# The Idiot's Guide to Family Bonding

**by** [Misscar](http://archiveofourown.org/users/Misscar)

**Summary**

Alternate title: The idiot's guide to surviving your significant others’ family without severe psychological damage or getting arrested.

They say that you cannot pick your family. Jim calls bulls#@t on that.

**Notes**
Proofread by UrsulaR
Rated M for dysfunctional family drama, mental illness, mentions of past sexual abuse and torture, bigotry, language, and sexual content.

Yes, there’s going to be sex in this but nothing really graphic right now. However, this story is not porn without plot. It’s probably going to be like 98% plot. There was a slightly graphic sex scene in this chapter but I cut it because I didn't like it and it wasn't necessary for plot reasons. In other words plot comes first.

Romantic relationships: Jim/Spock/Nyota (and every combination thereof) with background Bones/Carol and past Pike/Number one.

However, the romantic relationships really take a backseat in this one for the familial relationships. I’m not even going to try to list all of those otherwise we might be here all week. However, the big ones are Jim & Winona, Spock & Sarek, Nyota & her mother Admiral Oddoye, Nyota & Aunt Sarah, and Jim & Number One (who goes by the name, Admiral Nhi Pike in the story). Also, you may suggest family members you want to see the Triad interact with.

I know I said I would start in May, but I got distracted by Captain America and Agents of Shield. My new couples (Tony/Steve and May/Coulson) are just so shiny and fun to play with. But Jim, Spock, and Nyota will always have a big part of my heart.

Also I had my own family drama. My mom had surgery in April and I had to help take care of her for a while. Things like writing took a backseat for most of April. Her recovery is going well now.

Then work was slightly insane for a while, but by the time this chapter is posted things will be getting back to normal. However, since I broke my own rule and I’m now doing five stories simultaneously, updates are going to be a little slow until I finish one of my other stories. I just couldn’t wait any longer to start on this.

See the end of the work for more notes.
Winona Kirk

Your family are the only people on earth that can hurt you without actually trying. Despite that, you still love your family, even if you don't always understand why.

Chapter 2 The Idiot's Guide to Family Bonding, revised third edition

"I don’t think this qualifies as ‘light sexual activity’." Spock told his lovers as regular brain function started to return 4.2 minutes after orgasm occurred. The fact he used a contraction proves his mind has not completely returned to normal parameters.

Once they arrived at the desert resort 14 hours earlier, most of their activities have been confined to the bed. There have been a few breaks for sustenance (and some sleep), but that so far has only involved room service and eating in bed. Actually, it may be more accurate to characterize it as eating off of each other in bed. He can still taste the combination of Nyota and strawberry jam on his mouth.

"You know I just have to show off my awesome blow job skills." James winked at him. His lover’s lips were still red and swollen from his earlier activities.

"I think we’re good. You two are the ones who just got the real aerobic workout. My heart rate is still in the Bones approved happy zone. Although give me another half an hour and I’m perfectly willing to go outside those parameters." At this moment, James pulled Spock into a kiss. Spock is not bothered by the fact that he can taste himself on James lips. Actually, he finds it arousing.

"As much as I really enjoy watching this, visiting hours for Winona start at noon and it is already 11 AM now. We all need to shower." Nyota placed a final kiss to his shoulder before getting up from the bed, completely nude. You could see bite marks and bruising along her breasts and thighs from their earlier activities.

"We should do that together to save water." James said, breaking from the kiss, only to admire Nyota’s naked form.

"I do not believe such a practice would conserve water." Spock told his lover dryly. James just started kissing him once more.

"If we want to get out of here anytime soon, it’s going to have to be separate showers. Also ice water may need to be involved. Can you two stop making out for like 5 minutes?" She said slightly annoyed.

"Oh please, you’re enjoying this. This is getting you wet all over again." James said dragging her back down onto the bed. His mouth quickly descended on hers.

"We don’t have to go right at noon." James said breathlessly after several minutes of kissing between the 3. "We don’t even have to go today. We are not even supposed to return to San Francisco before next Friday. I deserve a mental health sex day. I’m completely making up for a very celibate couple of months." James pouted.

"The main purpose of our visit to the desert is to visit your mother." Spock pulled away reluctantly. "It would be remiss if we do not do so at the first opportune time." What was left unsaid was Spock would give anything for just a few more minutes with Amanda. Internally, he berates himself for all those breaks where he didn’t bother to come home.
"Actually, our main purpose is to hide away from the paparazzi until people are not talking about X’s grand scheme to take over Starfleet. The second purpose is to have vast quantities of very very good, albeit ‘light’ sex. Somebody’s up for a hand job already." James hand makes his way to Spock’s penis, which is rapidly losing its flaccid state. "Have I mentioned how much I love the fact that you are like always ready?"

"Hands to yourself lover boy." Nyota batted James hands away from his genitals. "I think we have left the realm of ‘light sex’ sometime last night and you need a rest break. If we stay here that’s not going to happen, as evidenced by the make out session on the way to the shower, and the fact that you’re already trying to molest Spock again."

"I still haven’t been fucked yet." James pouted.

"And that’s not going to happen until you visit your mother." Nyota told him with a firm glare as she pushed James up from the bed.

"First, never combine sex with anything related to my mom. It’s just too weird. Second, Spock’s the one who decides that."

"But that’s why strap-ons were created." Nyota smirked.

"The no sex threat isn’t going to work. We just went weeks without se--wait, seriously? You’re actually up for that?" James asked once his mind completely caught up to the conversation at hand.

"Yes, but now you know what you’re missing, including some choice items from my toy collection. I can just fuck Spock in front of you instead, so this doesn’t hurt me." Nyota said with a smile that can only be categorized as devious in nature.

"You’re a very cruel woman." James frowned. "I love you so much because of that. What bag did you pack the toys in?"

"You should have never mentioned the sexual aids." Spock told her in a whisper.

"I think you’re right." She responded directly to him before turning her attention back to James. "I get that you don’t want to see your mom. I understand. You’re not the only one in this relationship with extremely complicated family dynamics. We are all aware; my father is a complete and utter dick. I’m not even sure I could be in the same—"

"I don’t think any of us could take being around your dad right now." James finished for her. "I don’t think you guys are ready for Winona, I know I’m not." That last part was mumbled under breath.

"But it’s different with your mom. She hasn’t said anything horrible about…" James cut her off with a finger to her lips.

"That’s because she can’t." James sighed, sitting down on the bed again. "My mother is physically and psychologically not capable of-- I don’t think I’ve ever told you how bad things are with Winona. It’s-- she’s not really there. She hasn’t been there since the planet we don’t speak of. It was —" Spock placed an arm around James at that point and pulled his lover closer to him. Nyota wraps herself around Jim’s other side.

"You don’t have to tell us." Nyota stroked his cheek.

"Yes I do." He told Spock and Nyota with shaky breath. Spock can actually feel James trembling in his arms.
"I’m just starting to accept that this is not just a weekend romp nor do I want it to be. Whatever this thing is between us is more than just a 'sex filled weekend' thing or an 'until we get back on the ship' thing. This is something I want to last for fore-- a while at least." Spock notices the last minute word change. It was obvious that James wanted to say forever, but could not bring himself to do so.

"We talked before about me telling you big things. This is one of those things. The way I see my mom is divided into 2 parts; before and after Tarsus. Supposedly, there’s a 3rd version of Winona that existed before George died, but I never knew that woman. I don’t think I knew a happy version of my mother, a really happy version of her. Even before the planet of the fucked, she was a sad person and now it's so much worse. I think my father’s death destroyed her ability to be happy because I’ve seen these video files of her and dad. They were so wonderful together. " There was a single tear rolling down James' cheek.

"There’s this one from when mom broke the news that they were to have me. Dad puts his hands on her stomach and there’s just the brightest smile ever on her face. I’ve never seen that smile in real life. Like I said earlier, I don’t know that person. Step-dad number 1 beat all the remaining happiness out of her and step-dad…” James is unable to finish his thought and Spock presses his lips to his boyfriend’s temple.

"I am s…” Spock started to say, but was cut off mid-word.

"Don’t apologize for things you can’t control." James gave him half a smile. "Besides, I thought you believed apologies were illogical."

"Apologies are not illogical if they help you make peace with what happened." Spock replied, with a gentle kiss to James lips.

"There is no making peace with this." James intertwined his fingers with Spock’s. "It’s just something that I have to deal with. My mom is sick. If it is a good day she will ask me about how classes are going and if Dean from Calculus finally asked me out. If it’s a bad day…” James took a deep breath, but didn’t continue.

"You don’t have to tell us." Nyota squeezed him in support.

"Yes I do. This is not going to be a normal ‘meet the parents’ sort of thing. My mom is- my mom. On the really bad days she thinks I’m my father. One time she tried to kiss me. Another time she threw a glass that me. Then Winona proceeded to yell at me about how I left her or rather George left her to raise Jimmy, or rather me all by herself and how much she hated it. She said she wished she died in that shuttle so she didn’t have to be alone with me." Spock could see a lone tear slide down James' cheek.

"Not everything is always that bad. They are good days too where she lives in her own reality where Tarsus didn’t happen and her bastard third husband didn’t sell her out." Spock traced the tear with a finger.

"What are the good days like?" Nyota asked as she placed a gentle kiss to James' shoulder.

"On the good days we play board games and I make up some story about what I did in classes that day. She still thinks I’m in high school."

"She still thinks you’re in high school?" Nyota asked, slightly shocked and James shook his head in agreement.

"Unfortunately, there are more bad days with Winona and even the good days are kind of bad. I
always leave drained, but after I visit on the bad days I get completely wasted and complain about it to Chris for hours. But Chris is dead now and I have to tell her that the guy responsible for sending her to the closest thing this world has to hell essentially signed his death warrant." More tears came at that point.

It has been two days since they were informed that the admiral James refers to only as X orchestrated the events that led to "John Harrison's" attack on the admiralty and everything else that followed. James has yet to talk about this. He blames himself for what happened because he did not push harder to have Admiral X removed after Tarsus.

"When she finds out, it's going to be a bad day and maybe I'd just rather put that off for as long as I can. Blow jobs and hand jobs are much better way to spend the day." James joked.

"We don't have to go today." Nyota gave James a gentle kiss to his mouth.

"You don't have to go." James pulled away from her touch. "But I have to. I am the only one. Sam doesn't care at all. He has been running away from everything since I was ten. Even before then, he's been selfish. My mom is not his responsibility. He doesn't even see her as his mom." Jim said sadly.

"You are not going alone." His girlfriend practically growls.

"As we stated earlier, we will be accompanying you." Spock squeezed James' hand again.

"Think of this as a mission. We are going to get out of this bed, shower, and get dressed. Then we are going to stop at that crazy little store that you love so much that sells replica games and pick up some stuff we can play with her on the way to the rehab center. Then we will grab lunch and take it. You can save the Chris stuff for afterwards." Nyota suggested.

"What is your mother's preference for lunch?" Spock asked.

"Her favorites, that she can eat without utensils anyway, are pizza and fried chicken. For the sake of the vegetarian, we should go with pizza." James smiled halfheartedly.

"I'll place an order after I get out of the shower." Nyota said, getting up from the bed once more.

"I still lobby for a group shower." James smirked.

"I would be amenable to such a suggestion this afternoon once we return." Spock told his boyfriend.

"You are bribing me with shower sex?" James asked incredulously.

"We've come to the conclusion that you work better with positive reinforcement." Nyota blew him a kiss from the bathroom door.

"Okay, this is why I love you guys."

Xxxx

Armed with pizza and a 21st-century monopoly replica, James and his partners walked into Winona's rehab center. Most of the staff didn't even look at him. It was better that way because he didn't want to deal with their pity. They always gave him their pity; either that or they praised him for actually showing up. A lot of people in this place are pretty much forgotten by their family.

He spoke with his mom's therapist and other doctors for a few minutes before going into her room.
She’d had an episode the day of the Vengeance incident. She was watching one of her favorite TV shows as a live stream and the news of the incident preempted the normal telecast.

She broke the vid screen and did four thousand credits worth of property damage. Jim is not even sure Winona was aware that he was involved in the incident. He’s told her about Enterprise and the fact that he is the youngest Captain in Starfleet history few times, but she just goes back to her delusion that he is in high school. In recent years, Jim has discovered it’s just best to play along. Maybe the scene reminded her too much of any multitude of things including what George did. The only thing he really knows is that the entire incident will take a decent chunk out of the trust account for his mother’s care.

But that was weeks ago and she appears to be doing better (most likely because they changed her medication), especially when Nhi visited her 3 weeks ago. She already knows about Chris although not about the connection to the man responsible for her current state. The good news is she didn’t break anything. She just cried a lot and kept petting Admiral Number One’s stomach according to her regular nurse. Nhi forgot to mention that when he called her to let her know that they were going to be hiding in the desert until things calm down in San Francisco. At least that is one less bad thing he needs to tell her about. (He has decided that he’s never going to tell her about dying. She is not well enough to ever know about that.)

