I addressed him, he startled and responded that he was fine. He then informed me that he needed to speak with you about medical supplies and as he got up he lost consciousness and collapsed. I was able to catch him before his head reached the floor and was able to prevent further damage.”

“And this was the first time any of you noticed anything wrong with the kid?” McCoy asked, voice getting more frustrated.

“Yes Doctor,” Spock replied as the rest of the crew gave hesitant nods.

“I need to do a full assessment of his injuries but from what I saw I find it hard to believe nobody noticed he wasn’t ok.”

“Doctor if I may accompany you to the Med bay, I would like to know myself the full extent of the
Captain’s injuries as soon as possible.”

“Whatever Spock. Just don’t get in my way.”

“Of course, Doctor.” Spock turned to Sulu, “Ensign you have the conn.”

“Yes sir.” And with that Spock and McCoy left the Bridge and made their way quickly to the Med bay.

Spock and Leonard walk quickly down the halls of the Enterprise towards the med bay in silence. Spock could feel the tension rolling of the man in front of him. When they finally stepped into the med bay a nurse points the doctor towards Jim who was on a biobed near the back of the room, away from the most used parts of the bay. McCoy waits until Spock is on the other side of Jim’s bed before he pulls the curtain, shutting out the rest of the med bay. Without a word towards the First Officer he pulls out a tricorder and runs more thorough scans then he had on the Bridge. Bones sighs as he tries to figure out which of Jim’s injuries to treat first. How the kid had stayed upright for a week in this condition is a medical miracle. He pinches the bridge of his nose; this kid is going to drive him to an early grave.

“What is the extent of the Captain’s injuries Doctor?” God, he forgot the hobgoblin was here.

“Well to start I suspect he’s covered in cuts and bruises, but I’ll have to cut his shirt off to know the full extent of those. One of his ankles is defiantly sprained and it has lacerations I’ve never seen around it which is concerning at best. His hands are showing signs of pretty severe frost bite, most likely from Delta Vega,” Bones looks at the Vulcan accusingly, and to Spock’s credit he looks down in what McCoy is choosing to translate as guilt. “He has multiple broken bones in his left hand, I knew about those, but they’ve been made significantly worse since he came back from the drill. He has two broken ribs and several fractured ones, and he has some serious laryngeal trauma as well as a hyoid fracture it’s a surprise he could speak at all.” He sends another glare to Spock at that and the Vulcan does look ashamed at that and McCoy began to take pity on him. “Look Spock, I’ve got work to do. You should head back to the Bridge.” Spock gave a sharp nod and went to leave Jim’s closed off part of the med bay. Before he left Bones saw him pause and look towards the blond on the bed, an expression McCoy couldn’t place passed over the Vulcan’s face before he turned and left.

Bones took a deep breath before he started running a Dermal Regenerator over his friend’s body, fixing the superficial cuts and bruises with ease. He continued on, slowly making progress on Jim’s injuries, every once in a while, calling a nurse to help reposition the Captain. A couple of hours later McCoy knew he was making good progress, but it still felt too slow. Letting out a tired sigh he put down the regenerator and looked down at the Captain, letting the doctor mask fade away and look at Jim as a friend, not a patient.

“God kid why didn’t you come to me?” He said wiping Jim’s hair back from his forehead. “I’m going grey because of you Darlin’.” Pulling his hand back from Jim, McCoy starts to clean up the work space around him. He was only working for around ten minutes before he was startled by Jim sitting straight up in his Biobed. “Jim what the hell do you think you’re doing? Lay down or your gonna make yourself worse.” Bones shouts going back to his friend’s side. When Jim turned his eyes on him he nearly took a step back in shock. There was no recognition there, he’s never seen Jim look so afraid, he looked like a cornered animal, he looked feral. “Jim?” he asked his voice getting softer and Jim’s eyes darted around the room. “Are you ok kid?”

“Where are they, what have you done to them?” Jim’s voice was angry but rough from his injuries.

“I don’t know what you’re talking about Darlin’. Where’s who? You’re on the Enterprise Jim. Do
you know who I am?” He moves closer and he can’t help the spike of hurt when Jim presses himself against the wall to get farther from him. He made a reach for Jim which was in retrospect, a mistake. Before he was able to react, Jim’s fist made contact with his jaw and he stumbled back. He saw Jim get ready to bolt and grabbed the hypo with sedative on the table beside him and lunged to inject the medication into the Captain’s neck. As soon as he pressed down, Jim collapsed, almost on top of him, and he let the hypo fall to the ground and he wrapped his arms around the younger man.

“I’ve got you, I’ve got you sweetheart.” He whispered to Jim as he laid him back in the Biobed. As he pulls back a nurse came in through the curtain.

“Is everything ok Doctor McCoy?” He lets his gruff exterior fall back into place as he addresses the young man.

“He just woke up in a panic, didn’t know where he was. I sedated him, but I don’t want him alone until I know he’s in his right mind.”

“Of course, Sir.”

“Bring me a PADD, I need to update the First Officer.” The nurse nodded and left the way he came, and Leonard let his concern show on his face again. “Shit.” His jaw has been in better shape, he winces as he adjusts his jaw trying to assess the damage. “You got a hell of an arm on you considering your injuries kid.” He ran the dermal regenerator over his own face and he felt the pain begin to ease up. When the nurse came back with the PADD McCoy sinks into the chair across the room and after he sends a quick message to Spock he sets it down and fights off the hurt building in his chest. He could feel tears welling up no matter how much he tried to push them away. He knew the look Jim gave him when he woke up would haunt him for a long time. Leonard finally let himself breakdown, tears falling down his face as he thinks about the pain his best friend is in. He let out a dry laugh at himself, there’s no point denying it in his own head. He stopped looking at James Kirk as a friend a long time ago, looking back on it Leonard was wrapped around the kid’s finger before they even got off the shuttle from Iowa. He wiped the tears from his face as he picked up the PADD next to him.

He was only sitting there for a couple of minutes before the curtain was pulled back again and Spock stepped through. “Hey Spock, what can I do for you.”

Spock replied without looking away from Jim, “Doctor, you informed me that the Captain woke up, but you had to sedate him. I came to inquire as to…” Spock trailed off as he looked towards McCoy and a look of confusion passes over the Vulcan’s face.

“What? What did you want to ask Spock?”

“Have you been crying Doctor?” McCoy could feel himself tense up.

“I’m sure you didn’t come all the way down here to ask me that.”

“I apologize, I did not mean the question as a judgement. Your distress is… nearly logical, considering the circumstances.”

“Well I’ve had better days. What did you want to know?”

“I was going to inquire as to why you had to sedate the Captain, but the current state of your jaw has offered me some insight as to what occurred.”

“Yeah, kid’s got an arm on him.”
“What exactly caused him to attack you?”

“When he woke up he was already panicking, he didn’t know where he was, he didn’t recognize me.” He felt his voice crack at the last bit. “He was almost feral Spock, I’ve never seen him like that.”

“That is… concerning.” Leonard gave a dry chuckle at that.

“That’s one word for it. I’m extremely concerned about him and I don’t know what to do.” McCoy must be exhausted if he’s decided Spock is who he’s going to open up too.

“I too am worried about the Captain.” That surprised Leonard and he couldn’t help the snarky response that comes out of his mouth.

“So, you do have feelings then?” He regretted it as soon as Spock tenses up. But he was even more surprised about the next thing the Vulcan said.

“Yes. I do feel Leonard. My father once told me Vulcan’s feel even deeper than humans, they just have greater control over those feelings. I have always found it hard to control my own emotions.”

“Well it seems like you’ve got them under control to me.” McCoy thought he saw the corner of Spock’s mouth twitch upwards.

“I must check in with the Bridge. I am then off duty, please comm me if the Captain’s condition changes.”

“Of course, Spock. Have a good night.”

“You as well. And Leonard,” McCoy gave a questioning hum towards Spock, “You should get sleep soon. You are no use to the Captain if you have not gotten the necessary amount of sleep.”

“I’ll try, but I give no promises,” and with that Spock left the med bay. Leonard slumped over as soon as Spock was out of sight. Well he certainly didn’t expect a heart to heart with Spock today. He thought he had the green blooded hobgoblin figured out, looks like he’s got a lot cut out for him between the Captain and his First Officer. As he leaned back in his chair trying to get comfortable he could feel himself drifting off. He fell asleep listening to the sounds of Jim’s heart rate monitor.

Leonard woke up sometime later to his name being called. “Bones?” He shot up in his chair to see Jim laying in the biobed with his eyes open and a small smile on his face that looked more like a wince as he adjusted himself. “What the hell happened Bones?”

“What do you remember?” Leonard asks as soon as he’s sure Jim isn’t going to freak out on him again.

“Oh I was on the Bridge. Then… Spock was there and then I was coming down to find you… And that’s it.” Bones let out a huff as he picked up the tricorder and ran it over Jim’s ribs.

“You collapsed on the Bridge Jim. Your body shut down because it was in so much pain. Speaking of, how the hell did you get cleared with these injuries, which doctor cleared you? Jim was avoiding his eyes now. “Jim who cleared you?” The younger man mumbled something he couldn’t hear.

“What was that?”

“Nobody.” Leonard froze at that.
“Jim your file says you were cleared. That you were check over and you were fine. How exactly did that get on your file then?” The Captain finally looked up to him at that.

“I’ll give you three guesses.” That’s all McCoy needed to hear.

“You hacked your file.”

“Got it in one Bones.” Anger built up in Leonard, threatening to boil over.

“Jim these injuries could have killed you. Do you understand that?”

Now Jim was getting frustrated with the doctor, “It’s not like I haven’t had worse Bones.”

“Jim, I don’t think you quite know all the ways these injuries could have killed you if your body hadn’t saved you from yourself.” The fight seemed to visibly drain out of the younger man and he winced as he tried to draw in a deep breath. When he looked at McCoy the doctor could see the exhaustion and fear in the man’s eyes.

“I have to make sure everyone gets back ok. Plus, other people needed medical attention. I didn’t was to pull focus from them.”

“Oh Jim.” Leonard sat on the edge of Jim’s bed and rested his hand on the younger man’s shoulder. “Everybody is safe because of you. You’ve got an incredibly competent crew and you need to trust them now because right now you need to get better.”

“Bones I can’t. Vulcan is gone because I wasn’t quick enough, and I almost wasn’t quick enough to save Earth. So much of our class is dead Bones and I just can’t help but think I could have done something to save them faster. I could have figured it out quicker. I…” His breathing was speeding up and Leonard watched as panic set in and Jim’s eyes looked like they were looking at something that wasn’t there. Bones reached his hand out and ran his fingers through his friend’s hair. Jim tensed for a moment and Leonard got ready to pull away but as quick as Jim tensed he relaxes and leans into the older man’s touch.

“Jim, Darlin’ there’s nothing more you could have done.” Bones dropped every wall he’s ever put up. Jim didn’t need that right now. “You did more than anyone thought was possible, you were incredible Jim, I… You were amazing, you’re an amazing captain.”

“I should’ve done more Bones, I can never save enough of them.”

“James Tiberius Kirk, look at me.” McCoy moved his hand to the back of Jim’s neck forcing the man to look at him. “You saved so many lives today do you understand. Don’t belittle those people’s lives alright. You’re never gonna be able to save everyone kid, focus on the ones you can, the ones you did, otherwise you’ll go crazy.” Jim, still refusing to look his friend in the eye nodded and Bones released his hand from the back of Jim’s neck. “Get some rest Jim, you’re stuck here for a while.” Leonard got up and had his hand on the curtain when Jim spoke up.

“Bones?” He turned back towards the biobed.

“Yeah kid?”

“Could I get a PADD?” Bones looked at him suspiciously. “I won’t do work Bones, just want something to do.”

“Okay kid, but if I catch you working, I’m gonna hypo your ass into next week got it?” For the first time since Jim woke up Leonard saw a real smile on his face. He stepped back into the room and
grabbing the PADD he left on the table he walked over to Jim and handed it over.

“Night Bones.”

“Night Jim.”

Leonard walked around the med bay checking on the patients that were still confined there. Picking up tricorders that nurses left around in the shuffle throughout the day. It was clear that he was one of the last here, the rest of the on duty medical staff getting what sleep they could in the on-call room. As he was walking around he was surprised to hear voices coming from Jim’s room in the back, barely muffled by the curtain. Unable to help himself and also worried that his friend may have gone insane, he drifted over, keeping the appearance that he was cleaning for his own peace of mind.

“I went back on to the Bridge, had a bit of a panic attack, got up and then…” He heard Jim’s trail of and a muffled voice from the PADD and he moved closer to the curtain. Jim started talking again, “Well I... Then I collapsed.”

The man on the other end sounded as frustrated as Bones felt, “JT are you serious?”

“Don’t JT me. I didn’t think I was that bad off. I’ve withstood a lot worse.”

“You think I don’t know that? But you shouldn’t have to withstand anything like that again.”

“There were other people who needed medical attention. I didn’t want to take up any of the doctors’ time”

“You’re impossible JT, you must be driving your CMO crazy.” Bones couldn’t help the smile at that.

“Plus, don’t like med bay’s” Bones tilted his head, well that explains a lot. He always just thought Jim liked causing trouble.

“Course you don’t. I hate ‘em too. The only one who can stand them is Kev and even he gets antsy.” Then he heard Jim’s breath hitch and he heard a new voice over the PADD.

“Tommy! Tommy! I got my paper back today and…” The younger voice trailed off and Jim spoke up again.

“Kev? Is that you? Look how grown up you are, god.” Bones had never quite heard that tone of voice from Jim before but if he had to place it, it would be parental. The kid said something Bones couldn’t quite hear before his voice got louder.

“Look JT! I got my lab report back from school today and I got the best grade in the class!”

“That’s awesome Kev. I’m really proud of you.”

“Well Korra helped me with some of it.”

“Still Kev, did you understand it?”

“Yeah once Korra explained it to me.”

“Then that’s all that matters sweetheart. I’m really proud of you.” Bones could hear the smile in Jim’s voice. The man’s voice from before started talking again.

“Ok Kevin say goodnight to JT, he needs some rest.”

“Is he ok?” Jim spoke up again.
“I’m alright Kevin, don’t worry I’m gonna make it back ok.”

“Goodnight.”

“Night Kevin. I love you sweetheart.”

“Love you too.” There was no talking for a bit before Jim spoke again.

“Alright Tommy, I am actually exhausted so I think this is goodnight.”

“Get some rest JT.”

“Bye.” And with that Bones heard the PADD being set down on the table. “Alright Bones you can stop your eavesdropping,” Leonard pulled back the curtain and gave Jim a apologetic smile. “It’s ok Bones don’t look at me like that. How much did you hear?”

“Bits and pieces.”

“So, the whole thing?” Bones laughed at that.

“More or less. Missed the beginning and sometimes the kid was a little too quiet.”

“Oh well then I’ll ask him to speak up next time.” They both let out a chuckle as Bones sat in the chair at his bedside. “Ment to ask earlier, what happened to your jaw?”

Leonard’s hand flew up to what he was sure was his very bruised jaw. “Don’t worry about it Kid, looks worse than it is.”

“But you didn’t have it when I saw you at Breakfast.”

“Jim it’s not a big deal.”

“Then tell me.” Bones could tell Jim was getting frustrated and wanted to keep the kid calm.

“You really don’t remember then?” Jim froze and went pale as he put two and two together.

“Remember what Bones?”

“You woke up earlier, much earlier, and you were panicking.”

“No.”

“I shouldn’t have approached you like I did, and it startled you. You took a swing at me but it’s not as bad as it looks.” Despite Leonard’s reassurances Jim still looked horrified.

“I did that to you?” His voice smaller than Bones was used to hearing it.

“You weren’t in the right state of mind Jim. I don’t blame you, and really, it’s not that bad. Could’ve healed it completely by now if I was usin’ the dermal regenerator but I sorta forgot it was there.” Jim looked like he felt a little better at that. “Now get some sleep kid, you need it.”
Over the course of the next week, Jim’s physical condition was improving, slower than McCoy would have suspected, but improving none the less. Mentally however Jim seemed to be getting worse as the days went on and Leonard didn’t know what to do about it. It killed him to watch the man he loves tear himself apart like this. To McCoy’s surprise, and sometimes horror, he was starting to find more and more comfort in Spock, who seemed to be just as worried about Jim as Leonard was. The Vulcan spent a lot of his free time in the med bay now, entertaining the Captain, which McCoy had no problem with. Better Spock than him. He loved the Kid, but Jim could be a pain in the ass when he was bored.

Even with both McCoy and Spock keeping him company it still seemed as if Jim’s mental state was slipping. More than once a night now McCoy, who had taken to sleeping in the CMO’s office, would wake up to the sounds of Jim having a panic attack. From what he could tell Jim was getting little to no sleep, besides a couple of times Bones had to sedate him for his own safety. The doctor knew it was the reason his friend’s slow recovery process, but he couldn’t do anything about it because the stubborn bastard refused to talk to him. Jim was hiding something, and he knew it, but he couldn’t force him to tell someone. Bones has talked to Spock about it. After an entire night of trying to keep Jim’s nightmares at bay, he went to the Vulcan exhausted asking if Jim has told him anything. He hadn’t.

Jim felt like he was losing all the control he worked so hard to gain his entire life. All the guilt he pushed away throughout his life was coming forward, every fear he’s ever had haunted his dreams. He was jumping at every damn noise in the med bay and he hadn’t slept soundly in two weeks now. His guilt grew when it became clear what he was putting Bones through. He could tell by the dark circles under his eyes that the doctor was getting just as much sleep as he was, maybe less. Because of that, he’s spent the last few days trying to convince Bones to release him with no
success. The CMO was steadfast in his opinion that James was in no condition to work, something Jim disagreed with. It was a big hit to Jim the day he realized he was even worrying Spock. As he was getting better at reading the Vulcan First Officer it became clear that he was extremely concerned about Jim’s condition. Jim had no idea why he assumed it was because he was the Captain.

It was today though that he witnessed the weirdest interaction yet. Spock had spent his lunch break playing chess with Jim, a tradition they seemed to have developed in the past week. After two hours Spock had to go back to the Bridge, but as he left the med bay he stopped to talk to Bones. This alone was not unusual, what was unusual was that Spock was looking at Bones with the same look of concern Jim caught Spock looking at him with when he thought his Captain wasn’t looking. Spock then said something Jim couldn’t hear, but whatever it was made Bones deflate as Jim saw for the first time how tired Bones really was. Then Spock reached out and put a hand on Bones’ shoulder, which seemed to shock the doctor as much as it had shocked Jim. Bones looked up at Spock as the Vulcan said something else that had Bones nodding in understanding before the CMO straightened up again and Spock went to leave for the Bridge. What surprised Jim the most though was the teasing smile that grew on Bones’ face as he called out one last time, and the responding look of amusement on the Vulcan gave before turning and exiting.