He walks into the room to see her painting. Painting was one of the things that made her happy or at least less sad. His mom always said that if she didn’t join Starfleet she would be an artist when he was a little boy. In Winona’s happy reality she left Starfleet to become a painter years before the Tarsus fiasco.

When Winona was standing at her easel painting landscapes of the desert, it was a good day. Actually, any time she mostly uses pastels or watercolors, it was a good day. The oils only come out during the worst of it.

"Hi mom," Jim kissed her cheek "I like the painting."

"No hugging, I'm covered with paint. I didn’t think you would be home from school yet." Now that he had a deep space assignment and would not be around as much, his mother decided that he’d received a scholarship to a really prestigious off planet boarding school.

"I didn’t like it, so I came back early. I’m staying with the Pikes again." He told her as she washed her hands. In this happy reality, the Pikes are his foster parents. His mom realizes that she’s sick and not able to take care of him. It’s just-- okay, Jim cannot explain his mom’s reality. It is what it is.

"You don’t have to lie to me. Nhi told me about Christopher." Jim’s face fell. He was kind of hoping that he would not have to talk about that. His mom completely forgets that he’s an adult, yet she remembers that Chris is dead. How is that fair?

"I’m so sorry baby. I know he’s the closest thing you’ve ever had to a good father." She actually pulled him into a hug and Jim honestly felt like crying. Spending time with Winona always did this to him.

"I’m so proud of you for coming back to help her with the baby. You didn’t have to."

"I wanted to, mom." He said pulling out of the hug.

"Did Nhi bring you here? She promised me a scan of the baby." Most of the time, Chris or Nhi accompanied him on these visits. At least the ones that have occurred in the last four years after Winona was moved to the desert.
"Hey, I’m old enough to drive now." James said slightly annoyed.

"I forgot." Winona told him sadly.

"It’s okay. The first scan is next week." Jim actually hopes that they’ll be able to return to San Francisco in time for that. There’s nothing he can do to bring back baby Pike’s daddy. But Jim is going to try to be the best pseudo-father figure possible. He owes that to Chris’s memory. "I promise to bring a copy next time I’m here."

"Okay, but I really don’t want you to come up alone again. It’s such a long drive and you barely have your driver’s license. Then again you have been driving since you were 10."

"I’m fine. I came up with friends." Jim said motioning for his boyfriend and girlfriend to come into the room. Earlier, Jim told the two to wait until he gave the signal to come into the room. He wanted to make sure it was somewhat good day before bringing them into the room. It would just be bad if Ny and Spock ended up covered in oil paint.

"This is Nyota and Spock."

"Jim mentioned both of you in his letters." She said, extending her hand to Nyota after giving Spock the culturally appropriate greeting.

"It’s nice to meet you, Ms…" Nyota stopped there. It was obvious to Jim that she had no idea which last name to use. He feels like an idiot for forgetting to mention that earlier.

"It’s Kirk again. I decided that I wanted to have the same last name as my son after divorce number 2." Okay, so this is definitely one of the better realities.

"I didn’t want to assume. My mom went back to her maiden name after the divorce." Nyota explained.

"Mom hates her maiden name."

"Anyway, it’s really nice to meet you, Ms. Kirk. Jim talks about you a lot."

"I’m sure he did considering he brought you to visit his mom in the psych ward." Okay, definitely one of the better days. It’s always easier on Jim when his mom realizes she’s sick and in the rehab center and not living her normal life in Iowa.

"My own brother was institutionalized for a period of time when I was a child. There is nothing wrong in seeking help for mental issues." Jim’s mouth almost opened in shock when Spock said that. He never talks about his deceased half-brother. Jim only learned about his existence in the first place by sneaking into certain personnel files that he probably shouldn’t have.

"Hey, we brought pizza and monopoly." Jim said, trying to get things to safer ground. "Spock and I will set things up in the community room. You can show Nyota where that is after she helps you put up your painting supplies."

Okay, so he may have instructed Nyota in standard sign language or SSL to keep an eye on his mom at this point. Jim discovered way back when he was treasurer of the Academy’s linguistics club that they both knew how to speak the language. Jim learned on the planet of the damned because of his friend Olivia and kept up his skills as a tribute to his murdered friend. Nyota learned because one of her stepbrother’s is hearing impaired and she wanted to speak his language instead of being dependent on translator applications like everyone else. However, because it’s more common for people to get implants, SSL is starting to become a rarely used language.
"You brought pizza again. I thought we talked about your junk food problem last time."

"Actually, you told Chris..." Jim stops before he can finish the sentence.

"You know what I feel like pizza. You did at least bring a salad?" His mother asked. She’s always trying to get him to eat more vegetables. She reminds him of Bones in that way.

"Yes." Spock said as he and Jim left the room.

Lunch went surprisingly well, all things considered. Okay, Spock completely kicked his ass at Monopoly, because apparently Amanda used to play this game with him as a child to teach him economics.

He fell in love a little bit more with both because of the way they were able to interact with Winona. They never gave her that look of pity, which is something that so often happens. That’s probably one of the reasons why he’s never brought anybody else here, not even Bones. He’s not ready for anybody else to know about this. Afterwards, she showed Spock some of her paintings and he was actually able to talk art with her. Later they talked about Nyota growing up in Australia. So all in all it was a good visit.

At this point, Spock and Nyota went back to the car to give him a few minutes alone with Winona.

"I’m going to be planet side for a while. At least until Baby Pike is born." Jim told her as he placed a kiss on her cheek. "I promise to come by more often."

"I expect you to bring your girlfriend again." Jim’s mouth opened in shock at that. "Jimmy bear, you never bring people to visit me. She must be important to you. Why else would you bring her?"

"Because I wanted you to meet some of my friends?" Jim replied flippantly. "I brought Spock too."

"That’s true. For a while there I thought he was your boyfriend but then I saw you kiss Nyota on the mouth. Actually, I saw you grab his hand -- You’re dating both of them?" His mother asked. Despite what’s going on she actually picked up on that. Seriously, how obvious are his feelings for Spock and Nyota?

"Yes."

"Just please tell me they know about it?" She actually sounded exasperated.

"Actually, they were dating each other first. They brought me into the relationship later, but I love both of them very much." Jim told her honestly. Of course to keep this from becoming a bad day, he left out the fact that by Vulcan standards he and Spock are more than engaged, but less than married. He was expecting the classic Winona disappointment look but he never got it.

"Are you happy?" Winona asked instead.

"Yes. You’re not going to say I’m too young to fall in love? Or that I should just choose one?"

"No, baby. Sometimes I think you’re older than I think you are." Jim couldn’t help but frown at that. "I’m not your grandmother. It’s your life and you have to live it your way." She kissed him on the cheek one more time.

"Remember that I love you baby, no matter what." Winona pulled away.

"Love you too, mom." He said almost on the verge of tears, but he tried to hold it together. Jim
actually manages to make it to the vehicle before breaking down.

"I believe there is an establishment that serves alcohol 3.2 km away that is also on our drive back to the hotel." Spock said as Jim slid into the seat next to him still crying. Nyota quickly grabbed his left hand while Spock grabbed his right.

"That’s a good idea. I need alcohol." He can still only have a shot or two, but he needed it right now.

"We figured. It was still a good visit, though?" His girlfriend asked.

"She realized that I’m dating both of you. She’s cool with it."

"She did?" Nyota asked aloud, but Spock was raising an eyebrow, anyway.

"She assumed that I would only bring a girlfriend or boyfriend to meet her. Apparently, she realized I was dating both of you by the goodbye kisses, even if only one was human style." Nyota laughed at that.

"Thank you both for coming with me. It’s always so hard after these visits and I’m just glad I didn’t have to do that alone." Just their presence right now was making his tears subside.

"Even if you are not involved in a sexual relationship with myself and Nyota, we would have still accompanied you." Spock brings Jim’s fingers to his lips.

"Before the sex, we were your friends." Nyota leaned over the backseat to kiss him softly. "We will always be here for you, no matter what." For the first time in his life, Jim actually believed somebody when they said that. It was a good feeling.

To be continued.
The difference between a sperm donor and a father

Chapter Summary

Sometimes for one to build a future, one must contend with the ghosts of the past.
Chapter 5 of The Idiot's Guide to Family Bonding, revised third edition

Chapter Notes

Thank you to everybody who read or review the last chapter. I'm sorry for the long wait between updates. I had to take my computer into the shop on June 23, but I didn’t find out until July 12 that the computer was not repairable and my insurance was giving me a new one (just in time to proofread this chapter).

Thankfully, Docs to go now has a version for iPhone and that voice rec works much better than the voice rec on my old backup computer. However, writing letter chapters is easier than doing dialogue on the iPhone (You’re getting both in this chapter). I was planning for the section to end up a little later in the story, but it works now and it makes sense to write about all of Jim’s parents at the same time. Besides, I can always do another letter to Jim's favorite father figure later.

Also a quick note, Jim will be remembering a couple of moments from his childhood that at first glance appear to conflict with canon, but it’s more a case of Winona trying to give Jim a better childhood through lying. It’s sort of similar to what Winona did in my story Wonderful.

Dear George:

I really don't know how to begin this letter. It was my therapist's idea. Dr. Caraballo got it from a colleague of hers. She says sometimes it's helpful to write letters to people who are no longer with us. I don't know if it will work, but it doesn't hurt to try. She's actually one of the better therapist that I've worked with. Too bad she can't work with mom.

Let's see, I'm 26 years old and a Starfleet captain. Let's not even discuss how I ended up being the youngest captain in Starfleet history. I still think that it was politically motivated because who gives a 25-year-old Starfleet's flagship even if he and his partner prevented Earth from becoming a black hole. If it wasn't for my first officer, all of us would have died multiple times during the last year. Actually, in my case, it wasn't a near thing and...

And this is why I think this is a horrible idea. I don't know how to write to a man who doesn't know who I am. It feels like I should start at the beginning because you have no idea who I am let alone
who I have become due to recent catastrophic events.

To be fair, I don’t know anything about you either. The only personal information I’ve learned about you came from stories that mom told me and anecdotes from Chris. The only times I’ve seen you have been in archive footage. I’ve been told I look like you, but it doesn’t mean anything. You kind of look like one of my favorite superheroes, which makes sense, because that’s essentially what you are to me. You’re some abstract big damn hero that I’ve never met in real life, yet looked up to at the same time. You’re about as real to me as a comic book character.

I’m worried that Baby Pike is going to feel the same way about Chris (he was taken out a couple of months ago in X’s Starfleet coup d’état). It isn’t fair just like it’s not fair to you. It’s even worse with Chris because according to mom at least you got to see me one time before your heroic sacrifice...

Xxxxx

At that point, Jim tears the sheet of paper out of the notebook and tosses it onto the bed. Seriously, what was Dr. Caraballo thinking when she decided to give him therapy homework to work through his daddy issues before having to deal with his boyfriend’s daddy issues?

Sarek and his special friend (most likely Spock's new future step mom) were arriving in two days’ time for the dedication of the Battle of Vulcan memorial at Starfleet.

The dedication was supposed to happen earlier, but there was the Vengeance Incident and a starship in the middle of downtown San Francisco to contend with. Actually, they're still dealing with that, but Starfleet needs a nice shiny diplomatic distraction to keep people from asking about X and his conspiracy to kill off most of Starfleet's top brass.

"Hey, why are you so frustrated? What did that notebook do to you?" Nyota kisses him gently before sitting down next to him on the bedroom couch. She was sitting more on his lap than the couch which was more than fine with him. If only she was wearing one of those should be illegal Starfleet dress uniforms instead of the more practical instructor’s uniform, he thought. She did look really good in the black outfit with its' formfitting top. Apparently, the people who design Starfleet uniforms are perverts.

"You're wearing pants." He pouted. Jim didn't want to tell her the real reason for his frustration. He wanted to keep things light now that they had returned to San Francisco after hiding in the desert from the paparazzi.

"Because my former work colleague called me a slut on intergalactic media and I work with horny
adolescents." Thankfully, the woman didn't explain why she called her a pervert on intergalactic media, so most of their private life was still private. It would have been more than bad for all involved if Spock's dad found out about the relationship from the media. It would've been disastrous.

"Hey, I could always come down to class to get them to act like actual Starfleet cadets," he told her with another quick kiss as he rested his hands on her hip.

"Like you when you were at the Academy?" Nyota raised a most Spock like eyebrow at him. "How many of your fellow classmates did you sleep with?"

"A lot less than everyone thinks I did. If I fucked as many people as everyone assumes I did back then, I would have never made it to class. Let alone score the highest grades in our class." He joked.

"That's very true."

"You're not the only one who has people saying bad things about your personal life. Just because I have a dick, it's seen as a badge of honor, but I don’t look at it that way." Jim does not like his slut reputation even if sometimes he pretends otherwise. The incident with Carol made him realize that it can undermine his authority if nothing else.