Leonard was exhausted, he was surprised he body was still operating though he was sure it was more on muscle memory more than anything else now. Every once in a while, he would look over to where Jim and Spock were playing chess and he couldn’t help the smile that would creep on his face every time Jim would laugh at something that Spock had said. He shook his head and tried to focus on the patient file in front of him. He was trying so hard just to stay awake that he jumped when Spock said his name. He spun around and at one-point Spock had left Jim’s side and made his way across the room and somehow ended up right behind Leonard without him noticing. He needed to put a bell on that damn Vulcan sooner rather than later.

“Spock, hi what can I do for you? Is Jim alright.” Leonard put the PADD down on the table beside him.

“The Captain’s condition remains unchanged. I came over in order to inquire into your wellbeing Doctor.” McCoy couldn’t help the surprise that must be showing on his face at that.

“I’m fine Spock.”

“Fine is a relative term Doctor. Even so, you do not look ‘fine’.”

“A lot of late nights Spock, it’s to be expected.”

“Leonard it is okay to admit your fear of Jim’s worsening mental state.” Leonard deflated at that, letting his head hang down.

“I don’t know if I can fix this Spock. I’m afraid I’m gonna lose him to himself.” Spock reached out and grabbed Leonard’s shoulder which shocked the doctor into looking up at the Vulcan.

“It is illogical to put the entirety of Jim’s recovery on your own shoulders, Doctor. The entirety of the crew on the Enterprise would do most anything for the Captain now and the Bridge crew, in particular, would be willing to take some of the pressure off you. I too want to see the Captain recover soon and would be willing to assist you in anything you may need.” McCoy couldn’t do anything but nod at Spock.
“Thank you, Spock. I’ll let you know what comes to mind.” Spock gave a sharp nod of approval as he removed his hand from the doctor’s shoulder.

“I will return after my shift, Leonard.”

“See you then you green-blooded hobgoblin.” Bones snarked back, an insult that didn’t carry quite it’s intended impact when it was accompanied by the teasing smile currently on McCoy’s face. With a raised eyebrow that only made McCoy’s smile widen, Spock left the med bay.

Jim didn’t have much time to contemplate on when exactly his best friend and his First Officer had started getting along because a few minutes later his PADD chimes to notify him that he’s getting a call. He looked over to see Tommy’s number on the screen and he smiles as he picks it up and answers the call. When Tommy’s face pops up on the screen the young man is not focused on the PADD in front of him and is talking to someone off camera.

“Hey everyone calm down. You’ll all get a turn, alright?” Tommy was speaking over multiple voices off camera and Jim could just see someone’s shoulder to Tommy’s right. Jim couldn’t help but smile at his old friend interact with his kids.

“Hey Tommy, how are you doing?” Tommy’s attention snapped to Jim and the man on the screen started beaming.

“JT! I hope it’s not a bad time or anything, but this morning Kev was going on about how he got to talk to you and the rest of the kids wanted to see you.” Just then the person sitting next to Tommy leaned into frame. A young woman, not much younger than Tommy and Jim, came into view and Jim would recognize her anywhere. Her red hair falls in ringlets past her shoulders, much longer than it was since the last time Jim saw her. Her pale skin is covered in as many freckles as he remembers but the smile on her face was much bigger than he’s ever seen it.

“Dad! Oh my god wow, you’re really alive.” Jim’s heart broke a little at the idea that his kids never knew if he made it.

“Hey Rina, how are you, sweetheart?” Karina was the third oldest of the group and has never failed to impress Jim.

“Pretty good, I graduated university with a Bachelor of Science in Biology a couple years ago. I’ve been working to save up some money and now I’ve applied to Starfleet for their medical track.” God his kids were really grown up now.

“That’s great Rina, do you know what your specialty is going to be?”

“Right now, I’m thinking trauma surgery, but I’m not set in stone on that one yet.” Jim couldn’t help it as the smile on his face got bigger.

“Well I’ve got access to some of the best doctors in the fleet, and the best trauma surgeon there is, so if you have questions you call me, got it?” Karina’s eyes lit up at the offer and Jim knew he had said the right thing.

“Yeah totally, that would be awesome Dad.” As the noise picked up in the background Tommy
popped back into view.

“Ok Rina, give the others a chance with the PADD.” Karina’s smile fell a little.

“Ok, bye Dad, I’ll talk to you later right?” Jim’s smile softened at his kid’s worry.

“Of course, Rina, I’ll be sure to talk to you later.” The smile returned to her face as she bounced of camera only to be replaced with a boy a few years younger than her. His skin was darker than Rina’s and his jet-black hair was neatly styled. He gave Jim a small, shy smile.

“Hey, Dad.” The younger boy looked down at his fidgeting hands.

“Hey, Shadow. Wow, kid look how much you’ve grown up, how are you doing?” Jim’s face was now stuck in a constant smile as he sees his kids for the first time in years. Travis was one of the younger kids in the group and when they had been on Tarsus IV he had followed Jim nearly everywhere, always silently earning him the title of Jim’s Shadow, a nickname that stuck after they had run into the woods.

“I’m doing good. I graduate from university soon.”

“Oh, wow Shadow that’s great. What did you study?”

“I was a Psychology Major with a Minor in Xenolinguistics.” Travis had never been the most talkative kid, but Jim could hear the excitement in his kid’s voice when the topic of his study came up.

“That’s really impressive Shadow, I’m really proud of you kid.”

“Thanks, Dad. Theo really wants to talk to you now. Will I see you again?” Jim silently cursed every Starfleet officer involved in separating him and his kids.

“Of course, you will Shadow, I love you.”

“Love you too.” The boy mumbled back with a small smile on his face before he handed the PADD over to Theo.

Theo looked a lot different from the last time Jim saw him, his once long blond hair has been cut short and dyed purple. He also now wore glasses that seemed to slip down his nose without him noticing. Theo was already beaming at his dad by the time the PADD focused on him and before Jim was able to say anything he was already talking.

“Dad! Holy crap you got old. Your eyes look the same though, I remember those the best. How are you doing? Tommy said you were pretty hurt. Who’s your doctor? Are they taking care of you?” Jim let out a laugh at the boy.

“Theo, slow down. I’m doing fine, I was pretty beat up but they’re patching me together pretty well here, so I will be up and working by the time we dock. How are you doing kid?”

“Oh, I’m doing great! I’ve been doing some art for some pretty big comic book writers, mostly covers and stuff, but I just got an offer to be the primary artist on the next project. It’s not as traditional as what Rina or Shadow are doing but I have fun.” Theo shrugged, and Jim saw the
insecurity underneath the casual mention of his siblings.

“Hey, Theo, as long as you love what you’re doing then you’re all set.”

“Thanks, dad. Maybe I could send you some of the ones I’ve been working on?” Theo asked hopefully.

“I would love that. It would give me something to do other than paperwork while I’m stuck in the Med Bay.” Theo was beaming again now, and Jim suddenly got the strong desire to hug his kid.

“I’ll send it to you after you hang up alright?”

“Sounds great. Am I about to be passed to someone else now?” Theo laughed at that.

“Yeah give me a second.” Theo leaned forward and propped the PADD up on a table in front of the couch he was sitting on. As soon as the device was balanced to the younger man’s liking he looked off over the camera before waving his hand to get someone’s attention and pointing at the PADD.

“Oh see you later dad,” was the last thing he said before scampering off.

A few seconds later a girl with dark skin and short, tightly curled, black hair sits down on the couch, her legs crossed and a smile on her face that her father mirrored back to her.

“Hi Dad. I’m the last one today. The other three are at school, Korra and Pril are going to be sad they missed you.” She signed, and Jim could see her hands shaking a little.

“Hey Spark. I’m sad I’m going to miss the others but tell me how you’re doing. You’re shaking, are you ok?” Jim signed back, the language coming back easily despite the fact that he hadn’t used it for quite some time. When he mentioned her hands, she looked down as if she didn’t notice the shaking.

“The shaking is a normal thing. It never stopped after we got picked up. The doctors didn’t seem too concerned with it. I’m doing pretty well, I open a show in a couple weeks so I’m really busy nowadays.”

“Show?” Jim signed back questioningly.

“Yeah, I’m working on a show that’s about to go up at the American Conservatory Theater in San Francisco.” Madison was basically bouncing in her seat at this point and Jim couldn’t help but share her enthusiasm.

“What are you doing in it? Are you acting?” As soon as Jim signed that question a bubbly giggle erupted from Madison’s mouth.

“No, no I don’t act Dad. I’m the second assistant stage manager on the show.”

“You’ll have to help your Dad out on this one Spark, I have no idea what that means.” That pulled another giggle from his daughter.

“Just means I’m one of the people in charge of making sure the show actually happens. Like backstage stuff.” Jim nodded in understanding.

“Alright, well I expect tickets to this show of yours when I get back home ok?” Jim watched the smile spread on Madison’s face at the prospect of him coming to one of her shows.

“You’ll come to the show?”
“Of course, I will sweetheart. I wouldn’t miss it for the world.” Madison looked off camera, most likely watching someone sign to her. Jim’s guess was confirmed when she turned back to the PADD and began signing to him again.

“Ok Dad, Tommy wants to talk to you now. I love you.”

“I love you.” And with that, he watched as she and Tommy switched places and he watched as Tommy signed at her that she should finish up her work before dinner.

“Hey JT, how are you doing?” Tommy asked, bringing his attention back to the PADD.

“Physically? A lot better. Mentally? Not so great.” Jim watched as the other man’s eyebrows scrunched up in concern.

“What’s been going on?” Jim sighed, now was the time to get this off his chest, Tommy was pretty much the only one he could talk to about this. With the exception of Pike who was still in a medically induced coma.

“Nightmares, flashbacks, the works. Mostly T4 stuff though there’s a fair share of Nero stuff mixed in now.”

“James.” He stiffened at that, Tommy rarely called him by his real name. “Is there anyone there you can talk to about this? Do you have any friends you can trust with this?”

“Um, well Chris Pike is on the ship, you remember him, right?”

“He was one of the Ensigns on the ship that picked us up right? So, you could talk to him?”

“Yeah that’s him, and I would but, he’s in a medical coma.” Tommy let out a frustrated sigh as he pinched the bridge of his nose.

“Well shit. Is there anyone else?” Yes, there was, he could tell Bones, but he couldn’t take the way Bones would look at him if the man knew how broken he really was. “JT I can tell you’re thinking of someone, who is it?” It was Jim’s turn to let out a sigh.

“The CMO on the ship. He’s the closest thing I have had to real family since I was separated from you guys.” Tommy looked surprised.

“A doctor?”

“Yeah, trust me I get the irony of the whole thing,” Jim laughed.

“Talk to him JT. Please. You need someone to help you.” Jim gave a small nod.

“I’ll try.” Tommy didn’t look very convinced, but he didn’t push it.

“Well, I’ll let you go. It was good to talk again JT.”

“Talk to you later.” And with that, the screen goes dark leaving Jim to look at his own reflection. A few minutes later the PADD pings to alert him of an incoming file, no doubt that it’s Theo’s comic book.
After a couple of hours in the Med Bay and Jim was beginning to get restless again. With Spock on duty and Bones having disappeared somewhere he had no one to keep his mind from wandering. Before he could go down any of the normal destructive paths of thought he decided he needed to get out of this bed, there’s a good chance he could make it to the Mess Hall and back for some good food before Bones got back. He slowly righted himself, being careful not to aggravate any of his injuries more than necessary. Besides the dull ache coming from his ribs and his throat he feels fine, so he swings his legs over the side of the bed and slowly stands on his own. Once he’s confident he can walk without his knees buckling out from under him he makes his way out of the Med Bay and into the halls of the Enterprise.

As he walks to the Mess the officers in the hallway all nod at him as he walks by which he returns with a nod and a smile. Finally, he reaches the Mess Hall, ribs aching a little more now, and makes a beeline for the nearest replicator. He goes for oatmeal, simple but still more than the ration bars they’ve been giving him in the Med Bay. As he pulls the bowl from the replicator he finds the most isolated table and sits alone. It goes well, the food goes down easily, and he almost makes it to the end of the bowl. Then suddenly a switch in his mind flips and he can feel nausea set in as the food feels wrong in his mouth. He spits what’s in his mouth back into the bowl, an action that is just a little too close to gagging and the nausea gets worse. The whole situation is not helped by the panic that is beginning to set in too. Jim’s vision blurs and breathing becomes harder as his whole body heats up. He stumbles a few times trying to get up before walking to the disposal and drops his bowl in, in what he hopes looks like a normal fashion.

As soon as he gets out of the Mess he all but runs to the captain’s quarters he was staying in. He nearly losses the food in his stomach on the way but he made it to his door without incident. His hand reaches for the pad next to the door and somehow, he manages to press it down and the door opens in front of him. He doesn’t wait to hear it close before he runs to the bathroom and hunches over the toilet and throws up everything he just managed to eat.

He doesn’t know how long he’s been sitting here. His stomach is long empty, but the dry heaving keeps him on the bathroom floor. Every time his body convulses his ribs sends sharp pains through his whole body. Jim knows he has tears running down his face, but he doesn’t have the energy to care. As his vision begins to fade to black he is jolted back to reality by a cold hand rested on his face. His eyes managed to focus on Spock as the Vulcan sits him up against the sink, a far more comfortable position than the one he was in previously.

“Spock?” The question slips past his lips before his mind even catches up to the situation.

“Captain, what happened? Why are you not in the Med Bay?” If Jim was more lucid he would have been surprised by the concern on the Vulcan’s face.

“Was bored. Went to eat, couldn’t keep it down.” His head lolling to the side as it was supported by Spock’s hand.

“I will comm Doctor McCoy.” Jim’s panic came back a little at that.

“No! Bones will be mad.”

“I’m sure the Doctor will only be concerned for your wellbeing Captain.” Before Jim was able to protest anymore Spock opened his com. “Doctor McCoy.”

“What Spock? I don’t really have the time, Jim’s gone missing,” Bones’ panicked voice came over the com.

“I have the Captain here. I found him in our shared bathroom. I believe he tried to eat in the Mess
Hall but was unable to keep the food down.”

“Oh god, that kid, I swear he’s gonna be the death of me. I’ll be right there. McCoy out.” It was quiet for a moment before Jim spoke up, words still slightly slurred.

“I’m sorry.” Jim couldn’t stop a smile as he watched a confused look pass over Spock’s face.

“Captain, I am unsure what you are apologizing for.”

“I’m sorry that you have to drag my sorry ass of the bathroom floor. I’m sorry for being a pain in the ass and sneaking onto the Enterprise. I’m sorry for all the things I said to you on the Bridge that day. I’m sorry I couldn’t save them.” Jim thinks he hears Spock’s breath hitch at the last one which only makes him feel worse.

“You are unwell, it is my duty as your First Officer to ensure your wellbeing. Also, I cannot begrudge you for sneaking aboard the Enterprise or the events that led you to take command of the ship as it saved the lives of everyone on Earth.” Spock paused for a second before continuing, “As for the fate of my planet, you could not have done anything to save it. Your actions on the drill allowed us to save far more of my people than would have been possible otherwise. For that, I will always be thankful to you.” Jim had no idea how to respond to that, fortunately, it seemed luck was finally on his side as Bones rushes in and kneels next to him.

“Hey kid, what the hell happened?” Bones asks, his voice somewhere between concerned and frustrated. Jim tried to give him a smile, but it ends up looking more like a grimace.

“Hey Bones. Sorry, just wanted some food, was getting restless, didn’t mean to get sick.” Bones ran a tricorder over Jim.

“Course you didn’t. What did you eat?”

“Just oatmeal.” Bones looked at him with surprise.

“Really? You should’ve been able to keep that down. There’s no reason your body should have reacted like this.” Bones said looking over the results of the quick scan he had done. Jim broke eye contact at that, suddenly the tiled floor was incredibly interesting, and Bones had known Jim Kirk long enough to know that meant the kid was hiding something from him. “Jim, what aren’t you telling me?” Spock looked between the two men trying to assess the situation.

“Told you everything,” Jim mumbled back to him, still not making eye contact.

“Don’t lie to me Jim, I’m not stupid. What aren’t you telling me?” Jim covered his face with his hands for a moment before readjusting himself, still looking away from Bones, though his eyes did flicker up to Spock for a moment.

“Threw up ‘cuz it felt wrong.” Bones put down the tricorder and sat himself facing Jim. He looked to Spock to see if the Vulcan had any idea what Jim was talking about. A small shake of the head told him Spock was as lost as he was.

“What do you mean Jim? How did it feel wrong?” Jim finally looked up to Bones and Spock, gaze shifting between the two men who were looking at him worryingly before landing on Bones.

“You have access to my medical files, right?” Bones look of confusion grew at the rapid change of subject.

“Of course I do. I’m your doctor Jim.”
“All of it? You have access to the entire thing?” Bones froze up at that.

“No. It’s your file so I assume you know there’s confidential information in there that I can’t access. You never brought it up, so I didn’t push.” Jim smiled at that as Spock spoke up.

“But you are the Captain’s primary doctor, does that not mean you are given access to all his files?” Bones turned his attention to the Vulcan sitting next to him.

“Usually, yes, but they’re locked up so tight I’m not sure the Admiralty has access to them.” Bones could see Spock take in and work through that new information.

“Some of them do,” Jim corrected, and Leonard’s attention was pulled back to his friend, “There are only three people who can get into those files last time I checked. Even I have a hard time accessing them.”

“What are they?” Leonard asks, as gently as he can. Jim looked back at the floor at that and Bones was afraid he pushed too much.

“Don’t think I can talk about it right now, but you should know the incident that it addresses left me with some… triggers.” Jim’s speech started getting faster and Leonard carefully reaches out to grab his friend’s hand. “There are some specific ones that I avoid, but every once in a while, something weird will trigger memories. I think it’s worse now given the current situation.” Jim let out a self-deprecating laugh, “God that sounds pathetic.” Bones quickly jumped in on that.

“No Jim it doesn’t, I’m not gonna make you tell me the details but whatever it is doesn’t make you pathetic. Got it?” Before Jim is able to answer Spock speaks up.