"Honestly, I just want to make things easier for you. Besides, it’s not like there's a lot for me to do right now, at least not until..." Jim doesn't want to say 'there's nothing for me to really work on until after the investigation is completed', but he doesn't want to think about the X situation at all.

"Out of the blue and in the middle of today's baby checkup doctor’s appointment, our fearless leader tried to convince me to teach some classes next semester." She also asked him to take several classes at the Academy next semester. The majority of them are the advance command classes that he would've taken if he hadn't been thrown into the deep end of being a captain straight out of the Academy. He didn't like the idea of being the only person in the room that was already a captain. It made him feel like he was still getting that punishment that they wanted to give him after the Volcano Incident.

"Sitting in on your classes will help me decide if I'm willing to actually do it or if I should take ‘Being a Captain 101’ with the rest of the future captains."

"You mean the classes you should have taken before assuming command of Enterprise, but didn't because the idiots that be decided to toss you into the deep end instead?" She asked a little too
"You don't have to say it like that." He said not looking at her.

"You do know it's not that unusual for a captain that gains the rank due to a field promotion to take the required advance command classes a year or even two after taking command. That's what happened to my mom." Nyota reassures him. Jim tries not to show his surprise that she knows him well enough to realize exactly what he was thinking.

"She said it worked out better because unlike everyone else in her class, she actually had enough experience to call out her professor when they suggested doing something that wouldn't actually work on a real starship." She told him with a smirk. There has to be some truth to that considering 80% of the things that he saw during his first year were never mentioned at the Academy such as the lizard girl incident.

"Well, if your mom went through it that way, then I guess that means I'm not a complete loser." Jim joked with a shrug.

"You're not a complete loser." Nyota said kissing him on the cheek. "Hey, at least you weren't banished to the bedroom because our mutual boyfriend was afraid I would burn the place down. Spock is still freaking out about his dad arriving tomorrow." Jim frowned at her words.

"I thought we had two days before the invasion of the Vulcans?" He asked slightly worried.

“So did Spock up until an hour and a half ago. He just received an email from his father’s assistant stating that the ambassador would be arriving 24 hours earlier than planned and now he's being extra 'Spock'." Nyota grimaced at him.

"He's making his favorite vegan cookies right now isn't he?" Jim sighed. He wasn't exactly happy about finding out they had even less time to prepare for meeting his--father-in-law? He wasn’t exactly sure how that worked.

"Probably, but you know he won't let me check the oven or actually be in the kitchen right now. I was just told to check on you. Spock said he heard a lot of cursing in here." Stupid Vulcan hearing. She wasn't even joking about that. He's been extra frustrated for the last hour.
"That would be my last six attempts at therapy homework.” He tells her reluctantly gesturing to the wads of paper scattered across the bed and floor. “Dr. Caraballo thought it would be a good idea for me to write a letter to my deceased father, because I may be panicking just a little bit about the Sarek thing. The curled up ball of old-school paper currently sitting in the middle of our bed was attempt number 12."

"Okay, somebody hates therapy homework." She said looking at the bed.

"It is not that I hate this, it's just I don't know what to say to George. I've never met the man. I have no idea who he is except for what I've heard from other people. I don't know what he would think about me joining Starfleet or having a boyfriend and girlfriend or anything like that." Jim explanation results in him getting another kiss of the “I hope we have time for this before dinner” variety.

"So you're upset because you don't know how your father would've reacted to the three of us being together?” she asked as she pulled away from his lips.

"That maybe a part of it. I mean my mom was surprisingly cool with us, but like I said I don't know the man and I can't ask Winona. I mean, I could ask Chris— he stops himself when he realizes he used the wrong tense. “I mean, I could have asked Chris, but he's not exactly available anymore.”

“It's okay to miss him.” Nyota quickly wrapped an arm around Jim.

“I know it’s just…” He doesn’t say anything else because he doesn’t know how to explain how he feels about Chris being gone.

“What is the other reason why you’re upset?” Nyota pulled herself closer to him.

“I don't know, I can't even explain. It's just I don't know these last couple of weeks I've been reflecting more on the fact that I don't have a father and that I never had one. I can't relate to the fact that you and your father haven't spoken to each other since he was a complete dick to you. I can't understand Spock being nervous over his father's visit. I never had that.” Nyota responded by kissing his temple.

“It's okay. Would you be okay if I read what you wrote? Nyota asked gently as she untangled herself from him. “Maybe I can help.”
“It couldn’t hurt.” At his words, she quickly walks over to the bed and he follows behind her. It was much easier for the two to lay together on the bed anyway.

“I think I know what this is really about.” Nyota told him as she finally looked up from the page after several minutes of reading. “How did the visual scan of Baby Pike go?” Okay, that question was definitely a non sequitur.

“Baby Pike is adorable in all her 3-D glory even though she’s essentially a blob right now. I also managed to get through the appointment without punching Christine or having her make a pass at me.” He sighed. He wasn’t looking forward to spending quality time with his former stalker of an ex-girlfriend (and he uses that term loosely). Jim just hoped her new medication kept working.

“That is always a positive.” Nyota said sardonically.

“What does baby Pike have to do with my crumpled up letters?”

“Just like you, Baby Pike is going to be growing up without a dad and maybe that is bringing up a lot of emotions that you’ve never dealt with before.” His response was to open his mouth in shock. She already knew him too well.

“I'm not--okay—you know what, I think I'm going to help Spock.” Jim said getting up from their bed. She quickly pulled him back down to her.

“Not so fast. I think you're doing this assignment all wrong.”

“I'm supposed to be writing a letter to my father.” He told her with another annoyed sigh.

“But you're writing to the wrong father.”

“I'm not even going to try to write a letter to the stepdads. That would just be a lot of cursing.” As well as tears.

“Chris. I'm talking about Chris.” Nyota sounded a bit annoyed at that moment. “Christopher Pike was the closest thing you've ever had to a father. Even Winona called him your good dad more than
“I hate it when she’s having a lucid day -- I mean I hate that her lucid day gave you lots of dirt on me. I kind of like the fact that the new medication is starting to give me my mom back.” He was almost wistful in that moment.

“What I’m saying is true.”

“Maybe,” Jim confessed reluctantly.

“Look, dinner will be probably ready in 20 minutes if Spock starts to calm down. I’m going to go set the table and maybe make a salad if he’ll let me. In the meantime, write a letter to Chris.” She grazes his lips gently as she got up from the bed.

“Please tell me it’s going to be a bag salad?” He was only half joking with that question.

“Hey I’m getting better,” he just gives her the look. “At cutting vegetables anyway.”

“Yes, you only stabbed that piece of zucchini three times.”

“You’re evil. If you stay in here and write Chris this letter, I will demonstrate one of my better skill sets after dinner.” She says quickly kissing him one more time before leaving.

“No, you are.” Jim mumbled to himself before grabbing the notebook again.

xxxxxxx

Dear Chris:

Thanks to certain recent events, such as the fact you are no longer among the living and Adm. X arranged for it to happen, I’m now in Starfleet mandated therapy. Okay, I am mostly in therapy because I died, but unlike you I got better. Okay, there’s probably a lot of reasons why am in therapy. I’m pretty sure even mom being institutionalized is on that particular top 10 list.

I visited her last week when we were hiding from the paparazzi after I found out your death was part of a coup d’état designed to give control of Starfleet to X. Winona was lucid enough to realize that
you're dead, but not lucid enough to remember that I am a 26-year-old Starfleet captain. I guess I should be happy for the little things. She also figured out that I’m dating two people at the same time, but she’s okay with it.

So you were completely right about the Spock and Nyota thing, I just wish you were alive to tell me I told you so.

Dr. Caraballo thinks I have daddy issues because my girlfriend's father is a dick that keeps sending me inappropriate and slightly threatening emails which I don’t tell her about. And maybe I’m as freaked out as my boyfriend is about his dad’s upcoming visit during which he will have to tell him that we are Vulcan engaged. I’m not sure how to act around the ambassador because…

Dr. Caraballo may be onto something. Her idea to help me deal with my daddy issues is for me to write a letter to my father, a dead man whom I've never met. Unsurprisingly, the task has been anything but productive. Actually, it has produced a lot of balls of crumbled paper.

Since you’re dead and you can't tell anybody, I can tell you this - I don't really think of George as my dad, but as a guy who contributed the other half of my DNA. He didn't raise me. He never held me. He may have died for me, but I'm not sure if that’s enough to earn him the dad title. However, recent events make me feel really guilty about feeling that way because of Baby Pike.

So, if I wasn't a complete dick, off getting drunk instead of dealing with my problems like a big boy, you would have been with your wife celebrating the news that you were going to be an actual father. Instead, I fucked up and you became a victim of X's scheme to take out most of the top brass so he could take over Marcus's job. So you are a dad and never got to know and now I feel bad because if I feel this way regarding George then maybe Baby Pike is going to feel the same way about you. You don’t deserve that. You were a good dad to me and…

The truth of the matter is I consider you more my father then I ever did George. You saved my ass so many times. If it wasn't for you, I probably would be dead by now. One day I would have picked the wrong fight or took the wrong drug. It wouldn't even had to be drugs, a veggie burger can kill me. You made me realize I'm more than a fuck up, so I think you deserve the dad title.

I really wish you were around for me to talk to you about my fear of the future in-laws. My boyfriend's father is an ambassador and the last time we met his son was trying to choke me and not in an erotic way. I kind a need your help to keep me from putting my foot in my mouth. I need you to save me from my in-laws. This is going to be a disaster of intergalactic incident proportions.

Except you're not here anymore because the last time you tried to save me it was a trap. So now baby
Pike gets to grow up without you just like I grew up without George and—fuck!

Today was the baby’s first visual scan. She is adorable even if she looks like a lemon size blob. I am not just using the female pronoun to be politically correct. You’re having a little girl, but Nhi and Christine want to be surprised. However, I just had to look. I think I can keep a secret for the next five months.

It's just that you should've been there to kiss Nhi's stomach and hug her tight as you guys share the good news. You should be here to pick out baby booties and talk about birthing methods. Instead, it's me and Christine taking that role. We both know that just has disaster written all over it.

The good news is your niece is taking her medication and isn't trying to sleep with me. The bad news is I can't be around her without remembering the handcuff incident. Can you imagine us trying to be Lamaze coaches together? To be honest, I doubt that will happen because we keep arguing about which method is better. We're going to kill each other before Baby Pike even gets here.

Yes, I could leave all this to Christine. She is Nhi’s blood and she has a legitimate reason to be there, but in a weird way so do I. You were the closest thing I've ever had to a real father and because of that... You're gone and it sucks that you're gone and I hate that you're gone but I can't change that, but I remember how much it sucked to not have a dad and I don't want Baby Pike to deal with that. So I can't give Baby Pike her dad back, but I can try to be the next best thing. You did that for me. You were the father I need it, so I feel like I need to be the same thing to Baby Pike.

If anything good came from your death, it was that I realized I couldn't be a kid anymore. Let's be honest, I was never really a kid. My childhood was just that fucked up, but maybe I have been living in a state of arrested development. It's like the moment I didn't have to be responsible, I acted like a teenager. Except, I still have responsibilities, everyone under my command is my responsibility. It took me a while to get that. I can't fuck around anymore. I'm 26. I'm a Starfleet Captain. Fuck, I'm practically married. Shit, how did that happen? I can't be that fuck up that you found in that bar. I can't be who everyone thinks I should be. I have to be a fucking grown-up now. I just wish I’d figured that out before...

You're the person who taught me how to be a grown-up and I hope I can be the type of father figure that you were to me for Baby Pike. I'm not sure it's entirely possible because you were a great dad to me, but I'm going to try.

Anyway, I miss you and wish you were here. Seriously how does one get along with his in-laws? Especially when one is an ambassador who could kill you with his pinky and has the diplomatic immunity to get away with it and the other one is a hypocritical asshole?
"You do not need to be afraid of my father. Also, I doubt Sarek has any intention of killing you with his pinky or any other appendage." Spock said as soon as Jim laid his pen down on the notebook.

"You're afraid of your father, so why shouldn't I be?" Jim said pulling Spock down to him.

"I am not..." Jim shut up his boyfriend by putting his mouth on top of his. Spock's lips and tongue taste of tomatoes, basil and fresh mozzarella. Dinner is going to be very yummy.

"Seriously, did you just read over my shoulder?" Jim asked breathlessly as he ended the kiss. "That's very rude."

"I was curious to see what activity had you so engrossed that you did not notice my presence. Apparently, you are writing a letter to the deceased. Although I do not entirely understand why you are doing this activity, I do believe that you will make an excellent pseudo-father figure for Christopher Pike's daughter." Spock intertwined their fingers together as he pressed his lips to Jim's neck.

"My 'brilliant' doctor decided that I needed to write a letter to my dad to work through some of my issues. The activity actually started to be productive once I realized that I see Chris as my dad instead... It doesn't matter. I'm all done now and looking forward to our final evening together before your father arrives. I also want to see if dinner only tastes this good because it has Spock taste mixed into it." Jim said kissing Spock again. He wanted to get in as much of this as possible before the pseudo father-in-law arrived and they would have to be good.