“Leonard is correct Captain, whatever is causing your mental distress is not trivial in any way.” Jim smiled teasingly at the Vulcan.

“How come Bones is Leonard, but I’m still Captain?” Spock’s face took on a slight green tinge.

“He requested I call him such while we are off duty.” That had happened somewhere along the way during their daily check-ins about Jim.

“Well, then you’re calling me Jim.” The kid’s tone left no room for argument.

“Of course, Jim.” The Captain was basically beaming at the Vulcan now, finding amusement in the blush that had come over the man’s face.

“All right kid, enough changing the subject. Let’s get you back to the Med Bay, I need to check your ribs with more than a tricorder.” Bones got up as he spoke, before helping Jim to his feet, and slowly the three men made their way to the Med Bay.
Family Reunion

Chapter Notes

Sorry this is a little late in the day but it's here so it still counts as on time.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

It was a week later when the Enterprise finally arrived at Earth. Jim’s recovery was basically finished. He was able to walk with only minor discomfort and he spent the last few days of their trip back in the Captain’s seat, much to the happiness of the crew, who had grown to enjoy the young man as their Captain. His nightmares continued to prevent him from sleeping soundly and he still had trouble eating more than ration bars and apples. Bones and Spock had tried their best to make Jim as comfortable as possible, which included letting Jim sleep in the Captain’s quarters again. Jim wasn’t the only one getting better, Pike woke up a few days before they docked and though he’s been confined to a wheelchair, the man seems like himself.

Over the course of the week, Jim’s lack of sleep wasn’t able to break his spirit and he had been busy making sure the ship finished it’s limp back to Earth. The day of their arrival, Jim spent the whole day organizing for the crew’s transport back to the planet. He, Spock, and Bones spent a lot of the time in the ready room creating a priority list based on who Bones needed to get planet-side the soonest. Pike, who was all but walking now, insisted that he be in the last shuttle out, something that none of the three men were happy with and Bones insisted a nurse stay with him. Jim, Bones, and Spock themselves would be leaving somewhere near the middle of the process, making sure that the three of them were always where the majority of the crew was. They decided they would leave Sulu, Chekov, Uhura, and Scotty with the rest of the crew on the ship to organize the rest of the departures. As soon as they had scheduled every crew member on to a shuttle Jim sent out a ship-wide memo before opening up ship-wide communications.

“Crew of the Enterprise, we are about 4 hours from docking above Earth. Each of you should have received a departure schedule, please review it and if you have a problem with it feel free to bring it to my attention. Congratulations everyone we’ve made it home. Kirk out.” He leaned back in the captain’s chair as Chekov closed the comm, adjusting when his ribs protested at the movement.

Jim spent the next four hours putting out figurative fires, which he has to admit is a lot less stressful to the literal fires he and Scotty were putting out the other day. He was constantly shifting the departures around to try and fit in the people who needed to leave sooner for one reason or another. It was almost a relief when they docked, and he could focus on getting everyone off the ship. Those in critical or rough conditions were the first to go down, followed by the surviving Vulcans. When about half the remaining crew was left Jim boarded a transport shuttle with Bones and Spock. The ride back to Earth was quiet. Jim had spoken to the Bridge crew, Bones, and Scotty before they docked about dealing with the press, something he was unfortunately well acquainted with. Despite that Jim could feel himself getting nervous at the prospect of the questions the press may ask. Bones, sensing his distress, put his arm around Jim, and Jim was immediately leaning into the older man. When he felt the shuttle land he took a deep breath and stood up, he felt calmer knowing Bones and Spock were on either side of him.

“Let’s do this,” Jim said nothing else before stepping out of the shuttle. It seemed as if Jim’s worries
were all for nothing. Starfleet had pushed press fairly far away from where the shuttles were landing. That didn’t really do much as the bay was still flooded with people, family, and friends of the remaining crew, as well as many Starfleet security members. Jim stood to the side for a minute with Spock and Bones standing in front of him as he took out his communicator.

“Sulu, report.”

“Captain, everything up here is still going smoothly, no problems up here. How is it on the ground?”

“Busy, but at least Starfleet had the decency to keep the press back. Check in with me when you have about a quarter of the crew left.”

“Yes, Captain. Sulu out.”

Jim started walking through the crowd, stopping to check in with crew members as he went. Bones and Spock stayed standing silently at his side, something he was incredibly grateful for. He was so focused on his crew that he didn’t notice the young boy coming towards him until the boy’s arms were wrapped around him. He stiffened for a moment and he could feel the two men at his side tense as well, but as soon as he looked down at the teenager’s face looking up at him all the tension melted away. He could feel the tears starting to well up in his eyes and he was only able to get out a weak, “Kev,” before falling to the ground and hauling the kid on to his lap, crushing him to his chest and letting the tears fall. He could feel Kevin crying into his shoulder as well and started whispering in his ear.

“Kev, I’m alright, I’m ok. I won’t ever let anyone take you away from me again Kev. I’m so sorry.”

To say Leonard McCoy was a little shocked was a massive understatement, and, if the look on the Vulcan’s face next to him was anything to go by, he wasn’t alone. He stood there as his best friend held a young boy he had never seen before to his chest. By the way Jim’s shoulders were moving, Bones was pretty sure he was crying. Jim didn’t seem to notice as a young man came, nearly running, through the crowd towards them.

“Kevin! Kevin, where are you?” The man was looking around frantically until his eyes landed on Jim and the kid and he let out a breath. “Oh, thank god.” He turned away from the two on the ground (seemingly unphased by the fact that the teen was crying as well at this point) and turned his attention to McCoy and Spock. The first, and pretty much only thing, that Bones noticed about the young man was the fact that nearly his entire left side of his face was covered and there was clear burn scarring around the edges, how this young kid ended up with a phaser injury to the face concerned Bones, especially because the wound seemed to be old.

The man reached out his hand to McCoy, “You must be Doctor McCoy. It’s good to meet you finally.” All Bones was able to do was shake the man’s hand in shock. A look that reflected on Spock’s face when the man turned to him and straightened up giving Spock a Vulcan salute. “And you must be Commander Spock. It’s an honor to meet you as well Sir.” He lowered his hand, “Thank you both for looking after JT.” And suddenly it slipped into place why McCoy recognized the voice and the name Kevin, these were the people he heard Jim on a call with weeks ago. It was Spock that spoke up next though.

“I’m sorry, I did not get the chance to learn your name.” McCoy noticed the man’s lips twitch upwards at Spock’s speech pattern.

“Sorry, I’m Doctor Thomas Leighton.” To Bones’ growing surprise, he knew that name, but it took
“Doctor Leighton, it is an honor to meet you as well. You’re work in synthetic food sources is impressive.” Leighton gave a wry smile at that.

“Thank you, Sir. It’s a field of great… interest to me.”

At some point, while they were talking Jim had gotten up and as he set his eyes on Tommy he wasted no time wrapping himself around the man.

“Tommy, what the hell are you doing here?”

“You really think I wasn’t gonna be right here when you got off that ship JT?” Jim let out a short laugh.

“Are the others…?”

“Yeah. Kev ran ahead, no idea how he saw you. I ran after him; the other kids should be right behind us.” Jim turned to the two other men and was about to offer some sort of explanation for the display they just watched when he heard a girl’s voice shout, “Dad!” before another one of his kids slammed into him wrapping their arms around him, something his ribs didn’t like but no injury could stop Jim from greeting his kids. Bones and Spock’s eyebrows raised into their hairlines as they heard the young woman, who didn’t look all that younger than their captain, address Jim as her father.

“Rina, sweetheart, I can’t believe you’re here.” He said as he lifted the girl and spun her around. “Look at you, you’re so grown up.”

“You’re one to talk JT.” The woman then got a distant look in her eyes as she looked at Jim, giving him a small smile. “Your eyes are the same though.” Jim didn’t respond beside wrapping the young woman in a hug again. By now they had a small group of young adults gathered around them, all looking at Jim with a look of awe on their faces. Bones was so fucking confused.

“Spock, what the hell is happening?” Bones asked unable to look away from the display in front of him.

“I was going to ask you the same thing Doctor.”

“Great.”

“Theo!” Jim shouted as he wrapped his arms around a younger man spinning him around with a surprising amount of ease given his injuries.

“Dad! Let me down!” The boy, Theo, squealed a huge smile on his face.

“Oh, what you’re too cool to give your dad a hug now?” Bones felt like he stepped into a different reality watching Jim.

“No! Course not, don’t be stupid. Tommy said you were hurt.”

“Ugh, I’m not that bad Theo.”

“Yeah because you’ve never hidden injuries dad.” Jim laughed at that and Bones had to wonder how this kid knew about Jim’s habit of hiding injuries. Bones felt like he couldn’t be more surprised but then Jim had to go and prove him wrong as he turned to a shorter girl and hugged her before pulling
back and starting a rapid-fire conversation in Federation Sign Language, based on the small noise of surprise he heard from beside him, he guessed Spock didn’t see that coming either. McCoy watched the conversation as he picked up his beeping communicator.

“Hey Doctor, the captain isn’t answering his com, is he with you?”

“Yes, I have him here, he’s a little busy, what did you need Sulu?”

“Just wanted to let him know we have about a fourth of the crew left.”

“Thank you Sulu I’ll pass it on. McCoy out.”

He focused back to Jim who was now greeting yet another boy, (Where are these kids coming from?) and he watched as Jim’s face fell for the first time since the strange group greeted him and Bones followed his gaze to the biggest surprise of the group. Bones could feel Spock’s eyebrow raise as they watched Jim walk up to two Vulcan teenagers.

“Korra, Pril, I’m so, so sorry.” Leonard could hear how choked up Jim was getting, and he wanted no more than to take his friend and hold him until he was better. “I tried, I promise I tried to save them. I’m so sorry.” Bones watches as Jim drops to his knees in front of the two Vulcans, his head hung low. The girl steps forward and without a word raises her hand placing her fingers on Jim’s temple, Bones recognizes it as a Vulcan mind meld and looks towards Spock whose eyebrow was raised higher than Bones had ever seen it. He doesn’t step in to stop it, so Leonard assumes it’s safe. As the young girl closes her eyes she presses her fingers closer to Jim’s face and as Jim lulls forward a little, Bones feels Spock tense beside him. Ok, maybe not completely safe. The group around the two of them didn’t seem concerned though and the one Bones recognized as Tommy was keeping a close eye on both of them. After a while the girl opens her eyes and pulls back, moving her hand to Jim’s shoulders making sure he doesn’t fall forward before she speaks up.

“It is illogical to beg for forgiveness for something that was out of your control A’nirih. In fact, I know that if anything could have been done, you would have done it regardless of the cost to yourself. You have always had a talent for achieving the impossible.” Bones heard a chuckle from his friend and relaxed a little at the familiar sound. The Vulcan boy who was watching the exchange steps towards Jim and speaks up.

“T’Korra is correct A’nirih, and we are simply glad that you have made it back to us in a relatively healthy state. I know that does not relieve the guilt you feel, but please know that T’Korra and I still love you dearly and we always will.” The blatant expression of emotion shocked Bones but before he was able to think on it he noticed Tommy’s expression turning to one of shock and excitement.

“Well look who it is.” Bones turned to see Captain Pike rolling towards them in his wheelchair with a smile on his face.

“Tommy Leighton, what the hell are you doing here?” Pike stopped at their group and Bones waves off the nurse signaling that he would handle the man from here.

“What do you think I’m doing here? This asshole’s face is plastered all over the news and you don’t think I’d recognize him?” Jim had gotten up at this point and the group now stood in a rough circle, so Bones was able to see the offended look on his face.
“Hey!”

“Sorry JT… but it is a little true.” He saw Jim tilt his head to the side in agreement.

“That’s fair.” As Jim replied Tommy turned back to Pike.

“You look like you’ve seen better days.” Pike’s eyebrow rises as a smirk comes across his face.

“You’re one to talk Leighton. You look better than the last time I saw you.” The younger man let out a huff.

“I sure hope so. Do you still…?” Tommy’s question trailed off as he gestured to right below his own collarbone. Even Jim had a confused look on his face as he looked between Tommy and Pike, who was smiling. Pike pulled down on the collar and Tommy and Jim leaned in and it seemed Tommy found what he was looking for as he steps back with a laugh.

“Where the hell did you get that?” Jim asked Pike as the man returned his collar to its rightful place.

“That one took a scalpel to my neck,” Pike said gesturing to the younger man. Bones’ eyes went wide and looked to Spock who looked as shocked as Bones had ever seen him. Tommy was grinning though.

“Tommy! What the hell?” Jim turned to his friend, hitting his shoulder.

“Oh, like you didn’t have a go for anyone,” Tommy said to Jim who looked down scratching at the back of his neck. It was Pike that spoke up though.

“The kid nearly bit the finger off a nurse.” The youngest of the group turned to Jim at that.

“Did you really Dad?” To his credit, Jim looked bashful.

“Uh, yes Kev, I did. But that was wrong, and I was angry and scared.” He trailed off, then turned to Pike. “Uh Chris, you remember my kids, yeah?”

“Course I do, they’ve all grown up a lot since I saw them last.”

“You’re telling me. Kid’s do any of you remember Chris Pike? He was an Ensign when you saw him last.” The two oldest looking, besides Tommy, a redhead girl, and a blond boy, nodded their heads and the girl spoke up.

“I think I do. He was on the Enterprise, right? He came to talk to me a few times. He was the only one that would tell me if you were still alive.” The more these kids spoke the more confused Bones was getting.

“Yes, Chris was part of the Enterprise crew when we were on it. He made sure I always felt safe, and he always made sure I knew you were all safe.” A small, sad smile formed on Jim’s face as he talked and there was a long silence. After about a minute Spock spoke up for the first time.

“Captain?” Jim’s attention snapped to Spock and Bones in that moment. Damn it, he forgot the two men were there. They’re going to want an explanation. Yet that demand is not what came out of Spock’s mouth. “We have a meeting with the Admiralty now that the crew has all made it off the ship.” Jim straightened up, turning back into the Captain version of himself.

“Right, thank you, Spock.” He turns back to Tommy. “Could all of you come over to my place for
dinner?” Jim asked hopefully.

“Maybe you should come to our place, it’s not too far away and I’m betting we have a lot more space.” Jim nodded at the suggestion.

“Yeah, that makes sense.” Jim paused but Tommy could clearly tell the older man had something else to ask.

“Just ask JT, you’ve gotta be somewhere soon.”

“Would it be alright if I brought Bones, Spock, and Chris?” Both Bones and Spock were surprised at the request, but Tommy seems to have seen it coming.

“Course it is. I’ll be glad to get to meet them officially,” Tommy said while he smiled over Jim’s shoulder at the two men.

“Right, I’ll comm you after the meeting when we are headed over, just send me the address.”

“Yes Sir,” Tommy said giving a lazy salute that has Jim smiling.

“Alright,” starts Jim, turning towards Bones and Spock, “Let’s get this over with.”

For a while no one said anything. Bones and Spock trailed slightly behind their captain in silence. Every once in a while, Bones would glance at Spock to see if the Vulcan looked like he was going to speak up. When it was clear he wasn’t going to ask what both him and Bones were wondering Bones decided to ask himself.

“So,” started McCoy, trying for casual and praying it would work, “Who were they?” Jim was silent in front of them and Leonard would think he hadn’t heard the question if it wasn’t for the way he tensed up. Just as he was about to let the question go and move on Jim finally answered, still facing away from them and continuing down the halls of Starfleet.

“It’s a bit of a long story that I can’t really get into right now.” Jim suddenly spun around, and McCoy’s heart broke at the helpless and tired look on his friend’s face. “I will tell you. Tonight. I promise.” Jim was pleading with them both now.

“Hey, kid I was just curious if you don’t wanna talk about it just forget I even asked.” Bones let out a breath he didn’t know he was holding when Jim gave him a small smile.

“Thank you Bones, but I want you to know. Both of you,” he stated turning towards Spock, “Just, not right now.”

“Okay. Whenever you’re ready Jimmy. Also, we should get going, if we’re any later I think your First Officer may combust.” I eyebrow raise he got from Spock was worth it when the smile on Jim’s face grew. If the nod Spock gave McCoy when Jim turned around was anything to go by the Vulcan didn’t really mind as much as he let on. Leonard only hopes the Admiralty doesn’t tear into the kid too much.

Chapter End Notes

Vulcan Translation:
A’nirih – Father
This chapter ended up being a lot longer than I planned so oops I guess. Also the 'n' key on my computer broke halfway through writing it so pls ignore if there are any words missing an 'n'

Jim was exhausted, question after question was fired at him. How did a grounded cadet get on to the Enterprise? How is it that he ended up as First Officer? Why did Commander Spock step down from his position as Captain? Why didn’t Jim fall back and meet with the fleet at the Laurentian system as Captain Pike ordered? Multiple times during the meeting Jim had to take a deep breath to calm himself. Bones and Spock were both incredible, Jim wouldn’t have been able to make it through without them. Bones jumped in without hesitation to take the full blame for Jim ending up on the Enterprise, Spock wasted no time jumping in to defend Jim’s decision to rush to Earth. Every time an Admiral asked a question that set Jim on guard Bones would sense his distress and grab his hand underneath the table and rub circles on the back of Jim’s hand with his thumb.

Three hours later the three men left the room while the Admirals stay back. Jim was able to keep it together just long enough to turn a corner in the hallway before sharply turning and burying his face in Bones’ shoulder. The older man wraps his arms around Jim and starts running his fingers through his blond hair as Jim starts crying into his shoulder.

“Hey, it’s okay. I got you kid. It’s alright, you’re okay,” Bones whispers in Jim’s ear as he looks over the younger man’s shoulder to Spock. The Vulcan looked both concerned and unsure of what to do about the crying Captain. After a moment Spock seemed to decide the best thing he could do was keep watch to see if anyone was coming down the hall. They stood like this, Jim with his face buried in his best friend’s shoulder and Spock standing to the side on guard, for a couple of minutes before Jim’s sobbing turned into calmer breaths. Bones feels his friend relax in his arms and moves the hand that was carding through Jim’s hair to the kid’s shoulder and began to push Jim back just enough to see his face. As Jim pulls back he hangs his head, trying to avoid Bones’ gaze but the doctor is having none of it and rests his hand on the side of his face and forcing Jim to look at him.

“Hey, Jim, it’s okay. You don’t have to be embarrassed, it’s been a hell of a day,” Bones reassured, wiping the tears from Jim’s face. Bones watches as Jim’s view shifts to Spock, trying to gauge the Vulcan’s reaction, when Jim seemed to find nothing, he spoke up.

“Sorry about that Commander,” Spock tilts his head to the side in a move that Leonard thinks is akin to a small confused puppy.

“There is no need to apologize Jim, and since you insist on first names while off duty I must insist you use mine as well.” Leonard relaxes as he feels Jim almost lighten up in his grip. He moves back taking Jim’s hand in his and looking at the Captain to seek permission to keep it there. It was an action Jim himself usually took with Leonard but given the day they’ve had Bones would feel better having Jim there to ground him. He couldn’t help the smile as Jim nods to him before turning again down the hall dragging Leonard with him.

“Come on Spock, we’ve got a dinner to catch.” And if Spock let a small smile creep on to his lips as Jim swings his and Leonard’s hands nobody is around to see it.
The house his kids were living in wasn’t far from the academy and after a couple of minutes in a car Jim found himself, flanked by Bones and Spock, at the front door of a three-story building. He reached forward to ring the door bell and they only had to wait a few moments before the door swung open and Jim had an armful of one of his kids buried in his chest.

“Hey Kev, can I come in buddy?” Jim asks laughing. The kid pulls back and nods to Jim before looking over the man’s shoulder at Spock and Bones as they followed Jim into the house. “Oh right,” Jim suddenly remembered, “Kevin, this is Spock he was my First Officer on the Enterprise while I was captain,” He said gesturing to Spock, “and this is Bones, he’s been my best friend for a long time and he’s the CMO on the Enterprise.” Bones looked at the kid who looked like he had a million questions and waited for something to come out of the kid’s mouth. Kevin turns to Jim.

“He’s a doctor?” Kevin asks nervously. Okay Bones wasn’t quite expecting that to be the first question the kid asked. Jim however had a sad smile on his face as if he had seen the question coming.

“He is, and he’s a very good doctor Kevin. You trust me, right?” The kid nods so hard Bones thinks his head might pop off. “Well I trust Bones,” Jim’s serious face shifts into a teasing one, “I even let him Hypo me. Right Bones?” McCoy lets out a laugh at that.

“You certainly try not to let me.”

“Aw come on Bones I’m a great patient,” Jim said faking offence. Bones wasn’t the only one who laughed that time. Tommy had come down the stairs and punches Jim’s shoulder teasingly.

“Yeah and I’ve got great depth perception,” Tommy joked gesturing to his left eye which was completely covered over.

“Shut up Tommy,” Jim teases back good naturedly. “Now come on, I haven’t eaten a good meal in weeks.”

With that the four men and Kevin walked up the staircase into what was clearly the main floor of the house. The house was as chaotic as one would expect with eight young adults and teenagers living together. There were noises of people running around and some yelling. There seemed to be stuff cluttering every surface available. As they walked down the hallway it opened up into a large family room where it seemed all the people in the house were gathered.

Sitting in his wheelchair across the room, Bones saw Captain Pike deep in conversation with the younger short black-haired young man and the Vulcan boy Leonard recognizes from earlier. Siting on the couch was the Vulcan girl who was intently focusing on braiding the hair of the red-haired young woman who sat on the floor in front of her. The last two people are in the kitchen that overlooks the family room working together in silence, though every once in a while, they would sign back and forth with each other or the purple haired boy would interject into the conversation with Pike. The redhead was the first to see them come in as Kevin rushed over to join the conversation with Pike.

“Hey Dad,” She calls out to Jim, beaming and perking up, much to the Vulcan girl’s frustration.

“Please Karina, sit still.” The older girl freezes in place.

“Sorry Korra, got excited.”

“Yes, I too am glad father made it to our home, but I do not wish to cause you pain by pulling to
hard at your hair.” The teenager replies focus not moving from her work except to give a nod of acknowledgement to Jim. Noticing the conversation, the boy in the steps around the counter before leaning back on it and addressing the blonde man.

“Hey Dad, you’re just in time. Spark and I are nearly done.” He then turns his head to the boys speaking with Pike. “Pril, Shadow, Kev, set the table will you. Make sure you leave a spot open for Chris.” Bones watches amused as the kids go to complete the task with only mild complaining. As the rest of the kids settle back into what they were doing Bones and Spock follow Jim and Tommy to one of the couches to sit. Where Bones collapses into the comfortable cushions, Spock keeps his stiff posture. Bones raises an eyebrow at the Vulcan, that can’t be comfortable.

“So,” Tommy starts, talking to Jim “I told the kids what we’re going to be talking about at dinner.” Worry starts to grow on Jim’s face.

“And?” He asks hesitantly.

“All of them want to stay, if that’s okay with you?” Bones watches as Jim lets out a breath.

Yeah, yeah that’s okay. You told them they should leave whenever they want yeah?”

“Of course, but I can’t see any of ‘em leaving if I’m honest.” Bones was incredibly lost, but he doesn’t worry about it too much, since, apparently, he’ll be finding out at dinner.

It was only a few minutes until dinner was set and everyone was gathered in the dining room. Dinner didn’t seem to be much of a formal affair in this house as all the kids dove in grabbing food, fighting for the serving utensils. Even Korra and Pril were fighting for their share.

“Hey!” Tommy said, nearly shouting. “Calm down you savages, there’s more than enough for everyone.” The kids calmed down at that looking a little sheepish. Bones watched as Jim sits back watching it all play out. As the kids sat down with their food he looks towards Tommy, tilting his head to the food. Tommy smiles and rolls his eyes before getting his share. Jim watched him take food as intently as he watched the younger ones before turning towards the three guests.

“Feel free to grab whatever the savages didn’t get to. Spock there’s a bunch of vegetarian stuff, Pril and Korra are both vegetarian… ish.” Spock raised his eyebrow at the last-minute addition but joined Bones and Chris in taking food. Finally, when everyone had food in front of them Jim finally grabbed his share, which was not nearly enough in Leonard’s opinion.

“Jim,” Bones says warningly giving his friend a glare that eased as the man in question reached forward to put more food on his plate. Getting food was always something Jim did, even at the Academy, it was just one of the quirks that Leonard quickly accepted as part of the puzzle that was James Kirk. That didn’t mean he would let the kid slide for not eating enough.

The next few minutes passed in total silence, bordering on awkward in Bones’ personal opinion. Every once in a while, he would glance at Jim who was unusually focused on his plate. He noticed the others all doing the same. It almost made Bones jump when Jim broke the silence.

“I was fifteen when I drove my dad’s car off a cliff,” he started, poking at his food now, still not making eye contact. “My mom was off planet, as always, and Sam had just decided to leave. I knew I couldn’t survive in the house with Frank, my stepdad,” he added, likely for Spock’s benefit. “He used to beat Sam and I, and I knew that with Sam gone, I would be the only target which meant twice the beatings.” Though rage filled Leonard’s blood at that it wasn’t news to him. Jim had told
him about Frank years ago, when Bones became his primary physician, he wasn’t sure why Jim was repeating the story. Then he looked up at Jim, whose eyes had focused on Spock, andLeonard understood. Spock was being tested, Jim may trust the Vulcan after the disaster with Nero, but he still hasn’t known Spock long. The story about Frank was designed to gauge the Vulcan’s reactions to Jim’s past. He must have passed whatever test Jim was putting him through because the Captain looked back down at his plate and started up again.

“Frank was furious about the car, I think he finally snapped, and he decided I wasn’t worth the trouble anymore, and without a word to my mother, he sent me off planet. I went to live with my Aunt and Uncle in an earth colony on some other planet.” Jim looked up then at Bones and Spock, his eyes begging for understanding. “You have to realize, the next few months were the best of my entire life. My Aunt and Uncle made sure I knew they loved me and that I had everything I needed. I was going to a school with amazing teachers that were finally challenging me, and I had more friends than I had in my entire life. I loved it, it was like heaven.” As Jim breaks eye contact with Bones the doctor looks around at the rest of the table. Tommy was leaning back in his chair, arms crossed, watching Jim carefully as if waiting to see if he has to interfere. The other kids around the table were all looking down at their plates poking at their food just as Jim was. “It was a couple of months until I started to notice something was wrong. My Aunt and Uncle started having conversations in whispers, the whole air of the place was growing tense. The kids at school started talking about their parents being worried, about meals being smaller than normal. And after that I started realizing our meals at home were getting smaller and simpler.” Jim took a deep breath pausing in his story, slipping a piece of bread into his mouth. He looked up for the first time in a while but avoids eye contact Bones and Spock, instead he scanned over his kids. “You don’t have to stay for this kids you can leave.” Bones looked over the others at the table waiting for someone to speak up. It’s Karina that speaks up on behalf of the others.

“We’re not leaving Dad. Don’t worry about us, we’re all fine.” This seemed to be enough for Jim because he looks back down and continues talking. God Bones had a bad feeling about this.

“Yeah so, the whole colony was getting tense and it all came to a head one day when a man showed up at our door and told us to follow him. He had a phaser on him, so we weren’t going to say no. So, we followed him to the colony center, in front of the government center. It was packed, everyone was standing shoulder to shoulder. Then a man was speaking, and my Aunt was clutching at hand. She whispered down at me to get ready to get down or run. I still didn’t really understand what was happening until someone shouted a few feet away. There was phaser fire and people started dropping. I saw one of the kids in my class nearby and before I could even think I grabbed her hand and ran. Over the screams I can remember telling her to grab any other kids. I knew the adults were going to be too big and slow, that they would get us killed. By the time we hit the tree line we had 18 kids in the group, three had injuries I wouldn’t know about until later, but I kept everyone running.” Bones let his eyes slide over to Spock and he could see the cogs in the Vulcan’s brain spinning. McCoy has no idea how Jim hid any of this, when did something like this even happen?

“We ran until we just couldn’t anymore. Sometime later I found a cave, fairly good cover from what I saw, and it fit all of us. In less than 10 minutes Tarsus IV went from being my safe haven to a living hell.” Bones couldn’t breathe, the only thing going through his mind being, ‘no oh god not Jim.’ His grip on the table was causing his knuckles to turn white. Jim kept speaking though and Bones tried to focus back in.

“The rest is a bit of a long story that I don’t think I can get into it right now, baby steps and all that. A couple of kids died early on and we took a couple of runs into the colony for supplies, lost a couple of kids that way too. One particular run went sideways quick, Tommy got phaser fire to the face, I lost another kid, and one of Kodos’ men got a hold of me. What came next for me was the worst it ever got. See, Kodos knew a couple of kids had escaped and had been taking supplies and he
wanted to know where they were. So, my days varied between torture and ‘medical’ procedures that may as well have been torture. Kodos wanted to find the limits of the human body. For example, how many allergies could the human body sustain before it became unmanageable and could they eliminate allergies from someone’s body completely. Hundreds of forced hypos later the answer was many and no they couldn’t.” The bitterness in Jim’s voice was clear. Bones felt like he was going to vomit, god he shouldn’t have eaten tonight. He was snapped out of his thoughts by Jim’s breathing hitched, when he looked up Jim had set his fork down and pushed his chair back. Jim looked over and addressed Tommy.

“Yeah, I think that’s it for now.” Tommy just nodded as Jim quickly left the room. When Bones and Spock got up to follow their friend Tommy held up a hand.

“Not just yet. Let me talk to him.” Bones wanted so badly to argue that he was going to his friend no matter what, but he had to admit Tommy knows best in this situation. As he sits down Spock follows his example, his face unreadable. Tommy left the room the way Jim did, and the room was left in silence.

“You’ll be able to talk to him soon, he just needs a minute,” Karina says breaking the silence. After another moment of silence Bones had to talk to keep his thoughts at bay so he turned to Admiral Pike.

“Did you know about this?” Pike raised an eyebrow at him.

“I did. I was an Ensign on the Enterprise when it went to Tarsus with relief supplies. I was the only one Jim would talk to.” Bones just nodded and went back to sitting in silence.

“JT? Where are you?” Tommy calls as he walks up the steps to the third floor.

“Here,” he got as a weak response, coming from the bathroom across the hall. When he walked in Jim was on the floor, head hanging over the toilet, his face looking exhausted.

“Come on get up,” Tommy says offering his hand to Jim. The older man took it and was barely able to stand when Tommy finally pulls him up, so Tommy wrapped Jim’s arm over his shoulder and walked him into the room next door. “You still feeling sick?” Jim just nods. “Alright, Spark’s bathroom is much more comfortable. Pretty sure she’s got the world’s softest rug.” Jim let out a weak laugh. “Ah, there he is,” Tommy joked lowering Jim on to the rug in front of the toilet.

“How much am I gonna have to run damage control with Spock and Bones?” Jim asks Tommy worriedly, as he takes his position over the toilet again.

“If you don’t feel up to it, I’d say nothing. I’m pretty sure they’re just worried about you,” Tommy reassures Jim as he runs a hand though Jim’s blond hair earning him a happy hum from the man. “All though I’m pretty sure the doctor is seconds away from being sick himself.” Jim tenses back up.

“Can you get Bones up here? Tell Spock to wait a few, I need to talk to Bones alone.” Tommy gave him a lazy salute.

“Yes Captain,” he teases as he leaves.

“Shut it Tommy.”
Bones is leaning his elbows on the table with his face in his hands when Tommy walks in. He perks up as soon as the man clears his breath.

“How is he?” the doctor asked, not even bothering to hide the worry in his voice.

“He’s been better, but he’s also been a whole lot worse,” Bones puts his head back in his hands trying to hold back the tears he feels welling up. “He wants you to come up.” That made Bones perk up again.

“He does?” Tommy smiled at the doctor’s apparent disbelief.

“Come on Doctor McCoy, he’s waiting.” Leonard scrambles up, grabbing the bag at his side, to follow Tommy upstairs and into a room and then a bathroom. Tommy didn’t go in but gestured to McCoy before turning and leaving. When Leonard walks into the bathroom he feels the need to cry all over again. Jim turns to him and offers him a weak smile as he walks in and joins Jim on the ground.

“Hey Bones.”

“Hey Kid, how are feeling?”

“Just a little nauseous, it happens.” Bones runs a hand over his face trying to hide the tears that escape from his eyes. “What’s wrong Bones? Talk to me please.”

“It’s nothing Jim. I’m more worried about you.”

“No, I’ll be fine, I’ve been dealing with this for years, you just found out, it’s fresh for you.”

“Yeah but it didn’t happen to me.” Jim gives him a sad smile and moves his hand to Bones’ knee.

“Bones I know how empathetic you are, please talk to me? What’s going on in that brain of yours.” Bones lets out a self-deprecating chuckle.

“Oh, just reminiscing about how bad of a doctor I am.”

“What?” Jim looked at him, his face full of confusion. “What the hell do you mean Bones?”

“Jim I’ve been forcing hypos on you for as long as we’ve known each other.” Jim’s face shifted into one of understanding.

“Bones you didn’t know, I never told you. I’ve always known you had my best interests at heart.”

“But that’s not true is it? You did tell me. In every time you complained or flinched away from me. And I didn’t even ask, what kind of doctor am I?” To Leonard’s surprise Jim repositions him so he’s leaning against the sink cabinet before moving into the doctor’s lap and resting his head against the older man’s chest. McCoy’s arms instinctually wrap around him, his hand going to run through the blonde’s hair.

“Len, listen to me. You are an incredible doctor. I’ve always trusted you when I’m on the biobed. You’re the only one who’s ever made me feel this safe Len. Please don’t beat yourself up over this.” Jim’s speech is cut short as his nausea comes back and he moans and tenses up.

“What’s wrong darlin’?”
“Nauseous,” was all Jim was able get out. Bones tenses up and pauses for a moment before speaking.

“I have something that could help, but…” Bones trails off and Jim pulls back enough to look at his face.

“What?”

“It’s uh, it’s a hypo.” Jim smiles at him and lets out an amused breath.

“Is that what’s got you so worked up? Come on, hit me with it doctor.” Leonard reaches over to the bag he brought up with him preparing a hypo for the man on his lap who seemed to have no intention of moving. When he finished he looks hesitantly at Jim.

“Ready?” The smile never leaves Jim’s face.

“Go for it Bones.” With that Leonard reaches up, supporting Jim’s neck with his left hand, rubbing circles into the kid’s neck with his thumb. Jim let out a content hum at the movement, leaning into the doctor’s hand. Gently Bones presses the hypo to Jim’s neck, flinching a little when Jim does. “It’s alright Len, I’m all good.” Bones gave no response beyond rubbing his thumb over the injection sight. Both of them sat in silence for a while, Jim taking comfort in listening to his friend’s heartbeat and Bones continuing to offer what comfort he could.

“Bones?” Jim ask quietly not quite wanting to break out of this moment yet.

“Yeah kid?”

“Maybe we could move off the floor?” That earned Jim a short laugh from the other man.

“Yeah alright, get up kid.” James reluctantly moves away from his friend and gets up before turning to offer a hand and pulling Bones up from the ground. Wordlessly, and without dropping Bones’ hand, Jim walked out of the bathroom and into the bedroom before flopping ungracefully onto the bed. “James?” Bones asks climbing into the bed next to Jim before taking the young man back into his arms. He got a questioning hum in response. “Can I ask a question?”

“Of course,” Jim’s hesitancy contradiction the words.

“You don’t have to answer anything you don’t want to.”

“I know.” There was silence for a moment.

“Did they make you sit through the week they cover Tarsus at the Academy?” Jim didn’t know exactly what he had expected Bones to ask but that wasn’t it.

“Um, yeah. I mean Chris tried to get them to give me a pass, but he couldn’t give them a reason, it being confidential and all. Why?” James questions, curious as to why Bones was asking. Bones didn’t answer and instead asked a different question.

“Are any of your kids thinking of enlisting?” Jim couldn’t help but smile at the mention of his kids.

“Yeah, Rina and Shadow are defiantly going to.” James pulls back enough to look at Bones. “Rina wants to be a trauma surgeon, I was planning to ask you to talk to her at some point.”

“Course I will, give me her comm number and I may be able to get her shadowing me while we’re grounded.”
“She would love that. As for the other kids, Korra, Pril, and Kev have a good chance of ending up in Starfleet when they’re old enough.”

“Well then maybe we should start thinking now, with Pike of course, about how we’ll make sure they’re not sitting through that week like you did, yeah?” Bones was unsure about bringing up the suggestion, afraid he was overstepping to soon. The beaming smile on Jim’s face suggested it was appreciated.

“You’re such a dad sometimes Bones,” Jim jokes. Leonard rolls his eyes.

“I am a dad Jim.” They fall into a comfortable silence again for a while before Jim speaks up again.