"Did his assistant finally tell you how long he is staying?" Jim really wanted to know how long the sex deprivation was going to last.

"Most likely for a period of 3 to 4 weeks. It depends on his schedule." Spock gave Jim his own version of a frown as he spoke.

"Wonderful." Jim practically groaned the words. He was just getting used to regular sex again.

"From your tone I infer that you do not find the situation positive."
"You're getting really good at interpreting human sarcasm. Just tell me we are not going to have to stay in separate bedrooms or pretend we're not together so as not to offend your father’s Vulcan sensibilities. We just started having sex, I really would hate to have to stop for a month." Jim did not mean to say that last part out loud, but it just slipped. With Spock as a boyfriend, he's starting to lose his ability to filter.

"It would be pointless to lie when the true nature of our relationship will be obvious." Spock’s mouth moved to his at that moment. He really did love Spock kissing.

"Please tell me that whatever you made for dinner will hold until I can make you cum?" Jim asked huskily as he started to fumble with Spock's zipper. Sex would be really good right now. Unfortunately, his hand was moved away.

"Mozzarella and squash bake, which I know you prefer to eat hot. We will engage in sexual intercourse afterwards." Spock said getting up from the bed.

"I guess I should get used to blue balls." Jim mumbled to himself.

"You also have the premade turkey meatballs that you can add to your own dish." Jim loved the fact that his boyfriend enabled his meat eating habits even though he didn't like it. Jim doubted that his almost father-in-law would be as accommodating.

"Is this the last time I'm going to get to eat meat at home until your dad leaves?" Jim asked with a groan.

"Unless you count oral sex, yes." Spock’s deadpan delivery would have had Jim laughing under other circumstances.

"Wait, you're actually going to have sex with us when your father is in the apartment?" Jim asked incredulously.

"I do not understand why you would assume we would not engage in such activities. This is our house."

"And this is why I love you." Jim told his boyfriend as he pulled him down for a kiss. Nyota came in five minutes later to hurry her boyfriends along and ended up joining in the pre-dinner sex.
Thankfully, the casserole could be re-heated just fine.

Xxx

To be continued
Before she met Spock, Nyota was usually the calm one in her relationships. The logical one. Then she started dating Spock and she became the passionate one by outward comparison if nothing else. Now Jim has taken that role in their triad because of the three of them his reaction to any situation is more likely to be driven by emotions.

However, tonight that seems to be going out the window. Spock seemed nervous (actually downright terrified) even more so than Jim who was currently going through his wardrobe for something that would not offend his almost father-in-law. The contents of his closet was currently lying on their bed. She understands because she's nervous as well, but she wasn't binge baking or having a panic attack about what to wear. She was impeccably dressed and well put together unlike her partners. She had no choice but to keep her fears internalized because somebody had to be the put together one and she was the only option at this point.

Unlike Jim, she has met Spock's father before even though she wasn't sure she would be meeting the same man this time. Their first introduction wasn't exactly under the best circumstances (dead wife and destroyed planet). They'd lived together last summer for a few weeks, but the man was a zombie. It was like he wasn't there, but just going through the motions of existing. They didn't speak much. He occasionally would ask her about her interests in various things, but in general their conversations were shallow, never hitting on anything of any true importance.

During those weeks, he never once asked her what her intentions were with Spock. For all Nyota knew, he just considered what she had with Spock to be some sort of fling before he returned to Vulcan (or rather the new colony) and married his real wife or husband or whatever and Sarek wasn't going to concern himself with someone who would never end up as his daughter-in-law. Despite the fact that she doesn't believe in marriage if that was the case, it would still piss her off. It was one
thing for her to not want to be married, but it's another thing for someone else to tell her she wasn't good enough to marry their son.

She is a little worried that daddy dearest will freak out (by Vulcan standards) when he finds out he's getting a human in-law even if it's not her -- it is her but not really -- not only—okay, she completely understood why Jim was tearing through his closet. The meet the parent’s dinner was always something to freak out about.

In a weird way, this would be her first one as well. They were presenting this new relationship to Sarek and she hoped he would take this well. Polyandry was considered normal or rather more normal by Vulcan standards unlike in human society. It is highly unlikely he would say the same nasty things that her father said to her. He probably wouldn't call Spock a freak or tell him that his girlfriend was bringing in another person to their relationship because he can't satisfy her sexual needs. He definitely would not make the closet case remark since Jim is a guy. (She had to admit that her response of ‘It would be hypocritical if I cared about Spock being bi since I've fucked girls before’ was probably not the best thing to say, but he pissed her off.) Maybe she wasn’t outwardly terrified because in her mind it was impossible for Sarek to react as badly as her father.

However, Spock was taking to a new level. He had cleaned the house six times in three days. Spock had also completely purged the kitchen of all meat products. Everything! No turkey sausage, no turkey bacon. Nothing! He even took her hard salami away. At least, he left the dairy. If Spock took away her cheese, he would be sleeping on the couch for the next month. Spock also went to six stores to find just the right blend of tea. And she didn’t even want to think about how much baking Spock has done. They have enough specialty cookies to last at least two months.

Spock has ironed his Vulcan robes six times, six times. And he did it the old-fashioned way by hand. She didn't believe anyone still knew how to do that. He only changed robes twice, although, that's probably because he currently has just two sets. He ordered four more, but the clothing will not arrive until the day after Sarek’s visit due to the fact that Sarek showed up early.

All this was the reason why she had to step into the role of the logical one and keep things calm.

“Enough! Jim, you're going to wear the black pants and cream shirt with the shoes I bought you last week.” She finally said after the ninth time he changed outfits.

“Spock, if you even think about changing out of those robes again, you will not be getting a blowjob for the next month.”

“Despite Spock’s earlier assertions that we will still be having sex during daddy's visit, I'm not
convinced.” Jim quipped as he started to follow Nyota’s instructions. “So the blowjob threat may not work.”

“That incentive is always conducive for me performing as requested.” Spock said in the most Vulcan way possible.

“That’s good to know.” Jim smirked.

“Look, we just have to get through this. We’ve dealt with worse, like Klingons. The only thing we have to deal with today is telling Sarek about us.” As she spoke, she realized that Spock now looked more nervous than before. “When are you planning to tell your father about us?” She asked wondering if he was going to try to get out of this. She remembers all too well what happened last time.

“I have not decided.” Jim frowned at his response.

“But you will actually tell him or are you planning on having your father figure it out when we arrive home and we all go into the same bedroom?” The fact that Spock did not answer made her worry that this was his actual plan. She could see him doing that. He hates dealing with emotional responses and therefore avoids them whenever possible by not doing anything that could trigger such a response.

“You're not doing that again.” She said with a touch of anger in her voice. “I can forgive you for what happened last time because of the circumstances, but you’re not doing that again. Unlike you, I already told my father...”

“You did not tell your father about our relationship.” Spock retorted, cutting her off midsentence. “Your father was told about our relationship by a malicious coworker who was participating in a terrorist plot to allow a certain individual control of Starfleet. Therefore, you cannot criticize me for not directly telling my father...”

“It doesn't matter that I never spoke the words myself, he still knows.” Nyota said in her own defense.

“No fighting.” Jim interrupted becoming the calm and rational one. “Or at least tell me why you guys are fighting. Remember, I'm the new guy to this relationship, so I don't know all the history. Can somebody enlighten me?”
“I just remembered that I shouldn't be surprised that Spock has been delaying the last couple of months to tell his father about your bonding because Spock never actually told his father that he and I were dating. Sarek found out we were together when he found me in the kitchen the first night wearing just Spock's T-shirt.” She crossed her arms.

“The reason why my father discovered our relationship that way was because we were ordered not to speak publicly about our relationship until after graduation. Due to unfortunate circumstances, I was unable to tell my father the true nature of our relationship until...” At that point, Jim placed a finger on Spock’s lips.

“Okay. No yelling or screaming at each other. There were extenuating circumstances all around.” Jim pointed out. “Also, this time around we are still being encourage by Starfleet to stay as deep in the closet as possible, at least until the media stops freaking out about the great X conspiracy. Regardless, we need to present a united front and us bickering like this is not a united front.”

Jim was right about that. They couldn’t bicker or fight. They needed to act like the perfect couple. It would be harder for Sarek to undermine their relationship if he saw nothing to criticize.

“James’ point is logical.” Of course, Spock raises an eyebrow at this.

“Hey, I can be logical, sometimes. I really can. Actually, do I need to be extra logical around your father?” Jim asked after a moment.

“I do not believe that is necessary. It is best that you be yourself.” Jim pouted in mock offense.

“I think a certain Vulcan should take his own advice.” Nyota grabbed his lapel. “You hate wearing Vulcan robes. I think the only time you wear something like this involves a diplomatic function or a visit from your father.”

“This visit is probably going to be uncomfortable no matter what. You should at least be dressed comfortably or at least sexy.” Jim mumbled under his breath.

“Did you not just threatened me with a lack of oral sex if I were to change one more time?” Spock raised an eyebrow at her. Seriously, why does he play dumb sometimes?
“I will make an exception just this once.” She kissed him on the cheek to emphasize that she was not that mad at him anymore.

Despite the last minute change, they did make it to the spaceport on time.

Xxxxxx

‘I really do need to take the advanced Diplomacy for Dummies class.’ Jim thought to himself as he tried really, really hard not to order a third glass of wine. This dinner somehow managed to make it into his top 10 most uncomfortable dinners ever. This is saying something considering his mom lives in her own fantasy world.

The crazy thing was that it wasn't his sort of father-in-law who was driving him to drink, but rather his stuck up condescending companion, Princess T'Van. (She may not be a real princess, but she certainly acts like one.)

Spock's dad has been nice, nothing but nice, which was slightly shocking considering some of the things Spock said about past family encounters like being practically disowned. More shocking was the fact Sarek said he was perfectly okay with Jim ordering a steak. Spock raised two eyebrows at that and dropped his fork. That was like the Vulcan equivalent of fainting. Apparently, Spock really wasn't expecting that. Then again, after losing your wife and your planet, maybe you stop being a complete asshole and start to appreciate things more. The Vulcan seemed less judgmental than he was expecting.

The whole relationship confession thing happened on the car ride to the restaurant. It really wasn't much of a confession because the ambassador already knew. He said that he had already reached that conclusion because media reports had the threesome together a week earlier at a desert establishment known for being a romantic retreat. Starfleet may have altered the records to show two rooms being booked, but the Vulcan was too smart to fall for that. (Okay, Jim is convinced that his special Vulcan therapist may have said too much. However, since the guy was serving more as a friend than actual therapist, he couldn't be that upset.)

Sarek seemed genuinely happy that Spock had a bond mate. Nor was he upset by the fact the individual was human. He didn't even blink when he heard Spock still had a girlfriend. Even more amazing, he said that Amanda would have been proud of Spock and would find Jim as well as Nyota fascinating.

This wasn't at all what Jim had been expecting. Okay, he was actually prepared for Spock's dad to be like Nyota’s father. Now that was a troubling situation. Jim was still receiving irate messages from the man:
Just because I have been out of Starfleet for many years does not mean I am completely unaware of your reputation. I know you merely see my daughter as a means to get off. She is nothing more than a cheap fuck toy for you. The fact that you would use your position to manipulate her into participating in such an unhealthy and unnatural relationship between you and your First Officer is disgusting. It is a disgrace to the uniform and a disgrace to Starfleet. I served with your father. He would be so disappointed in you.

The only thing you can do to mitigate this distasteful situation is to leave and take your other lover with you.

Honestly, this was one of the nicer letters that the man has sent Jim. He’d actually filed multiple complaints against him alleging that Jim abused his position as her captain to force Nyota into a ‘relationship’. Thankfully, Bones testified that it was Nyota who decided to pursue a relationship with him. Because of that, her father couldn’t do a thing to him. (He has deliberately kept Nyota in the dark about this. She thinks that X was the only one challenging him. It would be best if she doesn’t know the full extent of what is going on.)

After that wonderful experience with her father, Jim was braced for more of the same treatment. This niceness by Vulcan standards anyway was unexpected. Although, the Vulcan is a diplomat, so maybe it was all show. Jim knew firsthand how good Vulcans were at keeping their true emotions to themselves.

However, Princess T’Van was making it quite obvious that some Vulcans are very good at letting you know how much they hate you. The Princess was the ambassador’s ‘companion’. Jim likes to think of her as the Vulcan equivalent of a trophy wife. She was much closer in age to Spock than the ambassador. She was only 15 years older than Spock. T’Van had been fortunate enough to be away on a business trip when Vulcan imploded.

Jim would love to say that she was smart and witty, but she came off like a condescending bitch, looking down on everything. The main reasons why Jim refers to her as the Princess are because of her ridiculous demands on the wait staff and her constant glaring at everyone and everything that does not meet her impossible standards. She glared when Spock told his father about their relationship status. She glared when they went to a restaurant that served animal products. She really glared when Jim order his steak, despite being given permission to by her partner. Actually, that glare was aimed solely at Sarek.

It really just went downhill from there. She was furious by Vulcan standards when she was informed of four dishes on the menu that she couldn't order due to the fact that Jim couldn't even be at the same table when someone consumes soy. (It's so unfair that thanks to the magical mystery blood he can have strawberries again, but his soy allergy is now 10 times more dangerous.)
It was very apparent that the Princess hated being forced to interact with humans. (This was extremely troubling considering she was Vulcan engaged to an ambassador.) She acted like Jim and Nyota were beneath her notice. She did not once engage in a conversation with either individual during this 87 minutes and counting dinner. Jim is pretty sure she purposely spoke only in Vulcan in an effort to exclude the two. She was noticeably upset when it became apparent they both spoke the language almost fluently.

She was further displeased to find out that Jim could follow the conversation regardless of the subject matter including Vulcan philosophy, perhaps especially Vulcan philosophy. Other Spock had been having him study up on it as a means to help with some of his issues. He'd even been learning Vulcan meditation techniques. Jim was currently employing those techniques so as not to punch the woman (or order more alcohol). Okay, he was definitely signing up for the advance diplomacy class.

At minute 93, the dinner finally ended. When they were home at last and safely alone in their bedroom, Spock asked for Jim’s opinion on his future step mother. Jim just smiled and said she seemed ‘very Vulcan’. The three then proceeded to have not loud, but enthusiastic sex. Really, that was the only redeeming part of the evening.

Xxxx

Breakfast the next morning was another exercise in political diplomacy. At least six times he had to repeat the phrase ‘I cannot attack my future mother-in-law especially because she is very well-connected’. She was irritated over the lack of her preferred breakfast food. Apparently, oatmeal was too pedestrian for her. Again, T’Van essentially refused to talk to Jim or Nyota. Jim wondered if anybody picked up on this rudeness/obvious prejudice.

After an overly quiet breakfast, Jim was left to entertain the Vulcan. Nyota had classes again and Spock was spending the day with his father. Actually, Spock was assigned to be his Starfleet liaison for the dedication. It was basically his job to stay by his father side. Jim sees this as punishment for something stupid that Spock has done, he’s just not sure what that was at this point. When Jim called to complain about that, instead of getting to finish off his vacation days, he was assigned to play Federation tour guide for future evil stepmom. (There is no doubt in his mind that she’s going to be evil because he’s had a lot of experience with evil stepparents).

“I have been informed that I am to be your escort for the day.” Jim said looking down at his PADD. “According to your itinerary, we have an 11:30 tour of the Intergalactic Institute of Peace.” Jim was not looking forward to that visit. At least Nyota’s father is at the Pretoria offices and not the San Francisco branch. Although, Jim is certain that the man has friends there who will make Jim’s visit absolutely fucking miserable.

“I need no escort. I do not wish to spend time in your company.” T’Van replied coldly.

“That’s obvious.” Jim mumbled under breath. “I wanted to spend my day off catching up on all the
movies I missed during my year in space.” Actually, Jim wanted to make up for the months without sex, but with Nyota and Spock elsewhere that wasn't going to happen regardless. “It looks like neither of us is getting what we want.”

“What I want is not to be forced to interact with people like you. You are beneath me.” This woman was just too annoying.

“People like me? Is it my humanness that offends your delicate sensibilities or the fact I didn't grow up entitled like you, looking down on anybody who is different?”

Jim grew up poor because he was raised by a single mother on a Starfleet salary which supported them and her second husband who drank or snorted half of their money. Jim had money now, though. He received it from the Tarsus/Starfleet defense fund to make up for the fact his mom lived in her own little world. He was currently worth 2.7 million credits. (Okay, the amount may have something to do with the fact that he was really good at investing and wanted to make sure that his mom would be taken care of no matter what. The original settlement was only half a million credits and he hadn’t even received that until his first year at the Academy. The litigation took forever.) There’s a good chance that Jim may be wealthier than the individual in front of him. However, Jim didn’t like talking about that money. He didn’t even use it, except to take care of Winona. He has yet to even tell Spock or Nyota about it.

“I refuse to dignify that with an answer.” She replied dismissively.

“Look, I really don't care if you hate me.” He already felt that way about her. “It's impossible for me to care any less about that. However, I'm bonded to your future step son, so I suggest that you get over yourself and learn to be civil. With San Francisco traffic, we need to leave in 30 minutes.” Jim said getting up from the table.

“Sarek may believe his son’s lies, but I do not. It is not possible for the Vulcan mind to form a bond with a brain of such inferior quality. It will be easy to break.” She said nonplussed.

“Break?” Did this mean that Sarek was just acting nice but planning to destroy their relationship in other ways.

“Someone like Spock, even with his disadvantages, should not be with somebody of inferior quality. Especially one who must involve a third-party just to provide children.” It's a good thing that Nyota is not here because she might punch the woman on principle alone for basically insinuating she was just a uterus for hire.
“Spock has never been good at doing what people expect him to do especially when they mention his ‘disadvantages’. That's how the Vulcan Academy lost him.” Jim smirked at her. “Why do you care? You already have your new political trophy spouse, well, as soon as you can convince him to put a ring on it. I have learned from personal experience that widows have a tendency to end up in the worst rebound marriages ever, so I’m sure it’s just a matter of time .”

“For the sake of healthy offspring, it would be more prudent to go with someone who is younger.” T’Van replied cryptically.

“What does that mean?” He had a feeling he knew what she meant, but Jim wanted clarification. He wanted to be absolutely sure of what she was saying.

“That I always get what I want and I want the best spouse possible. Your alleged bonding is of little consequence to me.” T’Van said walking away. Before she even exited the premises, Jim had his communicator in hand.

“We have a tiny problem.” He blurted out as soon as Nyota answered the comm. “Remember that we were concerned that Sarek would try to force Spock to trade up to a proper Vulcan spouse?”

“He didn't say something like that to you?” Nyota asked worriedly.

“No, but his future bondmate just insinuated that she was looking forward to trading up to the younger hybrid model, despite the disadvantage of his human DNA.”

To be continued.
Part four: Understanding Sarek

Chapter Notes

Thank you to everybody who read or review the last chapter. I got a ton of feedback and apparently we all hate Spock's future possible maybe stepmother with a fiery passion. I love it when you love to hate one of my original characters. Also I need to apologize for the long wait between updates. I've been focusing on trying to finish my story Tony Stark Is Not a Relationship Expert and that meant doing lots of back to back chapters. However, that story is now done which means more time to work on this.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

At 29 years of age, Spock is willing to admit that he does not understand his father. He never has. Sometimes he assumes that he is a tough Vulcan that reflects the values of his generation perfectly. Other times Spock sees him as an individual who loved his wife and misses her greatly.

Sometimes Spock believes that he is a great disappointment to his father because he can never live up to his standards, standards that Spock is not always aware of. Other times he believes that maybe his father not only respects his choices, but may be actually be proud of him. Those moments are rare, but seem to be happening more often in the last year.

For so long this relationship has been distant because of his lack of understanding. Not just lack of understanding on Spock’s part, but on Sarek’s part as well. He did not know how to speak with the Vulcan, always afraid of disappointing the man. Which was why, until recently, communication was very limited with Amanda as their intermediary.

Now they no longer have the luxury of avoiding each other. Since the fall of Vulcan, many of his previous assumptions about his father have proven to be false and he has been forced to re-examine things. Maybe the loss of Amanda as a buffer has forced Spock to interact with the Vulcan on a completely different level than he did in the past. Maybe the absence of Amanda meant that his father could no longer depend on her to provide Spock with emotional support and is therefore taking on a different role in the relationship. Maybe after witnessing the destruction of Vulcan and losing Amanda made the Vulcan realize that their earlier squabbles were illogical and purposeless.

In the last year they have tried to build a rapport with one another. They had no choice. Just like with his counterpart, there were too few Vulcans left in the universe to avoid each other.

They were forced to live with each other during those first few weeks after the battle of Vulcan.
Being forced in such close quarters caused the two to actually talk to each other for the first time in many years. Mostly they shared stories about Amanda and discussed the type of work Spock would be doing once he arrived on the colony. Looking back on it now, he wondered if his father knew that he would never actually come to the colony, that his life belongs on Enterprise. Spock was uncertain.

After Spock choose to rejoin Enterprise and his father left to help establish the new colony they stayed in contact, much to Spock surprise. Spock found it was much easier to deal with each other in emails and other such correspondence then in person. There was a certain amount of distance in their electronic correspondence.

They talked about missions and the process of rebuilding so much that he never talked about his growing feelings for James or his apprehension in proposing to Nyota. Spock could not bring himself to relate the events of February in a letter or videoconference. Disclosing his own near-death experience to his father was impossible. Discussing what happened to James was just as difficult. Spock realized he and his father did not have the type of relationship where they could easily share things with each other.

The truth was that he was afraid to share such personal things with his father because he was worried about disappointing the Vulcan. He did not want to acknowledge having an emotional response to James’ death, to the point where he completely lost control. No, that was something he would not discuss with his father. He felt the Vulcan would judge him severely lacking for such an emotional response.

Spock believed that his father expected him to be the perfect personification of Vulcan culture and behavior. Sometime along the way Spock convinced himself that if he filtered the type of information he shared with his father, it would be easier to meet his expectations. Now he resents the fact that this has become his major coping strategy to deal with his father.

The problem with such a strategy was that the illusion would be broken when they interacted in person. He was afraid the illusion of stability and understanding that has developed in the relationship over the last year would come undone once they were forced to interact in person. In person he could see the slight look of disappointment in his father’s eyes that is unavailable through the written word.

Spock would be the first to admit that he overcompensated. There was no logical explanation for filling the house with Vulcan foods or other paraphernalia. Spending a vast amount of money on Vulcan attire that he would only wear during his father’s visit was superfluous despite the fact he could afford it. The purging of the house of all Animal products except for cheese was wasteful. Despite the fact that such actions were unnecessary, he did them anyway.

What he feared would happen when his father arrived did not. He appreciated the gesture of securing
Vulcan food, but felt it was unnecessary. Apparently he had several favorite food items that could only be found on Earth. Spock was quite partial to Oreos and Doritos. His father himself wore what can only be described as human business attire when not participating in official functions. His father is even in possession of sweatpants.

The majority of his father’s visit this last week has been pleasant (and the only unpleasantness had nothing to do with his father’s behavior, only his choice of companionship). There were no condescending remarks about Spock’s career choice or decision to not follow the traditional path. No criticisms of Spock’s decision to stay in Starfleet, by his father anyway.

Maybe his father was now more supportive of the path he chose because Spock is alive because of it. Maybe Sarek was less critical in regards to Spock’s life choices because there was no longer a traditional path to take, at least not the one that existed when Spock was younger. The Vulcan Science Academy is currently in tatters. The remaining people of that age are more concerned with rebuilding society then obtaining a Master’s education. Those who actually see education as a priority were attending mostly earth institutions. MIT has seen a vast increase in Vulcan enrollment.

Spock was expecting his very first dinner with his father and his partners to be disastrous. He was expecting to be criticized for his choice of partners. Unlike on earth at least, polyandry is somewhat normal in Vulcan society, especially right now with low population levels and the need for as much genetic diversity as possible. But somewhere in Spock’s mind he believed his father still expected him to find a real Vulcan wife eventually for the sake of repopulation if nothing else. He expected the fact that he was bonded to a human man to be a point of contention, something to be criticized.

Yet no condemnation came at all, from his father anyway. There were no cutting remarks or allusions that he should take a proper Vulcan spouse. He was expecting to hear the same platitudes he heard as a child. Yet none of this came from his father. (He received several unpleasant looks from his father’s companion, but that is an issue that will be addressed later in this reflective narrative)

He should have expected this. His father was pleasant to Nyota the summer before. His only concern about their relationship was the fact he was technically dating a student at the Academy when he was a professor and if that would be detrimental to his career. The fact that his father was worried about his career at all was shocking. Similarly this time his father’s only concern about James was if dating his Captain would affect Spock’s Starfleet career. Apparently he heard rumors about certain recent events in addition to the fact that Nyota’s father has contacted him directly. Yet that did not influence his opinion of James in a negative way (his opinion of Nyota’s father was a completely different issue).

This proves that the fact Spock had human partners was a nonissue. The only time it was mentioned was a reminder that the human lifecycle was significantly shorter than that of the average Vulcan. At some point he would be left alone even if his partners live to 100 and his father worried about that.
Before Vulcan’s destruction he would see this as a sign of hypocrisy, but now he's willing to see it as a sign of genuine concern.

His father missed his mother greatly. He could see it last summer and he could see it now. Not in words, but in the way he traced her name with his fingers at the memorial. Despite the illogical nature of the gesture, he did bring a single rose to leave at the memorial for Amanda. Maybe his father’s concern was related to the fact he did not want Spock to suffer the same sadness.