“Do you have a comm? Or a PADD?” Bones thought for a second at the kid’s question.

“I left my comm downstairs, but I’ve got a PADD in my bag.” He said moving to go get it from the bathroom where he left his stuff which earned him a noise of protest from Jim.

“Where are you going?” Jim asked, very much sounding like a whining child.

“Do you want the PADD or not kid?” He handed the devise over to the man in the bed before shifting into the position he was just in. He watches as Jim shoots off a message to a number he assumes is Tommy’s asking him if he could send Spock up. When he was done he handed the PADD back to Bones who put it on the bedside table. A couple of minutes of silence later there was a knock at the door.

“It’s okay, you can just come in, you don’t have to knock,” Jim says, his voice laced with amusement as Spock walks into the room. It was extremely clear that Spock had no idea what to do with himself. Luckily James takes the initiative and pats the empty space on the bed to his left.

“Come on Spock get comfortable.” The Vulcan followed Jim’s instructions and took a seat, cross-legged, on the bed next to Jim, though he kept the same stiffness he walked in with. “You must have questions Spock, I’ll answer whatever I can.” Spock’s eyes shifted to Leonard as if asking permission to which Len gave a small nod to push the Vulcan on. It seemed to be enough as Spock turns his attention back to the man in Leonard’s arms.

“I will admit, I have many questions and I am finding it difficult to prioritize them. I do however feel I must once again extend you an apology.”

“For what?” The confusion in Jim’s voice clear.

“I wish to apologize for my words during your trial concerning the Kobayashi Maru. In hindsight I find my comments to be inaccurate and dismissive.” The whole time Spock is speaking he fails to maintain eye contact with the blond.

“I appreciate the apology Spock but if I could just say two things?” Jim waited for the Vulcan to respond, only getting a nod, he continued. “First, I’ll tell you what I told Bones, you didn’t know, couldn’t have known and I’m not going to hold it against you. Secondly, you were right.” Bones was a little surprised at that and based on how his head snapped up look at Jim, so was Spock.

“Accepting fear and maintaining control over yourself and your crew, it’s one of the most important parts of being a captain. I think that’s what made me cheat the test, why I needed to beat it. Being on… Tarsus and facing the certain death of me and my kids, it’s something I’ve had to live with for a long time. But I made it out and it frustrated me that I could make it out of a no-win scenario but that a simulation somehow got the best of me.” The three men sat in silence, mulling over Jim’s words.

“May I inquire about T’Korra and T’Pril?” Spock asks suddenly, breaking the silence.
“Yeah of course you can, though if I don’t think they’d want you to know I can’t answer it.”

“Understandable.” Spock pauses as he figures out where he wants to start. “Were the twins’ parents on Tarsus at the time of the massacre?” Bones felt Jim tense up in his arms and jumped in.

“You don’t have to answer that kid, if you don’t want to.”

“I know.” Bones feels Jim shift to face Spock. “Um, yes, yes they were there.”

“I assume they did not make it, as Dr. Leighton now has custody of them?”

“That’s correct.”

“I can then assume that you were the one that dealt with the consequences of their broken parental bonds?” Jim turned back into Len’s chest before answering.

“Yes, I did.” Nobody speaks for a moment. “It was horrible, I still have nightmares. I didn’t understand what was going on and it scared me. The pain didn’t start until we were well past the tree line, guess their parents didn’t drop ‘til then. Anyways, Korra started screaming first then Pril and I knew I had to get them quiet, so I picked up Korra, Tommy picked up Pril and they screamed into our chests. It got so bad I had Korra bite into my shoulder at one point. Finally, when we stopped Korra was able to tell us what was wrong. They were in that much pain for over 24 hours before they came up with a solution. I didn’t realize how dangerous it was at the time or I may not have let them do it.” Jim took a deep breath and Bones could feel the tears falling onto his neck and tightened his hold on the man.

“What exactly did they attempt?” Spock asked when Jim was silent for a while.

“They attempted a mind meld with each other.” Len looked up at Spock to see his reaction to the information Jim was giving them. The Vulcan had a look of horror on his face.

“That was extremely dangerous. They could have died.” Bones gave Spock an incredulous look, what the hell did he think he was saying to Jim. To his credit Spock looked like he wished he could take back the comment. Jim just gave a dry laugh.

“I know that now, but I was 15 and stupid and scared. They’ve always been talented mentally and they were able to fix some of the damage themselves, but I know they were in pain the whole time. Chris told me they had people helping them when we got rescued.” Spock just nods, thinking in silence for a while.

“Have you considered forming a parental bond with them? It is clear they see you as a father figure.”

“I have, I did then, and I have now. I can’t imagine they’d want that though, so I haven’t brought it up.”

“A parental bond can be greatly beneficial, especially at this stage in their development.”

“Spock,” Jim states turning once again away from Bones’ chest to face Spock. “I remember the pain they were in, I know they remember it too. I can’t ask them to risk going through that again.”

“I understand your hesitation, but I feel it would be relevant to tell you that the older a Vulcan gets, the less a breaking parental bond will induce pain. The fact that they lost both parents at such a young age is uncommon. I myself felt minimal physical pain when my bond with my mother broke.” Jim’s head hung at the mention of Spock’s mother.
“God Spock, I’m so sorry. I… I shou-“

“Jim, there is nothing you could have done.” Spock interrupted before Len was able to. After another few minutes of silence Jim untangled himself from Bones and sat up straight on the bed.

“Well if you don’t have any more questions at the moment, maybe we could go back down?” Bones stretches his back out as he answers.

“Course kid, you feel less nauseous?” Bones asks Jim as they all stand up.

“Yeah, I feel a lot better,” Jim pauses to look between the other two men. “Thank you. Both of you for handling this all well. I know it’s a lot.” Bones put a hand on the side of Jim’s face to make sure the kid was looking at him.

“I’ve told you this before darlin’ but I’ll remind you, you’re not getting rid of me that easily. I’m sticking around for good. Anything you need, I’ll try my hardest to deliver.”

“Thank you Bones.” Leonard gives the kid a smile as he removes his hand.

“I am glad that you felt comfortable enough to share this information with me Jim. I admit I am surprised I was involved in tonight’s… revelations, but I am honored you invited me. If you need or desire to talk further about your childhood I would be just as honored and willing.” Jim looks between the two men with tears in his eyes which he wipes away before they can fall before clearing his throat.

“I may take you two up on that. Now let’s get back before Tommy sends up a search party.”

The rest of the night went smoothly. Spock spent much of his time talking with the twins about god knows what. Leonard went between talking about the medical track with Rina, messing around with Kev (who had taken a shine to the doctor incredibly quickly), and sitting with Spark slowly learning Federation Sign Language. That in particular was something Jim found adorable, watching as Madison would position McCoy’s hand into the right positions. Theo was locked in a intense discussion with Chris the entire night about something that Jim couldn’t overhear from across the room. Jim spent the rest of most of the night on the couch with Tommy, watching his family in silence. He had Shadow curled into his side asleep by the end of the night and was running his hand through the boy’s hair.

“Some things never change,” Tommy speaks in a soft voice referring to the boy in Jim’s arms. “Kids 22 now and he’s still attached to you at the hip. I think that’s the quickest I’ve ever seen him fall asleep.” Jim just gave a happy hum in response, afraid that any more would wake Shadow up.

Tommy looked over the room before speaking again. “Leonard and Spock, they’re something else. I don’t know how you do it JT, but you manage to find the most amazing people. Keep them close, I see how you look at the two of them.” Jim’s head snapped to Tommy, a look of panic forming on his face that made the other man laugh. “Oh, JT I can read you like a book. If it means anything, I approve. Not a lot of people good enough to deserve you but those two are really something else.”

“Of course, your approval means something Tommy. I’ve always seen you as my brother, you know that?”
“Yeah, yeah, now you’re getting sappy on me.” Jim let out a huff and turned to look over the room again.

“You started it.”

“I was thinking I could start to transfer parental rights of Kev and the twins to you.”

“Really? Are you sure?”

“Course I am. I was never their dad, I knew that. I was just holding on to my younger siblings until dad made it back,” Tommy teases, knocking his shoulder against Jim’s.

“Yeah, I’d like that.” They were silent for a few moments.

“I love you JT.”

“Love you too Tommy.”
Families Meet

Chapter Notes

I’m not very happy with this chapter, for some reason it was extremely difficult to write but here it is, finally finished.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Over the next few weeks, the ensigns that had served on the Enterprise were sent back to finish their time at the Academy, something none of them were happy about or understood. They had successfully saved the Federation and now they were right back in the classroom listening to professors tell them how they should react in emergency situations. The only classes that were bearable for any of them were the ones Spock taught, as the commander felt no need to cover anything that may be redundant, that’s not very logical after all. Now as finals approached the group of them still in the Academy were as stressed as ever and the fact that Jim hadn’t gotten a ship assignment yet was causing far more stress for all of them. Spock was the one that was getting the brunt of the group’s anxieties. Jim, Bones, Sulu, Chekov, and Nyota were basically all living out of Bones and Jim’s apartment at this point and Spock was often dragged over to assist in studying. Scotty could also often be found in the apartment helping Chekov with his workload. Over the course of the week leading up to finals Jim barely slept and when he did it was because he couldn’t physically keep his eyes open and he usually woke up to find out that he had fallen asleep on one of his old crew members, usually Bones. It was three days into finals when Jim forced Bones to sit down and talk to him about something Jim himself didn’t really want to think about.

“Bones we have to talk about the very real possibility that I won’t end up on the Enterprise with the rest of you.” Leonard was already shaking his head in disagreement. “No, listen, you’ve all already got your assignments to the Enterprise and I haven’t. We lost a lot of people responding to Vulcan’s distress call. It’s a miracle the rest of you all got to keep the posts you were given, I wasn’t even assigned to the Enterprise to begin with.”

“Jim there’s no way they’re assigning you anywhere but to the flagship, you’re the top of the class.” Jim huffed out a breath in frustration.

“I’ve heard rumors about them assigning graduates at the top of the command track to be captains of starships right out the gate considering the situation. If that’s the case they certainly aren’t going to put any of us in charge of the flagship on our first year out, I’ll probably be assigned to something like the Farragut once it’s built. What then? Do we just drift apart? I can’t lose you Bones.” Jim’s voice cracks as he reaches the end of his speech.

“Jim, I’m gonna be honest with you kid, if you get put on a different ship I’m transferring.”

“Bones! You can’t, you can’t give up a position on the Enterprise just because I didn’t get one.” Jim looked horrified at the very thought.

“Kid the only reason I’m even going out into the endless death trap that is space is to make sure you don’t get yourself killed. If you don’t get assigned to the Enterprise I’m transferring, no arguments.” Jim was nearly brought to tears at his friend’s loyalty.

“I can’t ask you to do that.”
“You aren’t asking, I’m telling you what’s gonna happen so get used to it.” Bones gets up and pulls Jim up into a hug. “You’re not getting rid of me.” Before Jim has the chance to respond, Nyota busts through the door practically dragging Spock behind her.

“We’re studying fo-“ Nyota cut off when she saw Jim’s tear-stained face. “Oh god, what happened?” dread seeps into her voice, expecting the worst. Bones looks over to Jim and seeing that the other man is very focused on the floor he answers for him.

“Jim and I were just talking about what would happen if he isn’t assigned to the Enterprise.” Nyota looked at Jim in shock.

“Is that a possibility? You’re top of the class, they can’t assign you anywhere else!” Jim smiles at Nyota’s outrage on his behalf, it was only a few weeks ago she couldn’t stand him.

“People are saying the top command-track cadets are being assigned as captains to starships given the situation. The likelihood they’ll station me on the Enterprise is low at best,” Jim explains to her. Apparently still unhappy with that explanation she turns on Spock.

“Is that true?” Her tone almost accusatory. Spock looked over everyone in the room.

“It is true that the Admiralty seems to be planning to put high performing command track graduates immediately into positions as captains. It is also accurate that Jim is among the best in his class, so it is only logical to assume he will be given command immediately after graduation.” Jim knew it was a possibility, but hearing Spock say it was a punch to the gut. He flops down on to the couch and rubs his hands over his face.

“Why can’t they give the Enterprise to Jim? He’s already proven to be an amazing captain.” Nyota joins Jim on the couch as she fires back at Spock.

“Though it is possible, it is more likely that the Admiralty will assign the graduates to smaller starships.” Jim thinks he hears disappointment in the Vulcan’s voice but maybe that’s just wishful thinking.

“This is stupid,” Nyota exclaims as she falls back into the couch. Everyone was sitting in silence thinking over the possibility that Kirk wouldn’t be joining them on the Enterprise when there was a knock at the door. Everyone looked at each other in confusion, no one was expecting anyone, and Scotty knows to just come in whenever he wants. Spock, being the closest to the door is the one to answer it.

“Oh, hi commander, I was just wondering if my Dad’s here?” Jim hears Karina’s voice from the door and sees the confusion grow on Uhura’s. Nyota had sat back up and was trying to get a look at the person in the doorway and was visibly surprised when Spock gave his answer.

“Yes, your father is here. Please come in,” Spock says as he steps aside revealing the younger red-head. Stepping in and seeing the room full of people she hesitates for a second, clearly nervous about the attention that’s focused on her.

“Oh, hi commander, I was just wondering if my Dad’s here?” Jim hears Karina’s voice from the door and sees the confusion grow on Uhura’s. Nyota had sat back up and was trying to get a look at the person in the doorway and was visibly surprised when Spock gave his answer.

“Yes, your father is here. Please come in,” Spock says as he steps aside revealing the younger red-head. Stepping in and seeing the room full of people she hesitates for a second, clearly nervous about the attention that’s focused on her.

“Sorry to interrupt, I should’ve called ahead,” Rina says looking at the ground while scratching at her neck, a nervous habit Jim recognizes from when she was younger.

“Oh, you’re not interrupting sweetheart, you’re free to come by whenever you want, though I can’t promise someone will be here. Come over,” Jim says, a smile on his face, patting the cushion next to him on the couch between him and Uhura. “What brings you here kid?” Kirk can see Nyota staring at Spock and Bones, silently demanding an explanation, but ignores her and focuses on Rina.
“I just, I mean…” Rina started still nervous.

“Hey, nothing to be nervous for, yeah? Relax sweetheart,” Jim says calmly pushing the hair that had fallen in front of her face behind her ear.

“I was here, something for accepted cadets to prepare for the upcoming year, and I didn’t get to see you much yesterday, which I totally get,” She rushes to add as she sees the guilt on her Dad’s face. “But I just thought it wouldn’t hurt to swing by, but if you’re busy-“ Jim jumps in to cut her off.

“I’m never too busy for you Rina.” That earned him a smile from his oldest kid. “Well I think introductions are in order,” Jim addresses the whole room. “You already know Bones and Spock of course, but this is Nyota Uhura, she was my head communications officer on the Enterprise.” Rina turns to the older woman with a smile and offers her hand which Nyota shakes.

“It’s good to meet you, Ms. Uhura.”

“Ah, no need for the ‘Ms.’ right Uhura?” Nyota nods her head in agreement but is unable to speak before Jim is talking again. “Uhura this is Karina Morin she’s one of my kids.” Nyota’s eyes were darting between the two on the couch clearly trying to figure out the math of how that works before she realizes what Kirk just said.

“One of?” Bones snorted at her question and when she turns to him he has a clear look of amusement at the situation. That bastard knew what was going on and clearly so did Spock which means she’s officially out of the loop.

“Um yeah, one of seven.” Ok, now Jim was fucking with her.

“You want me to believe you have seven kids you’ve been secretly hiding Kirk?” To his credit, Jim looked actually offended.

“Ok, first of all, I haven’t been hiding any of them. It’s an extremely complicated story but we were only recently reunited. And secondly, I do have seven kids thank you very much.” Karina couldn’t help but laugh and share a look with Leonard at her father and Uhura’s argument which became even funnier when Spock chimed in.

“I can confirm Jim does in fact have seven kids, I had the pleasure of meeting them approximately two weeks ago.” Nyota couldn’t decide whether to keep her focus on Jim or turn on Spock. She settled for just generally addressing the room.

“Ok but Jim, Karina doesn’t look that much younger than you.” Spock jumped in again, something Jim greatly appreciated because he was trying very hard to keep it together in the face of Nyota’s confusion.

“I think you will find Nyota, that none of the seven children are biologically Jim’s.” Nyota rubs her hands over her face.

“Okay, I’m still very confused.” Jim decides to end her suffering even though he is endlessly amused by it.

“Karina is 24, then I have Theo who’s 23, then Madison and Travis are 22, the twins, Korra and Pril, are both 16, and my youngest is Kevin who is 15. I’ve known them for twelve years and I raised them through out the most formative time of their childhood and somewhere along the line I became Dad.”

“We all know it isn’t the most traditional family but it’s all most of us have left,” Karina says turning
to address Uhura.

“Well, it’s good to meet you, Karina, even if I still find it hard to imagine Kirk as anyone’s dad.” Jim sticks his tongue out at Nyota who just raises her eyebrow in a gesture that clearly meant, ‘see that’s what I mean’. By this point Rina has readjusted so that she’s leaning into her father’s chest and he has draped his arms over her, holding her close. Before Jim was able to say anything in response to Uhura the door to their apartment opens once again and Chekov, Sulu, and Scotty spill in the door. As soon as he reaches the open living room, Chekov falls to the ground face down.

“You good Chekov?” Jim asks, clearly amused at the boy’s dramatics.

“I ‘ave never done so much pointless work in my life.” The young Russian mumbles into the ground.

“We’re almost done kid,” Bones grumbles from where he’s leaning on the table.

“So, did they make all of you go back to the Academy?” Rina spoke up for the first time since the other three men came in. It’s Bones that answers her.

“Only those of us unfortunate enough to not have graduated already. Scotty and the pointy-eared bastard over there are lucky enough to get out of that particular hell.”

“Not to be rude but who are you, lassie?” Scotty asks, noticing Karina who is still leaning back into Jim’s chest. Scotty gestures between the two of them questioningly. “Are you two…?” As understanding blooms over Jim and Rina’s face it immediately shifts into disgust. Bones and Uhura, however, were having a hard time not laughing at the situation.

“No, ew, no!” Rina exclaims, pulling away from Jim and shaking herself as if to rid herself of the idea.

“Yeah no defiantly not,” Jim adds equally disgusted. It was then that Uhura and Bones cracked, and both doubled over laughing, even Spock looked slightly amused.