Much to Spock’s surprise, he did get along with James and Nyota quite well. He found both quite engaging. Yes, his father had behaved well around Nyota the summer before, but Spock assumed that that was due in part to still being in a state of emotional shock. But that seems not to be the case. His father has spent time with both outside of Spock. Nyota accompanied the Vulcan to the opera and James to an exhibit on the history of starship engineering. Spock was pleased that everyone was getting along so well.

Things were going so well that when his father suggested that he would relocate to the Embassy to give his son more privacy, he said no. Spock found himself enjoying getting to know his father. This would have made his nervousness in the weeks and days leading up to his father’s visit superfluous in hindsight if it were not for one miniscule problem, his father's partner.

According to Nyota, it is perfectly normal to despise your step parents. Nyota has hardly said anything kind in nature about the mother of her half-brothers except for the fact that she gave Nyota her brothers that she loves greatly. So therefore his intense dislike for his father’s intended is understandable. This female Vulcan is not his mother; she will never be his mother. She has neither grace nor affection. Therefore it is logical for Spock to despise her.

He understands the biological necessity of his father replacing his mother at least physically if not emotionally. The drive to reproduce renders the Vulcan mind in a state of chaos that can only be sated by copulation. Therefore a new partner is necessary. On an intellectual level Spock understands this. But on a personal level he does not understand why his father must choose a new partner who is …

Despite his vast knowledge of Standard and several other languages, Spock is not able to fully articulate why T’Van is a less than suitable partner for Sarek. The Vulcan is abrasive and disrespectful as well as extremely narcissistic and has an exaggerated sense of self-importance. There’s an obvious reason why James refers to her as ‘Princess’ despite the fact that she has no Royal lineage.

She looks down on anything that is not Vulcan, especially Spock’s lovers. She has said many harsh things to James and Nyota over the past week when she assumed that no one else could hear her. Spock personally wanted to render her unconscious for saying such things.
Her general attitude is completely unsuitable for the life partner of an ambassador. The Vulcan is anything but diplomatic. She has said many insulting things about human culture whenever Spock’s father was absent. She seems completely condescending. This is a quality that is counterproductive for anybody who will be working in interplanetary diplomacy.

His mother was well suited for the role of the ambassador’s wife. Many times it was his mother who prepared the way for successful negotiations between Vulcan and another state. In addition to being a gifted negotiator, she was also a humanitarian, particularly in the area of preventing the sex trade and sentient trafficking. T’Van was none of these things.

Yet despite her shortcomings, his father was still planning to couple himself with such a Vulcan. Sarek never chastised T’Van for inappropriate behavior or her cutting remarks. The most he would ever do was remind her to use Standard when speaking and to be open to new ideas.

For the sake of being cordial and keeping the tentative peace between himself and Sarek, he kept his extreme displeasure to himself. Maybe he was exaggerating T’Van’s shortcomings because he missed his own mother greatly. Therefore he kept silent for the last seven days. He would just make sure to not allow either of his lovers in the presence T’Van without supervision. Nor would he allow himself to be alone with the Vulcan. The way she looked at him made Spock very uncomfortable.

Of course at breakfast this morning he made the mistake of being alone with her. James had an early therapy appointment and Nyota was giving an exam that day which meant coming in early. Sarek chose to accompany both to their respective duties before arriving at the embassy himself.

The breakfast started pleasantly enough with Spock deciding to eat as quickly as possible and leave to spend the morning going over the proposed renovation plans for Enterprise. James was quite pleased they at least have blueprints to go over. Medical leave was not very relaxing for him.

Unfortunately, during the course of breakfast, T’Van touched Spock’s hand 13 times. At first he assumed that these touches were accidental. This erroneous assumption was triggered by the fact Spock is used to accidental contact after living in human society for nearly a decade. However, when she started projecting images of a sexual nature, he knew better.

"Do not touch me.” Spock said roughly as he pulled his hands away. “You are engaged to my father and I am bonded to James and with Nyota. Even if I found you pleasant, I would not be interested in you.”
"Your bonding with that human is laughable and not real. It is impossible to form a bond with such an inferior mind. You should be with someone of your station. I am willing to break my current arrangement for you despite your disadvantages." She tried to touch Spock’s fingers again, but Spock pulled away again. He found her utterly repugnant.

“That would not be you.” Spock said before leaving hastily.

He barely bothered putting on shoes and grabbing his PADD before exiting the premises. Thankfully, the wretched Vulcan did not follow behind. How delusional can one Vulcan be? To think that Spock would disrespect his father, let alone his lovers by engaging in such a behavior? Even if he found the Vulcan in question attractive, he would never do something to break those relationships. In this case it was a nonissue because he found her revolting.

After leaving, Spock picked up a replacement breakfast at a local café as well as something for James because Spock knows his boyfriend’s dietary habits too well. James has probably only consumed a doughnut by this point, if anything at all. Afterwards Spock goes to his office at Starfleet headquarters to wait for James.

They were finally relocated to a new office that did not hold such horrible memories during their time in the desert. As suspected the assignment to the former office of Admiral Pike was merely a head game to get James to resign. They never should have been assigned office space in the Admiral section to begin with, despite the renovations. After an hour James finally arrives and is grateful for the food. When James was eating a bagel Spock procured for him Spock told his bond mate of the morning’s events.

“Nyota owes me a blow job.” James said as he calmly took another bite of the bagel. Although James was usually extremely mellow, this was abnormal even for him.

"Why must Nyota perform fellatio on you?” Spock took another bite of his fruit.

"Oh God! I just love it when you say 'fellatio' and you are even eating a banana.” James then proceeds to lick cream cheese off with his fingers.

"James! We are at work." Spock chastised. “Explain!”

"We made a bet on when the pariah would finally make a move. Nyota was sure she would do it in front of us since Princess was stupid enough to make her claim on you on the first day and so directly
too. I assumed she would wait until the first time we were out of the house. So I’m sure you realize by now...” James stops speaking abruptly at Spock’s expression.

“That she is trying to engage in sexual relations with me? Yes, I am now aware. Why did you not inform me of this?” Despite his best efforts there was a hint of anger and Spock’s voice.

“I wasn’t entirely sure that you would actually believe me.” That went away the moment Spock saw James stricken expression.

“Why would I not believe you? I trust you implicitly.”

“I had a lot of trouble in the past with people not believing my side of the story. I always knew that stepdad number one was a bastard, but mom never believed me and that was just a nightmare. I had the same bad feeling about stepdad number two. But mom thought I was just reluctant because of what happened with stepdad number one and well my mom now lives in mental health rehab because her second husband sold us out for more rations.” Normally at work they tried to maintain a certain professional distance. However, he placed a gentle hand on James shoulder to show his support. If they were home, he may have been willing to try an entire embrace.

“Yes, but I will never be one of those individuals.” Spock reassured his boyfriend.

“I know that. And I really do trust you. That’s why we decided to go with the ‘giving Princess enough rope to hang herself’ method.”

“Explain?” He was familiar with the expression, but was not sure how it was applicable in this situation.

“So last week when I got left to do escort duties against my better judgment, T’Van insulted the human race and pretty much stated that she was only with your dad to get with you. Then T’Van said and I quote ‘That I always get what I want and I want the best spouse possible. Your alleged bonding is of little consequence to me.’” Spock found her assertion irritating. James did as well because he was shaking.

“She just said something similar this morning.”

"I'm not surprised." James laughed bitterly. "So after that I called Nyota. At first she thought I was
being a little paranoid, then Princess said something similar to her later that day. She felt that we should tell you right away but I was afraid of a repeat of the Frank incident.”

“You feared I would not believe you?” Spock frowned, by his standards anyway.

“Yes --no -- maybe --I don’t know. Maybe I was more worried about my future sort of kind of father-in-law hating me. I mean at that point it was my word against hers.” Spock could understand James’ apprehension, but it was purposeless.

“You said she did something similar with Nyota. That means there were two witnesses to her inappropriate behavior,” Spock pointed out.

“Okay, in that case it was your two perspective human spouses that he may not like against the word of his girlfriend. I still didn’t like those odds. Dr. Caraballo suggested we wait a little while to see if she made a move and she did and thankfully you ran out of the house screaming.”

“I did not run out of the house screaming.” Spock raised an eyebrow.

“No, you just got out of there so fast that I think you are wearing my boots." Spock looked down to see he was wearing James’ boots which were a size larger than Spock’s.

“All Starfleet regulation footwear looks alike." Spock said defensively.

“So you left me alone for the sole purpose of her…”

“No, the opposite actually. That’s why we haven’t been leaving you alone with Princess. This morning was coincidence. Dr. Caraballo had a last-minute meeting regarding the new management of Starfleet Medical and had to bump our session down to 8 AM. I couldn’t say no because if I’m going to have to spend quality time with your future almost stepmom, I need to vent.”

“So you hate my prospective stepmother?”

“You hate your prospective stepmother and not just because she’s not your mom.” James said poignantly.
“Possibly. I do not understand why my father is bonding with her. Although our population has been decimated, there are other options.”

“Like his right hand and a petri dish.” James mumbled under breath, but Spock heard him perfectly fine.

“What do I do?” Spock asked his boyfriend because he was uncertain of how to proceed.

“The only thing you can do is talk to your father. I mean he has to be more reasonable than my mom. He’s not completely stupid. He has to see that she’s just using him to…”

“Secure a younger spouse.” Spock supplies.

“Or rebuild her fortune. I mean, unlike my mom, it’s not like he’s blinded by love. I think he would see it eventually, especially if you pointed it out.” Spock was not so certain, at least not in the way that James inferred. He was blinded by love, just a different type of love for a different person who was no longer there.

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“James said that you owe him a blow job due to the fact that T’Van made a sexual advance towards me during this morning.” This is the reason why she should never ever take Spock’s calls on speaker mode.

“Well at least Jim is making you more willing to talk about sex and let me just say I’m so happy that I have my communicator automatically put your call on speaker mode.” She quipped as her cubicle mate Garcia just smirked.

“We already know you have two boyfriends. Lucky bitch.” Garcia said without any malice. Really the technically retired officer is the antithesis of she who was dragged off in handcuffs. She’s nice, sweet and accepts the differences of others.

Although she’s extremely annoyed about taking over a class this late in the semester. Marcie Garcia technically retired from Starfleet years ago, but between the scandal and casualties, Starfleet needed bodies. She was brought in temporarily to fill the gap. Garcia was definitely better at her job then her predecessor. Despite being nosy, she was less critical of Nyota which was a welcome change of pace.
from last time.

“I thought you said your new office mate was an improvement on the old one. Yet, she still calls you a derogatory term for women who are powerful and highly intelligent.”

“If that’s what he thinks that word means he is definitely a keeper.” Garcia smirked.

“She is better, when not listening in on private conversations.” Nyota said annoyed.

“Well, it’s not my fault you have it on speaker mode.” At that point she put on her headphones so that this conversation could be private.

“Okay headphones on now. So I’m guessing stepmom dearest made some sort of sexual overture?” That would explain why she owes Jim a blowjob. She was so sure she would be getting a full body massage.

"She tried to kiss me while projecting explicit imagery, by Vulcan standards anyway.” Spock told her annoyed.

“I assume that she tried to kiss you the Vulcan way.”

“Yes and I found it utterly repugnant.” She smiled when he said that.

“And this is why, unlike Jim, I wasn’t worried about the Princess.” Jim had a panic moment the first time he called. “Well at least not in regards to you. I am worried about your dad. Rebound relationships are dangerous.” If her dad wasn’t so emotionally vulnerable during her mom’s away missions, her childhood would had been a lot happier.

“Your first step mother?” Spock asked knowing her very well.

“Yes. She was a horrible awful human being. And yet my dad went straight for her even though she made me feel like a visitor in my own house. It was why I was happy to move to Melbourne.”
“But just like your dad, my dad was lonely and she took advantage of that. Because of this, I can understand why your father is susceptible. He didn’t just lose his wife, he lost his whole way of life. Friends, family, even general acquaintances are all gone and then to have to rebuild your entire life on a strange new planet, that makes you vulnerable. Then there’s this really pretty girl who is showing you attention and it makes things just a little bit easier. Of course your dad is going to fall for it. He may be Vulcan, but just like human males, he is still led around by his dick.”

“Some of that is medical necessity.” Spock interjected and she understood what he was talking about. Nyota feels bad for Sarek. His biology will not give him the real time he needs to deal with losing Amanda before moving on to the next relationship.

“I know. But that’s still no excuse for being engaged to that. They have nothing in common. Your father is an elder statesmen, a man of the galaxy who understands languages and cultures from all over the Federation and beyond. He’s a trained diplomat even though he can be harsh and overly direct sometimes. He does appreciate the finer aspects of human culture, though.”

“Such as Motown music and double stuffed Oreos.” Spock interjected.

“Never knock the double stuffed Oreo.” Nyota quipped. “But Princess wants nothing more than to be pampered and have everybody kiss her ass. You would just be a trophy husband for her.”