“I feel like I’m missing something,” Scotty says looking around confused, Sulu to has had his curiosity peaked and Chekov has lifted his head up from the floor to watch the conversation.

“Okay,” Jim starts, “This is Karina, we’ve known each other for twelve years now. She is one of seven, non-biological, kids I have. I have not been hiding them, we were separated a while ago and we have only now reunited. They are very important to me and I would, if you are interested, be happy to introduce you to the other six.” Jim is basically spitting this all out as fast as he can, but Scotty, Sulu, and Chekov seem to be keeping up.

“Why haven’t you ever talked about them?” Sulu asks curiously before realizing he may be overstepping. “If you don’t mind me asking, of course.” Jim pauses a moment before answering.

“Well, as I said, I was separated from them a while ago and, it’s not something that’s very easy to talk about.” Sulu nods in understanding.

“Well I do not know about Mr. Sulu and Mr. Scott, but I would be very excited to meet your family Captain.” Leonard stiffens as the young boy addresses Jim with his old title, but Jim just smiles.

“Well I need to ask Tommy since it’s his house but I’m sure this weekend I can bring you over. It can double as our celebration for finishing finals.” Though Jim was trying to look casual, Bones could now see his nerves growing and decides it’s time to interrupt.

“Okay well, if y’all are done making dinner plans Jim’s gotta get some sleep so keep it quiet out
“Of course, Doctor.” He gives Spock a tired smile before dragging Jim into his room and closing the door behind them.

“Bye Dad,” Karina calls as she leaves the apartment and Jim is dragged towards his room.

As soon as the two of them are alone Jim makes a 180 turn so he’s facing Bones before walking into the man’s arms. Leonard knew from their time at the Academy that on bad days Jim needed physical contact, the poor kid’s touch starvation always rears its head when he’s in the red mentally. So, as Jim walks towards him he opens his arms and pulls his friend as close as he can. He hears a whimper as Jim begins to cry into his shoulder and Len moves one of his hands on to the back of Jim’s neck.

“I got you darlin’, it’s okay, It’s okay.” Bones whispers as Jim manages to bury his face even deeper into Bones’ shoulder. “Let’s lay down, can you do that for me?” He feels Jim nod and so he pulls back just enough to comfortably walk them both to Jim’s bed. As they settled down Bones pulls Jim back into him. “Do you want to talk?” Jim is quite for long enough for Bones to assume the answer is no, so he’s surprised when Jim finally speaks.

“I’m just tired, Len. I’m so, so tired. I sick of pretending Tarsus didn’t happen, I’m sick of pretending that it didn’t fuck me up, that I don’t see the dead in my sleep or smell the rotting bodies. I’m just tired.” Leonard stays quiet for a while, just running his hand through Jim’s hair and rubbing circles in his back. When Jim’s breaths even out and his crying has stopped, Len finally speaks up.

“You fucking amaze me, Jim.” Jim gives a dry, disbelieving laugh. “No seriously Jim I can’t believe you exist sometimes. I know I’ve said it before but what you’ve made it through, it’s amazing that you’re here.” Jim was completely silent for a moment and when he did speak it was so quite Leonard almost missed it.

“Sometimes I think it would be better if I wasn’t.” McCoy tenses up and pulls away putting his hand under Jim’s chin making sure they were making eye contact. The look in Jim’s eyes tore Len’s heart to pieces, the kid just looks so helpless.

“James Kirk you listen to me right now, don’t ever think that this world would be better without you in it.” Leonard knew his voice may be betraying his deeper feelings for Jim, but he can’t find it in himself to care. “The number of lives you’ve saved within the months alone are unquantifiable.” Fuck it he might as well go all in now. “And I know it may be a small thing and doesn’t really matter in the grand scheme of things, but I can’t imagine living without you, Jim. You pulled me out of the lowest point of my life when I felt like nothing and knew I had nothing, and I will never be able to repay you. James, I can’t tell you enough how much I need you.” Jim was looking at Bones in shock at his speech.

“Bones I…” Jim trails off, not sure what to say.

“Jim don’t worry about it but just know that it wouldn’t be better if you weren’t here. The world is better with you in it.” Jim nods slowly resting back into Bones’ chest. After a while the two of them both drift off to sleep, Jim listening to Leonard’s heartbeat and Leonard burying his nose in Jim’s hair.
The week of final exams went about as smoothly as it could have. Those still in the Academy didn’t get much sleep and by the end of the week, they were all exhausted. By the end of the week, Jim was looking forward to spending time with his kids, though he was still slightly nervous about introducing the Enterprise crew to them. When the weekend hit everyone was relieved classes were over and done with and Jim finally gets around to talking to Tommy about having the crew over, something Tommy says the rest of the kids are extremely excited for. That’s how Jim finds himself once again on the doorstep of his kids’ house, this time flanked by, not only Bones and Spock, but Sulu, Chekov, Scotty, and Nyota as well. A couple of seconds after he rings the doorbell the door swings open and Shadow grabs his Dad’s hand, dragging him in leaving Jim just enough time to turn to his friends and gesture for them to follow. When they make their way to the family room they walk in on as much chaos as Jim expected. As soon as Shadow pulls Jim into the room he lets go of his hand and joins in what seems to be a game of tag happening between the rest of the kids. Tommy got up from his place on the couch to greet them all.

“Hey JT,” he says pulling Jim into a one arm side hug before turning to the rest of them and extending his hand to the nearest crew member, Nyota. “Hi, I’m Tommy, it’s great to meet you all.” He shakes each of the newcomers’ hands in kind. When he gets to Bones and Spock he just nods. “Doctor, Commander, it’s good to see you again.”

“Good to see you again Tommy,” Bones answers as Spock gives a polite nod. Just then it seems the others notice their father’s arrival. Kevin is the first to notice and launches himself over the couch into Jim’s arms.

“Hey Kid, good to see you, buddy.” Jim wraps his arms around the boy and pulls him close as the rest of his kids gather around as well. “Hey kids, these were my crew members when I was Captain of the Enterprise.” He gestures to each of his friends as he introduces them. “This is Uhura, she was my communications officer. That’s Sulu, he was my helmsman, and that’s Chekov, my navigator. And that is Scotty, he’s my chief engineer.” Jim then turns to address the group of Starfleet officers and gestures to each of his kids as he introduces them. “These are my kids, Karina you’ve already met, but this is Theo, Madison, Travis, Korra, Pril, and Kevin.” As Jim finishes introductions Tommy calls from where he disappeared into the kitchen.

“Korra and Shadow can you get in here and help me move the food to the table, will you?” The kids in question run out of sight and Jim leads his friends to the dining room and they all sit with the remaining kids. Jim sits silently, Bones and Spock on either side of him, looking between all the people at the table waiting for someone else to break the silence. After a while Karina comes to his rescue, striking up a conversation with Leonard.

“So, they’ve put me on the graveyard shift at the clinic for the first semester next year.” Bones laughs at that.

“That’s a killer one. Lucky you got it early though, the longer you’re at the Academy the worse it will be to get stuck in that shift. I got it the second half of my second year. You can ask your dad, it’s a goddamn miracle I made it through alive, honestly can’t remember most of it. I lived off caffeine for months.”

“Any advice for staying somewhat sane?” A smirk grew on Bones’ face.

“Make sure you have a roommate who isn’t a pain in the ass.” Jim whips around to face his friend, fake offense painted on his face.

“Hey! I was an amazing roommate!” Bones snorts at that one which, in Jim’s opinion, is fair.

“Yeah cuz what I needed after a night of fixing up idiots who got themselves hurt was to come home
to an idiot of my own who somehow got half his face punched in.” Jim just beams in response which earns him a smile from the doctor. When he looks up to the rest of the people Rina is wearing knowing smirk as she raises an eyebrow at her dad. Jim suddenly finds his hands incredibly interesting.

“So, JT was a bad roommate then?” Jim can hear the smile in his eldest’s voice.

“Ah no, I’m just giving your dad crap. He was great.” Jim locks eyes with his best friend as Bones finishes, looking right at him. “I got lucky with my roommate assignment.”

“I think it is safe to say we are all quite fortunate to have met Jim.” Jim was beet red now at Spock’s addition to the conversation. Out of the corner of his eye, he sees the smirk on Rina’s face get even bigger. Feeling uncomfortable with the sudden praise Jim gets up.

“Well, I’m gonna go check if Tommy needs help.” And with that Jim leaves the room and walks to the kitchen, wordlessly he starts collecting utensils and after a few moments Karina joins them.

“So, dad, how long have you been in love with your best friend and your first officer?” Rina asks casually leaning on the counter. Tommy and Shadow both snort at the question and Jim puts down the forks in his hand and leans back looking unimpressed at his eldest.

“Who says I am?” Jim knew he wasn’t fooling anyone, but he may as well try. It was apparently as futile as he thought because the four others in the room laughed. Jim turns towards Korra in shock. “Really Korra, you too.” The Vulcan girl shrugs.

“Well, it is clear that you have feelings for them, A’niirih.” Jim sighs and slumps down.

“It doesn’t matter,” Jim sighs. Rina’s face screws up with confusion.

“Why the hell do mean it doesn’t matter?” Jim lets out a self-deprecating laugh.

“Look, Rina, I know you all put me on a pretty high pedestal but honey I don’t got much to offer men like Leonard and Spock. They’re too good for me.” When he looks back up at Tommy and his kids he’s surprised to see anger written across all their faces. Tommy is the one that walks up to him and grabs his shoulders.

“James Tiberius Kirk you listen to me, they would both be lucky to have you. They are lucky to have you.” Jim scoffs at that but that only seems to spur Tommy on. “Seriously JT, talk to them, just talk to them. It can’t hurt.”

“It can’t hurt!?” Jim yells before remembering everyone is still in the other room and lowering his voice. “I could lose them, me telling them could tear apart what relationship I do have with them and I can’t risk that. I’ve only known Spock for a couple of weeks and I already depend on him and Bones, god if I lost Bones I don’t know if I could keep going, Tommy.” Tommy cups the side of his face with one hand, forcing Jim to look at him.

“JT do you trust me?”

“Yes,” Jim replies quickly, with no hesitation in his voice.

“Talk to them, please. I know you, it will tear at you if you don’t. I don’t think you quite understand how much those men care for you, they may surprise you.” Jim doesn’t respond. “Just think about it?” He finally locks eyes with Tommy and gives a small nod which seems to placate the younger man. Just then Jim’s comm beeps in his pocket. He pulls it out to see a message from the Admiralty. Confusion washing over him at what they could possibly want from him now pushes him to open the
message. He reads through it once. Then again. And a third time, because he must be reading it wrong. But no, there the message is, on his comm screen, unchanging.

_Cadet Kirk,_

_The Admiralty has come to a decision about your post-graduate assignment. Your field promotion will become permanent, and you will relieve me as Captain of the USS Enterprise. As you may be aware, your command crew has already been assigned, but the admiralty will consider any requests you may have for changes in your crew. Please let us know of any change requests as well as your choice for First Officer as soon as possible._

_Please feel free to ask any questions,_

_Admiral Pike_

_P.S. Congratulations Kid, you deserve it._

He must have been standing there staring for a while before Korra spoke up. “A’nírîh? What is it? Is something wrong?” He snaps his head up to her.

“Uh no, no, I just got my ship assignment.” Karina’s eyes grew at that.

“And?” She asks pressing, still unable to read her dad’s face.

“I um,” Jim takes in a breath, still in disbelief. “I’m Captain of the Enterprise.” Rina can’t help the joyful laugh she lets out as she launches herself into her father’s arms. “I uh, I should go tell the crew. My crew.” He pulls back, still in shock as he drifts back into the dining room. He stands at the doorway of the room watching his crew and his kids talking. Spock is the first to notice him and after the Vulcan’s attention shifts to him, the rest of the people in the room fall silent.

“Jim? You okay kid?” Leonard asks, concern clear in his voice as he gets up from his chair to stand in front of Jim.

“Yeah, yeah I am.” For the first time in a while, Jim believes those words and he finally lets himself smile as he says the next part to the whole room. “I just got assigned as Captain of the Enterprise.”

It is quiet for a moment before Bones’ breathes out, “Oh thank god,” before launching himself into Jim’s arms. After that, the room is filled with questions and congratulations and excitement, but all Jim can focus on is the man in his arms who can’t stop whispering thanks to a god he doesn’t believe in and the smile that has crept its way on to the face of the Vulcan still sitting at the table.

Chapter End Notes

_I was thinking of keeping the story going at least through Into Darkness and possibly_
into Beyond. Would that interest anyone?
New Beginnings

Chapter Notes

First of all, sorry this chapter is both late and short it really didn't want to be written. My computer deleted it 3 times and 2 pages in I seemed to lose all sense of the story and how to write so that was fun.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

The day of his graduation was one of the happiest days of Jim’s life. Not only was he finally out of the Academy in the three years he told Pike he would make it out in but he was going to officially be given the captaincy of the Starfleet's flagship. He couldn’t have asked for more and if you told him three years ago this is where he would be in three years time he would have laughed in your face. Though he had always boasted his skills and shone confidence in himself when it came to reaching his goals at the Academy, in reality, he never quite believed he would make it this far. Disappointment does set in early in the day when he gets word that neither his bother or his mother were bothering to show their faces at his graduation. He knows they aren’t on the best of terms but he had hoped they could at least show up to keep up some facade of familial love. Instead, neither of them had even bothered to make up excuses for their absences. He hasn’t even heard back from his mother; his brother at least had the decency to send a quick message saying he wasn’t coming. His mood must have been apparent on his face because it's still early in the day when Bones brings it up.

“You’ve been looking forward to this day for years, so tell me why the hell you look like someone just kicked a puppy in front of you.”

“My family’s not showing up for graduation.” Jim is shocked that as soon as he finishes Bones bursts into laughter. “Oh thanks, Bones. I’m glad that you find it all so funny.” That comment seemed to sober Bones up as he came to sit next to Jim on his bed.

“No Jim, sorry. It’s just you’re gonna have more family there than any of us.” Jim’s confusion must have been evident because Bones goes on to clarify, “Your kids love you more than anything, and a hell of a lot more than some people’s biological families do. If they don’t count I don’t think there’s any hope for the rest of us. Plus now you’ve gone and got yourself a crew that’s willing to go to the ends of the universe for you. You’re slowly getting the biggest family in the universe. Fuck the assholes you happen to share genes with, they don’t deserve you. Don’t ever think you’re alone though, got it?” The comment seems to cheer Jim up and Bones receives a genuine smile for his efforts.

From that moment on Jim’s mood vastly improved. A couple hours before the ceremony they meet up with the rest of the graduating command crew at a nearby bar, everyone already in their cadet reds. Jim pays for the one and only round of drinks they agreed on, none of them wanting to have anyone tipsy at graduation. It’s Nyota that starts up a conversation about their upcoming assignments.

“I still can’t believe that we’re all on the Enterprise still.” She smirks at Jim as she continues, “I can’t believe they’re letting you back in her chair.”

“Thanks for the vote of confidence. I thought I did pretty well given the circumstances!” Jim shoots back with mock offense, making the rest of the table laugh.
“Your command over the Enterprise and it’s crew was remarkable especially under the circumstances Captain,” Spock’s voice come from behind Jim who turns around and gives the Vulcan a blinding smile.

“That almost sounds like a compliment Commander Spock,” Jim teases as Spock takes a seat at the table with them. To Jim’s surprise a look of fondness forms on Spock’s face.

“It was meant as one Captain,” Spock says kindly before turning to address the rest of the group. “I assume you are all prepared for your graduation ceremony?”

“Oh yes, I am so ready to leave this planet behind for a while,” Jim huffs out, leaning back in his chair. “I still can’t believe they put me on the Enterprise, honestly they must’ve gone crazy.”

“I think you will make a very good Captain, Jim,” Chekov says excitedly and Jim laughs.

“Thanks, kid. Though you may be the only one voting for me. I have a sneaking suspicion the Admiralty is going to be keeping a close eye on me.”

“He’s definitely not the only one who has got your back, Jim. We’re all behind you now,” Bones says taking a swig from his glass. Jim smiles and leans into his friend for a moment.

“Thanks, Bones.” A relaxed smile comes over Jim’s face. “This is going to be amazing, we’re going to space Bones!” Jim gestures excitedly as he talks.

“Oh yeah, you know me, can’t get enough of the death trap that you all call space,” Bones snarks.

“Oh come on old man it’s the adventure of a lifetime how can you say no to that?”

“Easily, I was perfectly good staying planetside. It’s you I have trouble saying no to.”

“Damn right, you promised you’d be my CMO and I’m holding you to that.” Bones laughs at that but it’s Uhura that speaks up.

“God knows McCoy is the only one who can keep your impulsive ass alive.” Bones laughed even harder at that.

“She’s right Jim, gotta go and keep space from killing your crazy ass.”

“Yeah, yeah I get it. You’re all the worst you know that?” Jim shoots to both of the people ganging up on him who just roll their eyes in response.

It was a couple of minutes later when there was a familiar beep of a comm, and everyone at the table pulls out their comm checking if it was them who was contacted. Seeing the message on his comm, Spock gets up and excuses himself from the group telling them he will see them at the ceremony. He gives Jim his congratulations to Jim a final time, resting his hand on the human’s shoulder. The contact earned him an eyebrow raise from Nyota who gets up and offers to walk out with him. When they leave view and earshot of the rest of the group Nyota stops him and turns to him, grabbing his elbow and pulling him out of the main path of travel in the bar. He waits for her to say what she means to which doesn’t take long.

“So, you seem to be getting along with Jim and McCoy,” her tone seems casual but Spock anticipates she is leading up to something.

“I assume that is not all you pulled me over to speak about, but yes, though we, as you would say, got off on the wrong foot, I am finding both the Doctor and Captain are intelligent and talented
officers.” The woman in front of him seemed slightly frustrated with his response which, based on previous conversations he has had with her, suggests he has not given the response that she wanted.

“We’re friends, right Spock?” He raises an eyebrow at her question.

“Of course Nyota, I value your friendship greatly.” That gained him a smile from the woman as she nods to him.

“Right, and as your friend, your human friend, you should know you can talk to me about things you may not speak to Vulcans about right?” Spock thinks over her words, confused as to what she is implying.

“I’m sorry Nyota, I am unsure as to what you are referring to.” The frustration appears back on her face.

“Feelings Spock, I’m talking about feelings, romantic feelings specifically.” There is a stretch of silence between them as Spock sorts through the thoughts flying through his head. He must have shown some of his well-hidden emotions on his face because after a few minutes Nyota speaks up again, her voice now sympathetic. “Oh, Spock, have you not thought about why exactly you’ve let Jim and Len so close so quickly? You hated Jim three or four weeks ago and you haven’t stopped to think about what’s changed or why he and Len have integrated you into their lives so quickly?”

“They have not treated me any differently from the rest of the crew they have become acquainted with,” Spock replies weakly as his mind flies through memories of the past weeks, he has never been quite as tuned into emotional concerns and often found himself relying on Nyota for guidance. It is not uncommon that she catch things he doesn’t but this seems much bigger than the normal social slip.

“Len and Jim have been a pair for three years now since they joined the Academy. Nobody could get close to them, not really in any way that mattered, and now suddenly it’s not just Kirk and McCoy now. It’s Kirk, McCoy, and Spock, which isn’t an insignificant feat. We’ve all seen the three of you together, you already work like a well-oiled machine and it’s alarmingly clear how much you all care about each other. I thought you knew.”

Spock was finding it hard to find words to respond but after a long moment of sorting through repressed feelings, Spock has to acknowledge his relationship with the Captain and Doctor has grown at an extremely fast rate compared to his friendship with Nyota. He even must admit he feels differently for Nyota than he does for the two men in question, something he had been ignoring but now Nyota has forced to the forefront of his mind. If he’s honest with himself it scares him slightly how much he has come to care for Leonard and Jim. When Jim had collapsed on the Bridge it had taken a large amount of his control to keep his panic at bay and he had been more worried than perhaps necessary when Leonard overexerted himself after the Nero incident. The unfortunate truth though is that Spock had no idea what to do with the information he now had about his own feelings, so he turned, as he found himself doing more and more often, to Nyota.

“After some deliberation, I have concluded your theory to be… accurate,” Spock addresses her, unable to keep the uncomfortable tone out of his voice. She gives him a sympathetic look in response.

“I really thought you knew Spock, I’m sorry I brought it up. Forget I said anything.”

“Nyota you have no reason to apologize and though I may not have been aware of my… feelings before I certainly am now and I must admit I am confused as to what to do with this information.” Nyota looks at him surprised which confuses him slightly. “You look surprised.”
“Oh, I just thought it may be harder to get you to, well, admit to feelings.”

“I find it is illogical to deny what is true no matter how uncomfortable it may make me. In addition, you have historically been of help concerning social situations in the past making it even more illogical to not ask for your assistance in an area where I lack experience.”

“Well, honestly I think the best idea is to just talk to the two of them.” Spock goes to talk but Nyota cuts him off. “I know it may not go well but Jim and Len aren’t the types to make it a big thing and I can’t see them being cruel about it. It’s clear the two of them have a soft spot for you so I don’t think they’ll react as badly as you think.” Spock gives a sharp nod as his comm pings again.

“I will think on the recommendation but now I really must go.” Nyota nods pulling him into a quick and fairly awkward hug.

“We’ll see you after the ceremony.”

“Of course Spock, good luck.”

“You as well Nyota.” And with that Spock turns and leaves the bar, thoughts of Jim and Leonard still swimming through his head.

The graduation ceremony itself was bittersweet. Their class was by far the smallest to graduate the Academy for centuries and the feeling of loss was heavy in the room. Almost everyone was crying or despondent at one time during the day and speech after speech reminded them not only of the adventures waiting for them and the important jobs they had ahead but of the loss they were sure to feel again at some point in their careers with Starfleet. Never the less there was still an air of excitement between those in the room about to graduate and the event went smoothly. Before the ceremony came to an end, those of the graduates who were taking up captaincies were called up and given special recognition. Jim was one of the few who was relieving a living captain and as he looked down at the man who may as well been his father and received his command it became increasingly difficult to keep his tears at bay.

Theo is the first of his kids to reach him at the after party for the graduates and their friends and family. The younger man’s arms immediately wrapped around his father and he is so excited he is nearly vibrating. Jim responds in kind as the rest of kids reach them, not waiting until Theo pulls back to join the hug much to Tommy’s amusement which Jim can just barely see over his kids’ heads.

“That was so awesome dad I can’t believe you’re really a captain now,” Shadow says bouncing up and down on the spot as all the kids pull back from Jim.

“Exactly how much sugar have they all had Tommy?” Jim asks his friend laughingly.

“Clearly more than I thought they did. Can you all settle for a minute and give JT some space, I’m surprised he could even breath with you all wrapped around him like that.” All the kids take another few steps away. All the kids start up their own conversations and add to the building noise in the packed room. Jim takes note of Spark reaching up and slipping her hearing aids out of her ears, probably beginning to get slightly uncomfortable with the level of noise. He walks over to her, pulling her into a hug before stepping back so he can sign to her.

“Hey Spark, you ok?”

“Yeah, just starting to get a bit of a headache. Crowded rooms are a bit of a pain,” she signs back
giving him a weak smile.

“I’m sorry, sweetheart,” he says feeling bad for the younger girl.

“I’m fine, don’t worry so much dad.” And before they continue the conversation Spark is pulled into an argument between Korra and Shadow that Jim was sure Korra was winning. Kevin comes to join him shortly after he sits down on a nearby couch, watching his family mess around with each other and his crew socialize with the other graduates and suck up to the Admiralty.

“Are we going to see you again after you become a captain dad?” Kevin asks after they sit in silence for a while, the kid’s voice filled with worry. The question nearly broke Jim’s heart.

“Of course you will Kev, why wouldn’t you?” Kevin shrugs refusing to make eye contact and flipping a coin Jim couldn’t quite see clearly around in his hand.

“It’s just Starfleet took you away last time, what if they do it again?” Jim pulls the teen into his chest and buries his face in the kid’s hair.

“Kevin Riley there is no way they can ever take me away from you again okay? I’m much bigger now and I’m never gonna let them do that to us ever again.” Kevin pulls back and nods before burying himself back in his father’s chest. As he holds his youngest in his arms and looks out to the rest of his brilliant kids, Jim swears to himself he’ll do everything he can to stay with them. Fate was kind enough to give him the best family in the universe and he’ll be damned if anything takes them away from him.

Chapter End Notes

Three more things: 1. I decided I will continue the story on through Into Darkness and Beyond. 2. I may not update next week because I will be in Cuba and it is unclear if I will have internet or time. 3. Another question: Would anyone be interested if I wrote character studies or something for each of Jim’s kids? It's something I've done already for a couple of them and it's something I may be able to post on weeks I don't have time for a full story.

Also, if you feel the need to message me, or I vanish with no warning, or you just want updates on the story if there ever are any my Tumblr is problemforfuturetech and if I'm ever not able to post the reason will probably end up on there.
A couple of weeks pass after graduation as repairs continue on the Enterprise and Jim is swamped with paperwork the whole time. Signing off on everything from replicators to new medical equipment that Bones was insisting he needs access to.

“If you’re dragging me along on this, I’m gonna need all the equipment I can to keep your sorry ass alive kid”

He still hasn’t picked a first officer, something Pike is constantly harassing him about. It’s not that he doesn’t know who he wants as second in command. Clearly, if he had his pick of anyone in the fleet it would be Spock, but he was still unsure on where he stood with the Vulcan, if he would even want to take up the position. Jim knows he is impulsive and a host of other things Vulcans sneer at and he’s not completely sure Spock will be willing to be second to that at all times. So Jim is currently putting off talking to him and is instead very focused on finalizing plans on the Enterprise and spending as much time as he can with his kids. He and Tommy have also been putting a plan of their own into action. After spending a night talking over drinks a couple days before, Jim had decided he wanted to have official custody of the three youngest kids and file for adult adoption for the others. Kevin had been afraid that Jim would be separated from them again and he’ll be damned if that happens so he plans on taking the legal action to ensure he can always be there for them.

The process was long and grueling, especially considering he was filling seven adoption requests. It certainly added to his pile of paperwork, but it was a small price to pay if he gets to show his kids he’s here to stay. Of course, there is the terrifying thought that something will go wrong, and he won’t be able to have parental and familial rights so he and Tommy have held off telling the kids about any of it, in case the whole thing crashes and burns. He’s at lunch with the command crew when he gets a message telling him the paperwork has all gone through and all he needs to do is meet with them to finalize the process as soon as he can. He practically bolts out of the Starfleet cafeteria, just managing to send a message saying he’ll be there in 20 minutes.

About an hour later he leaves the family court with official custody and familial rights for all seven of his kids. His hands still shaking as he calls Tommy.

“Hey Tommy, it’s JT, I just got out of the meetings to finalize the adoptions, everything is done,” he speaks into the phone, voice laced still with disbelief. After planning for Jim to come over for dinner again to tell the kids he hangs up the phone. He stands in the middle of the sidewalk for a while just trying to take in what he just did, letting a smile wash over his face. The one downside of the process being complete was now he has less to keep his mind from wandering to the fact that he promised himself he would talk to Bones and Spock before they started serving on the same ship, making sure they had time to bail if they felt the need. The very thought of either of them leaving him sends his mind to a place he doesn’t want to go but they both deserve the option. He knows he can’t spend time in space with them without telling them, it has been hard enough to keep his feelings for Bones at bay but with the addition of Spock into their lives has multiplied the difficulty exponentially. Now not only would he catch himself staring at Bones or melt when the man’s
Jim knows that the possibility of one of them let alone both of them returning his feelings is hopeless but at the very least he hopes that they will take the information of Jim’s feelings in stride and their relationships will be minimally affected. He knows, in reality, the chance that he will lose one or both of them is high but if he has to keep it to himself for one more second, he will burst at the seams. He has given days of thought to how he plans to go about telling them this information and he feels as good as he can about his plan. He and Bones had already decided they would spend a day in their apartment tomorrow to give them both a chance to relax from all the work they’ve been swamped with, he may as well get that part of the process done then. For now, though he has a dinner to get to and good news to give.

It’s a couple of hours later when Jim is finally sitting around the table with his kids and Tommy, his plate full of the salmon Rina had cooked for the night. Tommy gives him a nod to encourage him to start and he clears his throat, immediately catching the attention of all the people at the table.

“Umm, so I have a bit of news for you all,” Jim starts suddenly nervous with all the curious eyes on him. Nobody speaks up so he continues, “I uh, Tommy and I have spent the past few weeks working on something. You all know I love you very, much right?” Jim gets a bunch of confused looks from the younger people at the table.

“Of course, we know that Dad, we love you too.” Spark signs while the rest of his kids nod in agreement making his nerves melt away as he smiles.

“Yes, well the worst moment in my entire life was when they dragged me away from you all on the Enterprise that day and took you from me. I can’t begin to tell you how many nightmares I’ve had centered around that moment.” A couple of his kids, mostly the older ones, nod in agreement, something that tugs at Jim’s heart painfully. “Well, I swore to myself when I got you all back that no one would ever take you away from me again; that I would do anything to make sure nobody can ever stop me from being there for you.”

“Does this still have something to do with what you said you and Tommy were working on?” asks Theo curiously pushing the food around on his plate absentmindedly.

“Well I thought the best way to make sure no one could argue that I don’t have familial rights with all of you if anything is to happen would be to make us a legal family.” Looks of shock and excitement wash over all the kids’ faces as the meaning of Jim’s words sink in.

“Please confirm what we think you are saying Father;” requests Pril politely but barely able to keep his excitement at bay.

“As of today, I have taken parental rights for Kevin and the twins from Tommy and have gotten approved for the adult adoption of the rest of you which will grant me familial rights if anything happens to any of you. Nobody will ever be able to keep me from you again.” The first reaction to the news is Spark bursting into tears, and Jim’s heart melts as he immediately gets up and goes to pull, he into his arms. He rubs her back for a while before pulling back to sign to her.

“What is it, sweetheart? What’s wrong?”

“Nothing is wrong, I was just so scared, but you fixed it, just like you always do,” Spark
signs back, reluctantly breaking contact with her dad.

“What scared you Spark?” Jim says while rubbing his hands up and down the arms of his little girl as tears continue to trail down her face.

“I just kept waiting for them to take you away again. You know I remember it, that day on the Enterprise, the last day we saw you.” She stops for a moment to wipe tears off of her face.

“God sweetheart I’m so sorry,” Jim signs back, trying so hard not just to wrap Madison in his arms and hide her away from all her fears. She starts signing again when she finishes wiping the tear streaks off her face.

“I don’t remember it well, but I remember all of us being taken to the medbay and doctors and nurses were scanning us and you were trying to get over to Kevin and they wouldn’t let you go. That’s when you bit the nurse wasn’t it?” Jim just nods and waits for her to continue. “Well my memory gets a little foggy after that. I guess a doctor must have told them to get you out of the room because they started taking you away and Tommy screamed. I couldn’t hear it but he was standing next to me and it was almost like I could feel it. You were being dragged away and I felt so helpless because I couldn’t tell any of them to stop, I couldn’t move my hands at all they were broken, remember? I could see the other kids start to panic but I had no idea what was happening, and all the lights were so bright.” Tears are starting to run down her dark skin again, but she pays them no mind as she continues. “I remember a couple minutes after they took you out my throat was on fire and I realized that I had been screaming the whole time. A nurse must have used a hypo on me because I remember pain in my neck and then nothing.” As she finishes signing Jim finally gives in and wraps his arms around her and pulls her into his chest. It’s minutes later when he pulls back and rests his forehead against hers and pulls back just enough so he can sign between them.

“Never again, you got that, never again.” Spark simply nods in response, obviously exhausted from the emotional display and slumps back into her chair and leans into Shadow who is sitting next to her. Over the next few hours as they all finished the food on their plates and cleaned up dinner Jim speaks with his kids about the future. His kids make him promise that while he is in space, they will be getting weekly vid calls from him at the least, something that doesn’t exactly pain Jim to agree to. When they exhaust conversation about their future as a family his kids start questioning Jim about McCoy and Spock something he tries to shut down as quickly as he can telling them that he has a plan. He rolls his eyes when Theo asks him to clarify if he has a timely plan to deal with it or if his plan is just ‘wait it out and hope I don’t crack’ and tells him that no he actually has a plan to talk to Bones tomorrow. This seems to get them excited and he gets many demands to keep them in the loop, Rina stating that if she’s the last to know what happens she’ll never forgive him. By the time he returns to his apartment Bones is either already asleep or still in the clinic because he’s nowhere to be seen. Luckily Jim still manages to get to sleep that night despite his growing anxiety that tomorrow’s conversation brings.

Next morning is fairly uneventful. Jim is the first up since it turns out that Leonard didn’t actually get home until the early hours of the morning. He makes the two of them breakfast and downs two cups of coffee before grabbing his plate and sitting at the table with his PADD. Going through all the messages he’s gotten since yesterday helps him keep his mind off his looming conversation with Bones which he has been second guessing having all morning. It’s nearly noon by the time Bones drags himself out of bed and Jim has already put his breakfast in the fridge, something he makes the other man aware of with a passing comment as he pretends to be invested in whatever is on his PADD screen. They are both fairly silent as Bones eats his breakfast/lunch and the silence continues as the older man puts his plate in the sink and comes to sit next to Jim on the
couch. It stretches on as Bones picks up his own PADD and scrolls through his messages.

“So, are you going to tell me what’s wrong?” Bones breaks the silence, startling Jim which makes him release a breath he wasn’t even aware he was holding. Jim looks over at Bones and the man is still just scrolling through his PADD, so Jim returns his attention to his own device.

“Why would you think anything’s wrong?” Jim tries for casual but if had to guess he doesn’t quite get there because he can see his friend raise an eyebrow out of the corner of his eye.

“Jim, you’ve been completely silent and practically as still as a statue since I’ve gotten up. The only time you’re like this is when you make yourself anxious thinking too much. So, what’s wrong?” Bones turns towards him and puts his PADD down, clearly not ready to take any of Jim’s dismissals as an answer. Jim sighs as he turns towards his friend, putting his own tablet down on the coffee table in front of them. Well, it’s now or never then, god he feels like he’s gonna vomit. It must show on his face because Bones’ look shifts to one of concern. “What’s wrong Jim? Are you in pain? Are you still having nightmares?” Jim lets out a breathy laugh at his friend.

“Well yes and yeah still a little but that’s not what’s wrong.” Bones looks at him confused.

“What is it then? You know you can tell me anything darlin’.” Jim’s heart skips a beat at the term of endearment that easily slips past the doctor’s lips.

“First I need you to promise me something Bones, please.” Bones frowns at the desperation in his friend’s voice.

“Of course, Jim, anything,” Bones says honestly, willing to do anything to ease the panic growing on Jim’s face.

“Just promise you’ll try not to hate me, or be disgusted, or… or…” Jim’s voice catches

“Or what Jim?”

“Leave.” The word slips out without Jim’s permission. The last thing he wants is for Bones to feel like he’s obligated to stay with Jim.

“Of course, Jimmy. I don’t think I could ever hate you or be disgusted with you kid, and you don’t ever gotta be afraid of me leaving, got that Jim?” Bones says, now extremely concerned.

“What’s this about kid?” Jim takes a deep breath.

“Um… well, I just have been trying to keep it to myself for so long and it feels like it’s just clawing to get out. I didn’t want you to leave or get scared or treat me differently, I still don’t, but there are days where it’s almost painful not to just say it, where it could be so easy to just let it slip out but then I remember that it could ruin everything and I could lose you and it makes me so scared but I just don’t think I can keep from you anymore.” Leonard decides he needs to cut Jim off before the man goes into a full-fledged panic attack.

“Jim please just spit it out, it’s ok.” Jim looks at him for a moment before finally replying, spitting his words out as if it burned to have them inside of him.

“I love you, god Bones I’m so in love with you, and-” Once the kid gets started it seems like he can’t stop but Leonard isn’t listening because he’s pretty sure his brain just short-circuited. There’s no way he heard those words come out of his friend’s mouth. The friend he’s been so hopelessly in love with for the past years that it’s been pathetic. One of the two men that have taken up every one of his thoughts these past months. And here Jim was, bearing the rest of his heart to him, giving Leonard the one piece of him that he still kept so close and refused to give out to anyone. A small part of him
screams at him that Leonard can’t respond in kind, that it’s not fair to Jim, that part of Leonard’s heart is still cordoned off for Spock. It was a revelation the doctor had come to a few weeks prior and it had shocked him to the core. His heart had belonged to Jim for so long it was a surprise that Spock had seemed to slip in while his walls were down. Speaking of Jim, Leonard realizes the kid is still rambling on and when he focuses back in on the blonde there are tears welling up in his eyes as words continue spill from his mouth. “-I’m so sorry, I just couldn’t stop it and I know that you probably hate me-”

“Jim” Leonard tries to cut in.