“But you’re not worried about me being tempted?”

“If this take a third option relationship didn’t work, maybe. However, you are already dating my only viable competition and he’s really good at…” She stopped there as she realized Garcia really isn’t paying attention to grading her papers anymore.

“Oral stimulation.” Spock supplies.

“I didn’t want to say that because my new office mates are still listening.”

“Honey, I am 72 and twice divorced. Your stories about you and your boyfriends are really the only thing I’m getting right now.” Garcia joked.

“What I’m trying to say is I’m not worried that you would be tempted by her, but…”
“James is, even though he said otherwise.” Spock said knowing Jim really well.

“More like he’s afraid of losing you.” Nyota supplied.

“Us.” Spock corrected. Sometimes she wasn’t entirely sure of that. Sometimes she heard her father’s voice in her head reminding her that this would all fall apart.

“Us, he’s afraid of losing us.” She amended even if a part of her was still apprehensive about her place in Jim’s heart. “I mean remember the visit to Winona a couple of weeks ago. Jim is used to people he cares about leaving him one way or the other.”

“I understand.”

“I’m not sure that you do.” Despite Amanda’s death Spock grew up in the most stable household of any of them.

“I understand. I am afraid of losing my father’s favor which is why…”

“You kept forgetting to tell him that you’re involved with humans.” She realized that despite having both parents, Spock’s relationship with his dad has always been complicated.

“I would not phrase it exactly like that especially in the light of the fact Sarek finds both you and James pleasing. The only thing he worried about is your shorter than Vulcan life expectancy.” Her reaction was to put her head down on her desk because Spock was being extra Spock right now. At that point Garcia in the cubicle next door switch the communicator back to speaker mode.

“Spock I don’t think we’ve met. I’m Lieutenant Commander Garcia. Technically I’m retired, but I get to keep the title now that I’m being forced to educate young minds again.” She joked.

“I have heard mostly positive things about you.” Spock said politely and, compared to the woman’s predecessor, most of it has been polite.
“That’s not hard considering my predecessor. So your father is engaged to a woman who is trying to sleep with you.” Garcia said bluntly, which was perfectly normal for the woman.

“I would not phrase it quite like that.”

“Yes, but in Vulcan terms which means she wants to marry him and only copulate when absolutely necessary. Premarital sex is a rare thing.” Nyota smirked as she raised her head from her desk.

“Thankfully your boyfriend goes by human standards. You’re too happy to not be getting orgasms.” She felt her cheeks become quite hot at those words.

“I’ve been in your father’s position.” Garcia continued. “After the second divorce, I was vulnerable and ended up with the first guy who paid me any attention. My children tried to warn me, but by the time I started to listen, my retirement fund was gone and I’m back here teaching undergrads at the Academy. Do you think they will reevaluate the active-duty retirement age in light of the recent mass casualties and mass dismissal?” Garcia really hates doing a desk job.

“More like they will put you in charge of the linguistics department, Garcia.” Nyota supplied.

“Dreadful.” She said with a disgusted face. “One can only spend so much time with freshman before you start to crave the excitement of being shot at by Klingons. What I am trying to say is talk to your father. You can’t keep this from him. He needs to know what the person he’s marrying is really like”

“What if he does not believe me? What if he hates me for intruding in his life?” Spock asked slightly worried.

“He may not believe you. Or maybe I should say he may not be ready to believe you, but when the moment is right, he will. And as a mom I can say it is impossible to hate you. You may be disappointed sometimes and you may be frustrated, you may even wish that they made completely different life choices, but it is impossible for you to hate your child.”

“Maybe for humans.” Nyota considers it a small victory for Spock not to say something along the lines of ‘Vulcans do not hate.’

“It is a universal truth.” Garcia smiled.
“Spock, you’re supposed to meet with your dad at the embassy for lunch, right?” She asked her boyfriend. She knew his schedule, but she also knew that Spock would try to reschedule something like this right now.

“Yes.”

“Talk to him then. At least tell him that you don’t like his fiancée even if you don’t tell her about the inappropriate touching.” Nyota implored her boyfriend.

“Agreed.” With that Spock ended the call and she had exactly 10 minutes to get to the next class to prepare for part two of the nightmare of finals. Only thing worse than giving out final exams was going to be grading. Of course on the bright side, grading the exams will give her a legitimate reason to miss dinner with Princess. She considers that one a wonderful silver lining.

The exams go okay. She only catches three people cheating. She lets them off with a reprimand because anything worse than that would just hurt her and really they are only hurting themselves by cheating. If they get themselves killed because they rather played beer Pong instead of studying, it’s their own fault. When she gets back to her office she finds a text message from Spock.

Spock: Discussion with father did not go as expected. He is relocating to the Embassy with T’Van

Within seconds she was already dialing a number she had memorized, “Spock what happened?”

To be continued

Chapter End Notes

I wanted to put all this family drama in one chapter but I’m trying to avoid chapters over 6000 words.
Chapter Summary

Misunderstandings within the family unit usually occur when you think you know everything about the situation, when in reality you know nothing. Again, communication is key.

Chapter six The Idiot's Guide to Family Bonding, revised third edition

Chapter Notes

Thank you to everybody who read or reviewed the last chapter. I apologize for the longer than desired break between updates. I’ve been busy with secret projects for a certain K/S event (lookout for goodies on December 23 and 24) and finishing up other stories. However, since my special projects are mostly done, I am now able to return to my normal rotation.

For those of you who were concerned with Sarek’s reaction I will tell you that things are not quite what they seem. However, don’t feel bad because Jim sees things exactly the way most of you do and he is pissed off.

Jim would be the first individual to admit that he doesn’t understand Vulcans. On good days, he may understand Spock, but Spock is Spock and even then the good days are few and far between. Which explains some of the more epic moments of miscommunication including that thing that almost got him sent back to the Academy.

So it’s understandable that he doesn’t understand why his almost sort of future father-in-law decided to take the side of that wretched, soul crushing, condescending bitch over his own flesh and blood. The only explanation he could come up with is sex and even that’s a bad one. No one’s oral skills are that good. Spock and Nyota comes close, but it’s still not quite worth it.

Spock is sulking and refuses to say anything more about what happened. What they know is this: Spock had lunch yesterday with his father. At that lunch, he told his father about his girlfriend’s inappropriate behavior in excruciating details that only a Vulcan could give. Sarek then said that he would take steps to rectify the issue and promptly told Spock that he was moving out of the apartment with the Princess, effective immediately. By immediately Jim means that by the time they got back to the apartment, all their possessions were gone and the guestroom was once again in pristine condition. Actually not quite pristine, there were now fresh flowers everywhere in the apartment.
Now Spock is sulking in a very Vulcan way. That means lots of meditation and no sex. Not even a blowjob. The situation is extremely dire when Spock is not in the mood for oral sex. Never a good sign. Okay and most of those fresh flowers have made their way to the recycler.

Jim knew that Spock was hurt. The Vulcan thought things were going good between father and son, at least better than normal considering their years of minimum communications with Amanda functioning as a filter. But then something happened yesterday to derail every bit of progress that has happened since Amanda’s death and he doesn’t know what happened. Nyota doesn’t know either. She knows exactly what Jim does. Actually Jim was sitting next to Spock when he explained the entire story to her. So really there was only one option, talking to Sarek and figuring out the other side of the story.

Jim was slightly shocked that they were able to get on the ambassador’s calendar so quickly. They had a 12 o’clock with the ambassador at the Embassy. So Spock thinks that Jim is having lunch with Nhi to get all the good dirt on Nyota’s Admiralty mom before her ship lands and she and Aunt Sarah descend upon San Francisco. (On the bright side, Sarek moving out means Aunt Sarah no longer has to stay in a hotel.)

At the same time Spock thinks Nyota is grading papers. That was not a complete lie. Because she really was grading papers the entire drive to the Embassy as well as cursing about students who don’t even bother to actually study or show up to class or even read the textbook. There also may have been something about if you are going to copy off of somebody, at least copy off of somebody who knows what the hell they’re talking about. Right now Jim is seriously wondering if she is going to be able to survive another two semesters at the Academy before Enterprise is back in space.

The reason why Spock believes that they are doing other things right now is they are purposely not telling Spock what they are doing. They may have been told explicitly not to talk to Spock’s father about what happened, but thanks to his own dysfunctional family issues, Jim knows better than to let things fester. Okay he knows better than to sit in a corner and not talk about it instead of actually trying to deal with the problem. Not talking about things usually involves things like the warp core fiasco. Besides Spock would never forgive himself if something happens to his dad and then the situation became unresolvable. So really they were doing Spock a favor even if a few doesn’t realize that yet.

The Vulcan Embassy is opulent. There are no other words for it. It is a stunning display of classical Vulcan architecture. Jim quietly wonders how many structures like this still exist in the galaxy. The colony is still in its infancy and they are focusing on practical buildings instead of grand examples of Vulcan architecture.

Once the two walked inside the embassy, they were quickly ushered by Sarek’s very human assistant to a conference room. Jim was slightly surprised to see tea and sandwiches waiting. Especially the sandwiches because sandwiches and finger food in general were not common in Vulcan cuisine.
Then again Doritos were present, so who really knows. Besides Jim is pretty sure he saw Sarek
eating something that suspiciously looked like a Canadian bacon free Egg McMuffin yesterday, with
his hands!

“So mozzarella and pesto or goat cheese and some sort of fruit spread?” He said grabbing a plate. If
he was going to have to deal with awkward family drama, he was going to have food. Food was
necessary.

“I will take the pesto and mozzarella and you can do Doritos. I’m not sure how you will handle pine
nuts and I’m not sure what that fruit spread is. I’m really don’t want to risk you going to the
hospital.” Okay so maybe his earlier assumptions about his future father-in-law were all completely
wrong and the guy really did want to kill him. You never know. Of course if this conversation went
really bad he could always take a bite of the sandwich and pray that it does cause a reaction bad
enough to end the meeting, but not bad enough to send him to the hospital or actually kill him.

“I apologize.” Sarek said as he walked into the room as if he owned the place, which in some ways
he did. Not only was he an ambassador, but he was also one of the chief members of the Vulcan
Council. He is a main leader of the Vulcan government especially during this time of rebuilding.
(Although according to Spock, there were a few on the Council not happy about that.)

“I was unaware that James had a sensitivity to pine nuts. These were a few of the options from the
commissary that contain no soy. I could have my assistant pick up something else outside the
building. Cheeseburgers seem to be safe for James.” The ambassador suggested with sincerity.

Good, his almost sort of father-in-law is not trying to poison him. That is always a bonus in Jim’s
mind. Especially considering that stepdad number 2 tried to a couple of times. He wanted Jim dead
on the planet of the damned just so he could get his rations. Even better Sarek was willing to feed
Jim meat.

“My allergies changed after receiving an experimental treatment for radiation poisoning so we have
no idea what will make me sick right now and I don’t want anaphylaxis to get in the way of our
discussion.” Yes Nyota and Spock carry an allergy hypo everywhere now, but he’s still not ready to
risk it at the moment. Maybe he should just give in and let Bones send him to an allergy specialist so
they can create a comprehensive list of everything that makes Jim break out in hives, but he’s a little
afraid to.

“However, the Doritos are perfectly safe.” Nyota gives Jim a bag before whispering, “I’ll get you a
burger on the way back to headquarters.”
“Of course.” The ambassador said grabbing the sandwich. Yes with his hands. The sandwiches were wrapped in paper and the ambassador never actually made direct hand contact with the food, but still. “What are we here to discuss?”

“You being a complete and utter asshole to your son.” However a year of being a Captain told him not to say this out loud. Also a year of being a Captain told him that it would be best to let Nyota do most of the talking. She was the more diplomatic of the two and less likely to put her foot in her mouth. In the situation she was definitely the cooler head of the two. Nyota had a much better grasp of Vulcan body language and doublespeak.

“Why did you choose T’Van over your own son?” Considering the fact that there was a shocked Vulcan sitting in front of him maybe he should have done the speaking. Although, his sentence probably would have started with several uses of the word fuck along with other inappropriate language.

“Is that what Spock told you? Is that what he believes? Did you speak to me at his request?” Jim could sense the stress in every one of his words especially during that last question.

“No.” Nyota responded quickly.

“Actually Spock doesn’t even know we’re here. And now he did not directly state that you choose your fiancé over him. It was just implied.” By the fact he refused to leave his meditation room last night.

“How?” The Vulcan questioned. Jim and Nyota just looked at each other for a moment figuring out how to explain this.

“Spock has been very withdrawn since he informed us that after you found out about T’Van’s inappropriate and hostile behavior…” Nyota started, but was obviously not sure how to politely phrase the rest of that sentence. Jim had no such qualms.

“Such as referring to us as human whores and trying to molest Spock Vulcan style.” Sarek looked slightly offended at that turn of phrase which was odd considering his normal impassable demeanor.