“-but I can’t lose you, so I’ll just never bring it up again I promise. And-”

“Jim”

“-if you never want me to talk to you again, I get it, but it’s been years and-”

“JIM,” Leonard says loud enough to make Jim jump out of his monologue and finally stop talking. “Calm down, I’m not mad, I’m not angry, and I’m certainly not gonna leave so take a deep breath.” Jim does as he asks, and Len takes the younger man’s hands in his and rubs circles into the backs of them with his thumbs, letting a calm smile grow on his face. “Jim, I love-” to his surprise Jim cuts him off.

“There’s more. Before you say what, I hope you’re going to say you need to know one thing.” Len nods knowing that confusion is growing on his face. “It’s not just you. There’s someone else.” Leonard tries to let the hope grow in his chest, there’s no way in hell he’s that fucking lucky. “I haven’t known him as long as I have you but I think I’m just as in love with him as I am with you, and even more, my feelings for him have made my feelings for you grow even more which doesn’t really make sense now that I say it out loud but it was all just getting to be so much-” For what seems like the thousandth time that day Leonard cuts Jim off again.

“Who is it?” God, he hates how he can’t seem to keep the hope out of his voice. Jim looks at him for a moment before answering.

“Spock,” is all he says, and a joyful laugh erupts from Len’s mouth without his permission. He quickly speaks up when he sees hurt flash on Jim’s face.

“God, we’re a pair of idiots, aren’t we?” Confusion replaces hurt on Jim’s face. Well, that’s a little better. “Both of us hopelessly in love with each other for years and then that pointy-eared bastard comes in and manages to slip into place with us likes he’s always been here and has the nerve to make us both fall for him too, just my luck,” Len says as if he’s mildly inconvenienced by the situation while the reality is it couldn’t be farther from the truth but it’s worth the act when Jim starts laughing and a bright smile grows on the kid’s face.

“Please tell me you’re serious and not fucking with me Bones,” Jim says when he finally settles down. Len gives him a sincere smile before pulling Jim into his chest and holding him.

“I would never fuck around with something like this Jim.” He feels Jim relax in his arms in a way he never quite has before as the younger man drops his final barriers, the thought alone nearly brings tears to Len’s eyes.

“I know, I just needed to check.” The two of them sit in silence for a while. Bones holding Jim close to him and running a hand through the man’s hair, his other hand rubbing circles into Jim’s waist. Len is sure Jim has fallen asleep but is proven wrong when the man speaks up again. “Can I kiss you?” The genuine hopefulness in his best friend’s voice nearly makes him melt on the spot but
instead, he stops running a hand through Jim’s hair and tilts Jim’s chin up before leaning in and placing his lips on Jim’s. Ok, now he’s pretty sure he’s melted. His eyes slide shut at one point and all he can focus on is the feeling of Jim’s lips on his and the man’s intoxicating smell and taste. He loses track of time completely and only realizes he’s losing air when Jim pulls back and they’re both gasping for breath. Jim immediately buries his face in Len’s shoulder when he pulls back and Len just hears him mutter, “Holy Shit.”

“You can say that again,” Bones laughs running a hand through Jim’s hair. They stayed like that for a while, Jim on Len’s lap planting kisses on his neck every once in a while, and Len just holding Jim like he’s been longing to since Jim came into the medbay hanging on by a thread. “This is certainly not how I expected this day to go but I can’t say I mind.”

“I still feel like I’m about to wake up and find out this is just some trick my mind is playing on me. I was so sure you would leave Len, I have no idea what I did to deserve any of this” Jim says moving his head to the doctor’s chest so he’s not speaking into his shoulder.

“I suspect that’s something both of us will deal with for a while, knowing the pair of us.”

“What is?”

“Feeling like neither of us deserves the other.” Jim doesn’t reply and the comfortable silence returns before the younger man speaks up, changing the topic.

“So, Spock huh,” Jim looks up at him teasingly.

“Oh, like you’ve got a leg to stand on kid.” Jim laughs at that.

“I’m not the one who calls him a pointy-eared bastard or a green-blooded hobgoblin and is continually grumbling at him.”

“Yeah well, I have a reputation to uphold.” The two of them aren’t even trying to keep the grins off their faces at this point. “Not my fault the bastard somehow found a place in my life that was supposed to be just reserved for you,” Bones continues, his smile softening. Jim gives him one in return before dramatically flopping back on the couch, so his feet were now resting over Len’s lap.

“But how could he not Bones, I mean first of all the way he talks is a total turn on-” Whatever Jim was going to say next is cut off by a barking laugh from the doctor. Jim just smiles up at him for a while before leaning up and planting a quick kiss on Len’s lips before falling back into his place draped over the couch and Leonard. “But seriously, do we tell him? Do we ask him out? This is about as far as my plan got me. Honestly, it’s much farther than it took me. Oh my god, do we get to woo Spock now?!” Jim shoots up again, this time in excitement.

“Oh god, how do you even court a Vulcan? Trust us to fall for a member of the most emotionally constipated race in the galaxy.” Jim gives him a slap for that one which he just responds to with a raised eyebrow before continuing where he left off. “Would either of the twins know?” Jim’s face morphs into one of slight disgust.

“We are not asking my kids for dating advice, I absolutely draw the line there, especially with Pril and Korra.” The amusement in the kid’s voice is clear at just the thought of it.

“Oh, so they’re as emotionally shut off as the rest of their race?”

“No, far from it actually, but they are only 16 and to be fair I would be hesitant to ask any 16-year-old for romantic advice.” Bones tilts his head in agreement thinking of his own 16-year-old.
“Yeah, that’s fair enough.” They were quiet for a moment before Leonard decides to speak up again. “I love you.” He hears Jim’s voice catch and he panics for a moment thinking he’s pushed too far, but the panic evaporates when he sees the smile on Jim’s face.

“Love you to Bones.” Silence again before out of nowhere Jim says, “But seriously Bones how the fuck do we handle this Spock thing?”

“Well, the logical side of my brain thinks the best way to go about this is just to talk to Spock and tell him the truth. The emotional side would rather jump into the vacuum of space unprotected.” Len’s heart swells when Jim lets out a laugh at that.

“Well, I think we have our answer then.”

“What? Throw ourselves into space?” he asks dryly, which gets another laugh for that one accompanied by a friendly slap.

“No Bones, Spock values logic above all else so if you think the logical thing to do is just talk to him straight up then isn’t that the way to go?”

“I don’t exactly see Spock calling anything either of us thinks ‘logical’ whether we think it is or not,” Bones mumbles, rolling his eyes.

“Come on Bones I’m being serious,” Jim pushes, grabbing Len’s hands in his.

“Yeah, yeah alright kid.” Jim looks up at him, an unsure look on his face Bones rarely sees and definitely doesn’t like. “What’s wrong, darlin’?”

“We’ll be okay, right? No matter what Spock says?” Bones leans forward to place another soft kiss on Jim’s lips before responding.

“Of course, Jim. We’re always gonna be okay kid.” And for what may be the first time in Jim’s life he believes he just might be.
An Invitation

Chapter Notes

As the busiest semester of my college career begins it is likely that updates will only come every other Monday. There definitely won't be an update next week because I'll be in tech for a show but after that, I'll probably have something. Thanks to all of you for your patience!

Jim and Leonard spend the rest of the day curled up on the couch together talking while the TV plays in the background. They hit on nearly every topic under the sun, everything ranging from Joanna and Jim’s kids to their home lives growing up (the good, the bad, and, in Jim’s case, the horrific). There was also a fair amount of making out, both men seemingly trying to make up for lost time. Jim used to make fun of those people who talked wistfully about teenage love, and that innocent, sappy feeling of love you only really ever see in holovids but sitting for hours, curled into his best friend he can’t help but take back every snide comment he ever made on the topic. For his part, Leonard was also in a bit of a wistful shock and was allowing himself, for the first time in a long time, to just be happy and not worry about any number of things his mind tries to trip him up on. Jim is telling him some story about Tommy from when they first met, and the younger boy was trying, with very little success, to impress the girl who had caught his eye that week. Len is nearly doubled over in laughter, and his eyes are watering up as Jim continues gesturing wildly, imitating Tommy falling from what Jim describes as, ‘the universe’s tallest and sketchiest jungle gym.’ Suddenly mid-sentence Jim falls quiet, and Len looks up quickly wiping the tears from his eyes, afraid to see what has stopped Jim from talking. His worry seems to be unnecessary though because when he looks up at Jim, the man is beaming at him with love so clear on his face that it nearly stops Leonard’s heart.

“What? What’re you smiling at?” Len asks, slightly defensively, curious as to what exactly he did to earn that look from Jim.

“God, I love you.” The sincerity in Jim’s voice took Leonard’s breath away, what did he ever do to earn this much devotion from someone like Jim. He smiles at Jim, running a hand through the man’s hair before moving his hand to the back of Jim’s neck and holding it there.

“I love you too Darlin’,” Len says as he leans into the other man. The two men sit in silence for a while, comfortable to just be in each other’s company.

“Are we actually doing this?” Jim asks after a while.

“Doin’ what?”

“This,” Jim repeats, gesturing between them. “Whatever we are. What are we?” Len thinks for a few seconds before replying.

“Well, I hope… I mean I know you don’t like labels or anything but~” Jim cuts him off.

“Not with you.” Len looks at him questioningly, and Jim continues. “I wouldn’t mind labels if they’re with you.” Jim’s face is starting to get red, and Len takes that as his cue to jump back in.
“Well then, I was going to say, I hope we’re partners, now in every sense of the word.” Len hopes his nerves don’t show on his face too much. If Jim notices he doesn’t let on, instead his blush grows, and he offers a small smile.

“Uh, yeah, I’d like that, with you.” Len knows he can’t keep the smile off his face, so he doesn’t even try.

“Good, good, that’s good.” Jim laughs at him a little bit, but he can’t find it in himself to care.

The two of them spend the rest of the night talking, laughing, and just sitting in each other’s company. Jim talks about his fears for becoming captain of the Enterprise and is calmed somewhat by his partner’s reassurance. Bones talks about his most recent talk with Joanna as well as nervously breaching the subject of his worries about his aviophobia with a seriousness that he rarely uses while talking about his fears, especially with Jim, who often uses humor to defuse these situations. Jim however, never fails to surprise him and approaches the conversation with extreme care and tact. Leonard comes away from the discussion with many reassurances from Jim and a request from Jim that if he ever reaches a point where he is genuinely distressed that he promises to come to the Captain, something he begrudgingly promises to do.

Over the next few days, all of the members of the command crew are busy making the final preparations to leave for their first mission as the crew of the Enterprise. They had been given a mission, it’s clearly a milk run mission meant to test his crew, but Jim can’t find it in himself to care, it was still a mission. By the time they’re set to take off Jim has read over the mission file an obsessive amount of times, to the point where Bones had threatened to hide it from him a couple nights before. Their orders themselves were quite simple. It is a basic scientific recon mission. One of the typical, beam a science team down to an empty planet and run scans, missions that ships go on every day, but Jim is excited none the less. He still hasn’t picked a first officer yet, something the higher-ups are giving him a lot of crap over and have threatened to assign him one if he does not make a decision by the end of the Enterprise’s first mission. He really has been meaning to ask Spock to fill the position, but every time he gets the opportunity to ask, he gets uncharacteristically nervous, something that actually seems to be happening a lot around Spock.

Bones finds that fact neverendingly hilarious and teases Jim every time he comes home and flops face down on the ground and moans about how difficult he finds it to talk to the Vulcan. In fact, he and Bones talk a lot more about Spock than Jim anticipated, it’s not unusual for one of them to come home after a run-in with the Vulcan and have a long conversation full of pining about the interaction. They decided they would wait to talk to Spock until they’ve gotten to know the man a little more. Jim has made no promise not to try to court Spock something that Bones is quite looking forward to watching that.

It turns out that Jim hadn’t needed to worry so much about the first officer because it seemed he wasn’t the only one thinking about it. It’s only a few minutes before the Enterprise’s departure when the issue resolves itself when Spock walks on the bridge and puts his name forward for the position. Jim readily accepts Spock’s offer and can’t help shooting a smile over to Leonard who is frowning over on the other side of the Bridge. The doctor has been grumpy all day, the fact that he had to step in a shuttle putting him in a bad mood right from the start, but he couldn’t resist giving his partner a smirk as the man beams at him over Spock’s shoulder.

After the launch, they are in warp for two hours before Jim’s nerves start creeping in and he suddenly feels the need to distract himself. Leonard had gone down to the Medbay right after they
entered warp and no matter what he wants to do, Jim really can’t justify calling his CMO up to the Bridge. Instead, he turns on the other object of his affection.

“Spock, come here a sec,” he calls back over his shoulder.

“Yes, Captain, what can I do for you?” Spock asks as he walks up and stands to Jim’s left side, requiring Jim to turn a little to keep Spock in his full vision.

“What are you working on?” The Vulcan raises an eyebrow at that question which in Jim opinion, is fair.

“Well, I was preparing a plan of action for the away team. Was there something I could do for you?” Jim turns his entire chair to face Spock.

“There can’t be that much prep work you need to do is there? It’s a pretty standard mission,” Jim says, slightly confused at what Spock could have spent so much time preparing and a little concerned that he may have missed something (though he knows logically that he didn’t miss anything, and that thought is just a product of his anxiety).

“You are correct in assuming the orders we are given are fairly standard. None the less I felt it may be in our best interest, as we are clearly being tested by the Admiralty, that I over prepare.” Jim sees the logic in Spock’s plan. Even if he thinks it’s unnecessary it certainly can’t hurt, and since there was nothing else that would require Spock’s attention, he has no reason to voice his opinion to his first officer, so he just nods before changing the subject.

“I was wondering if you would want to join Bones and I for lunch?” he asks casually, beaming Spock’s way with a smile that Bones often tells him is unfairly and adorably convincing. Spock raises his eyebrow which Jim hopes means it’s working.

“I would not want to intrude.” Nyota who has apparently been listening in from across the bridge snorts and it’s Jim’s turn to raise his eyebrow at the two of them as Spock’s face gains a green tinge. He hadn’t expected news of his and Bones’ relationship to travel quite that fast, much less reach Spock’s attention, but that seems to be what’s happened if his two friends’ reactions.

“Oh, it wouldn’t be intruding, we’d love to have you,” Jim replies, shifting the smile into something more overtly flirty. He could see, behind Spock, Nyota’s eyes grew wide, and she choked on something that wasn’t there. In front of him, Spock’s face was growing greener by the second, but Jim gives him the courtesy of pretending he doesn’t notice.

“Then I would be happy to join the both of you,” Spock says, his voice stiff with, what Jim is pretty sure, is embarrassment.

“Great, we’ll walk over together,” he beams at the Vulcan before turning forward in his chair and talking back over his shoulder. “You’re dismissed, Commander.” Jim hears Spock turn and goes back to his station. A few seconds later he hears Nyota whispering something he can’t quite understand. Jim smiles and shoots off a message to Bones letting him know they’ll have a guest at their lunch break.

Spock isn’t entirely sure what just happened if he is completely honest with himself. He’s never really been the best at reading humans, and he finds the captain even more challenging to understand at times. He hears Nyota snort when he tells Jim he wouldn’t want to intrude on his time with Leonard. He has to resist the urge to turn around and glare at her, an urge that is annoyingly human.
For a moment, he regrets telling Nyota of his growing affection for the two men because he knows the snort was because Nyota knows full well he will do what he can for time with either man. Jim insists he wouldn’t be a burden though, so he agrees with no further argument. Before he agreed though, Jim’s smile had shifted into something Spock couldn't quite make out. He hears someone, he assumes Nyota, choke behind him, but he doesn’t bother to look back. When he makes his way back to his station, Nyota is looking at him expectantly, clearly waiting for something, though Spock is unsure what. He just cocks his head to the side in a silent question.

“What the hell was that about?” She whispers to him moving closer after rolling her eyes at him dramatically.

“I am not sure as to what you are referring.” That earns him a long-suffering sigh that Nyota tends to only give him when she thought he was being purposely obtuse.

“With the captain just now,” she says, keeping her voice down.

“He simply invited me to lunch with Leonard and himself,” Spock answers truthfully so he’s unsure why he was given an eye roll this time around.

“Yes, I heard that I was more referring to the fact that Kirk was clearly flirting with you,” Uhura’s voice getting slightly more incredulous as she realized her friend seriously missed that fact. Spock’s shock must have shown on his face because Nyota’s expression gets somewhat more sympathetic.

“I… I believe you must have been mistaken. You are as aware as I am that the Captain is already romantically involved.” He struggles to keep the hurt out of his voice.

“Yes, well based on whatever the hell I just heard you may not be as out of luck as we thought, in fact, this may have gotten a whole less complicated.” Spock was having an incredibly difficult time tracking where this conversation was going, much to his growing frustration. Luckily, Nyota seems to notice this and begins to clarify. “Well, Kirk invited you to lunch with him and McCoy, he said they’d both love to have you. It sounded a whole lot like he wasn’t just flirting with you for him, it sounded like he was coming on to you for both of them, which means you may not have to choose between them, I know that was the other problem.”

“Do humans regularly participate in relationships between more than two people? I have never encountered this,” Spock asks trying to keep the hope out of his voice.

“It’s not extremely common, and it used to be pretty taboo, but nowadays it’s nothing people get to hung up about. I’m not surprised Kirk or McCoy would be interested in you joining. Honestly, I sorta suspected it. At the very least Kirk is a handful enough to need two partners,” Nyota lets out a small laugh at that as she says it. Spock just raises an eyebrow, and she soberes up. “But really, I think this may be a date, Spock.” Spock feels panic rise in his chest as that thought sets in. “No, no, no, don’t panic.”

“I am not panicking Nyota, panic is a human emotion.” The look Nyota gives him makes it clear she isn’t buying it.

“Oh Spock, I’m not an idiot.”

“I would never insinuate that Nyota, I am fully aware of your level of intelligence.”

“Then don’t lie to me, it’s okay to be nervous Spock, I’d be more concerned if you weren’t.” Spock takes a deep breath and forces the tension out of his body.

“I should not be feeling this way, it is illogical, but I cannot push the feeling away.”
“Then don’t push it away. It will be fine, they want to spend time with you Spock, just be yourself.” Spock nods before turning back towards his station. Hopefully, Nyota is right, though he can’t quite understand how men like Jim and Leonard would find him suitable.

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