“Molest is not the word I would use. She just tried to kiss him in the Vulcan tradition.” Nyota clarified.
“As she sent him dirty thoughts.” Sarek actually started choking on a piece of his sandwich. However, the Vulcan was quickly able to rectify the situation. Until that moment Jim didn’t even know it was possible for Vulcans to choke. Spock had no gag reflex at all.

“Did you really need to tell him that?” Nyota mumbled under her breath. Jim just shrugged in response as he passed Sarek a glass of water.

“I was notified of her inappropriate behavior; however, I was not made aware of its severity.” He took a drink of water as he tried to return to his normally collected demeanor. “Regardless, I felt the best remedy was to remove her from your presence. She will be unable to insult you at the Embassy. Nor will she be able to continue her attempts to undermine your relationship with Spock.”

There was something about the way he said this that bothered Jim. Granted this is more than Jim’s mother ever did when he told her about what stepdad number two was doing to him. However this behavior showed that the Vulcan in front of him cared more about their well-being than his own. That was a dangerous mindset to have. His mom got like that too at some point. With stepdad number one she was perfectly fine with him leaving her black and blue, but did not make a move to leave until she witnessed firsthand Jim being equally victimized.

“I don’t care about that and I doubt that Spock does either. Our relationship is solid and some stuck up Vulcan Princess who is trying to trade up is not going to destroy us. We have both been called worse things. We are worried about you.” Jim emphasized the ‘we’ there because it wasn’t just Spock that was concerned. Both Jim and Nyota were concerned since both of them witnessed their parents made really bad decisions in the love department post widowhood and divorce.

“This is why we agreed that I would do the talking.” Nyota whispered before turning her attentions to the ambassador.

“With James is trying to explain is that Spock did not tell you about her inappropriate behavior for our sake or even for himself. He told you because he’s worried about you and doesn’t want you to be with somebody who does not respect you and obviously if she’s trying to sleep with your son she doesn’t respect you.” Jim personally felt that statement is the understatement of the millennium.

“You don’t need to be with someone who does not value you, who is looking to trade up at the first opportune occasion. And it’s obvious that she doesn’t. You’re better than that. You are better than her.” Jim wanted to say something about everybody in the universe being better, but he does have some filtering abilities.

“With that in mind we don’t understand why you’re staying with somebody who is…” Jim paused
because he probably should not say colossal bitch or xenophobic asshole. That would be completely uncalled for and would completely prove that he could not filter.

“Beneath the station of an elder statesmen such as yourself.” Nyota finished for him and this is why she is one of the best negotiators on the ship. She has such an elegant tongue.

“I mean it’s obvious you knew what was going on before Spock pointed it out to you. You may not have been there when she was openly hostile to us, but you were there to witness some of her more passive aggressive moments, such as only speaking in Vulcan in front of us in an effort to isolate us.” Jim explained.

“I do not see how that could occur because both of you are fluent in Vulcan, which is more than I can say for Amanda before courtship.” He didn’t mean this in a malicious way. Jim could tell because he saw the beginnings of a Spock smile. Apparently, Spock gets this from his father.

This pretty much confirms Jim’s suspicions that this is one gigantic rebound relationship that will crash and burn at any moment. They just need to work on getting Sarek out of the car before things blow up and they will blow up. Seriously, why do Vulcans have to be so fucking stubborn?

“I think you’re missing the point. Look, I’ve been here before. My mom did not take my father’s death well at all and ended up married to the first idiot who paid her any attention. Unfortunately, he turned out to be an abusive drug addicted asshole. Broken bones were involved before we got the hell out of there. I did not understand why she stayed so long with him and I don’t understand why you’re staying with her.” Jim really doesn’t, no more than he did when he was a little kid.

“I assume that by the serious nature of your relationship Spock has made you aware of certain biological requirements that all our species must endure. Maybe my assumption was faulty.” Jim understood what he was saying, but he didn’t understand the context for bringing this up.

“We are both aware. Jim and Spock will solidify their bond before Spock’s time and I will be there to assist with some of the physical requirements.” Nyota supplied diplomatically.

What his girlfriend was actually saying is they were planning to book a hotel room at a place that catered to people who would be engaging in a four-day sex marathon, stock it with carbohydrate heavy food and protein bars as well as sex supplies, and then fuck the fever out of Spock as they tag team the Vulcan. However, Jim knows not to say that to Sarek.
“Then you are aware that in light of Amanda’s death I must make preparations for such biological necessity is.” Okay Jim could see somebody choose in the frigid Vulcan over death although Jim is sure he’s not that person. As somebody who has actually died, Jim can honestly say that he finds death more pleasant than T’Van and he died of radiation poisoning.

“I understand that your biology is completely screwing you over right now, but there must be other options,” Jim decided not to mention his own preference of death. “I mean every culture has prostitutes. That happens to be a better option.” Anything has to be a better option. Although considering the glare that he was receiving from Nyota, Jim was now receiving maybe he should’ve went with his unfiltered opinion regarding the situation at hand.

“That would be preferable if such an option was available.” The Vulcan actually frowned when he said this. Frowned!

“Is this because a telepathic bond is required?” Nyota questioned with a touch of concerned. Maybe she was thinking of her own situation and the fact that if it wasn’t for Jim, Spock may have been forced to leave her for some snotty Vulcan bimbo because biology deemed it necessary.

“Which could still be achieved during a temporary encounter with somebody who is favorable. There are some individuals, not all of whom are Vulcan, who are working as sexual surrogates to help those without bond mates get through the fever in an effort to preserve the lives of those of us who are left. However, such an option is not available to me.” Again Jim could feel a deep sense of sorrow in his words. He was upset about not having a choice.

“Why the hell not? Somebody’s blackmailing you into marrying the Princess? “Jim asked flippantly. Really he was joking however the ambassador’s serious expression told him that Sarek saw more truth than his words than intended. This cannot be good.

“You’re actually being blackmailed into marrying her?” Jim asked because that scenario made the most sense. I mean why else would the ambassador be with somebody that horrible unless someone was forcing him. However, Jim wondered what the ambassador could have done that was so horrific that it led to him having no choice, but to become engaged to the evil Princess. Then again in Vulcan society he was still a pariah to some for being human-sexual. Maybe this was their long-awaited revenge for his sexual preferences, forcing him to marry such a wretched individual.

“I would not use that phrasing.” The ambassador paused.

“So what phrasing would you use?” Nyota asked.
“You are aware will that the number one priority of the Vulcan people is to rebuild our population after being brought to near extinction.” They were well aware that Spock’s biological clock was ticking. During the desert this was something they talked about. Kids were on the table because every Vulcan was needed. They had time. By Vulcan standards, Spock was a baby and by human standards, they have at least another 20 or even 30 years, more if they considered harvesting some of Nyota’s eggs now and saving them for a rainy day. It was not unheard of for women to have healthy children in their 60s and 70s now considering the average life expectancy for a human is 105.3 years.

“Yes, but that’s why in vitro was created. You don’t have to marry her, just jac…” Jim was stopped by Nyota stepping on his foot.

“I am providing biological samples for Amanda’s dear friend Professor T’Pay at the University of Iowa and her wife. If the professor did not get married shortly before the destruction of Vulcan she would be a viable alternative. However, the professor is not an option and the Council cannot dissolve a pre-existing bond.”

“What does the Council have to do with you marrying someone you obviously don’t like and do not want to be with? I mean you already took care of propagating the new colony by helping out a nice lesbian couple and you mentioned the sexual surrogates. It’s obvious you have other options?” At that point the ambassador pulled out his PADD.

“In your inbox you will find all documents pertinent to your inquiry, although I would enjoy continuing to eat with you I have just received notice that I now have a 12:20 PM conference call.” With that the ambassador was gone and they were left to deal with and really long legal sounding document in perfect Vulcan. Jim was fluent in the language, but only Nyota really understood it. It essentially boiled down to the Vulcan having to marry someone of the Council’s choosing if he wanted to stay on said counsel and they chose the Princess. What’s worse is that if he just held the fuck off then the Council of morons will move on to Spock and pretty much force him to marry whomever they choose despite any pre-existing relationships or special stipulations in section 26 of the document. Jim’s personally convinced that the bastards just engineered the entire thing to get Sarek off the Council. Now he just has to prove it.

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“Where were you this afternoon?” Spock asked his boyfriend as he walked into the room carrying a sack of burgers and French fries. He was kind enough to bring Spock an eggplant and Parmesan burger with sweet potato fries. James was also eating a lettuce wrapped burger which would somewhat pacify Dr. McCoy despite the fact it was filled with bacon.

“Getting the dirt on Nyota’s mom. Although lunch didn’t happen, which is why I brought fast food or rather the closest approximation to fast food that has decent veggie burgers. I know you didn’t go out for lunch.”
James was right about that assessment. Spock had no desire to consume anything. If he were entirely human he would be willing to acknowledge that he was upset about his father once again choosing someone else over Spock. Last time it was Vulcan social norms, this time it was his T’Van.

“Considering that Admiral Pike came looking for you I am uncertain of that.” James lying to Spock was the other reason for his lack of appetite. Although Spock is certain that James had a reason for subterfuge he dislikes that his lover did not trust him enough to tell him the truth.

“Shit. I’m knew I should have talked to her first. Okay, I lied.” Jim said with a sigh after consuming a great portion of French fries.

“That is obvious.”

“It wasn’t anything bad. I was with Nyota and we went to see your father.” Spock closed his eyes for a moment. He should have expected something like this once he realized that James was not where he was supposed to be.

“Despite the fact I explicitly told you not to.”

“Yes because somebody needed to talk to him and you were too busy looking for evidence that he absolutely hates you to see the truth.” James raised his voice.

“What truth would that be?” Spock refused to acknowledge that James’ words were closer to Spock’s feelings on the matter then he wished.

“First of all he does not love T’Van. I’m not even sure if he likes her. Actually, I’m pretty sure he hates her.”

“That is of no consequence in Vulcan marriages. Pre-destruction of Vulcan only 13.2% of all bond were what humans would consider it love match. I am unfamiliar with the current statistic, but I’m sure that number is even less.”

“That doesn’t surprise me at all. Your father is only marrying her because…”
“Biological necessity.” Spock supplied for his lover.

“He is trying to protect you.” James finally yelled out.

“How is Sarek marrying an individual who insults the sanctity of our relationship as well as her relationship with him of benefit to me?” Spock found such a notion ridiculous.

“Because if he does not, he will lose his place on the Vulcan Council, the bastards that be will also try to seize a good portion of his assets, i.e. your inheritance, and then the dicks that be will try to put you in the exact same position otherwise your entire line will forfeit their right to a position on the Council. Personally I think there’s some asshole on the Council that is trying to force you both out, but I can’t prove it.” Spock could see that as a possibility. His father spoke at length about Elder Sunk. His father finds him to be pompous and firmly believes he only made it on the Council because all others in his family line died during the destruction of Vulcan.

“I do not understand. It is impossible to force my father to do anything.” Because if such a thing were possible, Sarek would have never married Amanda in the first place.

That is when James passed his PADD to him.

“I’ve read through what your father sent us six times and I still don’t completely understand. But your fluency in Starfleet bullshit coupled with your vast understanding of arcane Vulcan vernacular should help you get through that.” At the words Spock started to read the document. As James suggested the document was written in quite a precarious fashion. However essentially the regulations dictated that his father was to marry and if he did not find a suitable partner one would be provided for him. Spock assumed that T’Van was chosen for his father because he does not see the Vulcan choosing her otherwise.

Spock was certain that his father would wait as long as he could before securing a new partner. He had a few years before his first time post Amanda. Actually, Spock would not be surprised if his father chose to utilize a sexual surrogate for his next cycle. Anything would be better than the undesirable one.

“So this is not an arrangement of his choice.”

“Pretty much. Trust me, if your father had a say in this he would just jack off in a cup and use a
prostitute or whatever you guys call it to deal with his duties and biological needs until he’s ready for something more, but that may never happen.”

“He is being forced to join his mind with…”

“That stuck up condescending bitch.” James finished for him using more profanity than preferred. “Yes, that’s pretty much it.”

“Those are not the words I would use.”

“That’s because you’re too nice. The only reason why he relocated to the Embassy is so he could get her away from you.” In that context Spock could almost appreciate the gesture almost. He still did not want his father to be forced to tie his mind to such an objectionable individual.

“I would still prefer him to not be around her at all.” Spock told James honestly.

“Yeah well, unless we can find her a nice Vulcan sugar daddy to move on to or prove that she paid for the privilege of being a sugar baby or something along those lines, your dad is pretty much fucked right now.” Spock’s only response is to glare.

“Don’t glare at me. I am checking on the possibility of her paying someone off to become your daddy’s sugar baby.” Spock closed his eyes at that confession because he knew exactly what Jim was going to do to discover that possible information.

“For the sake of plausible deniability I wish you would not inform me of your plans to do something illegal.” Spock admonished his boyfriend.

“I’m not planning to do anything illegal.” Jim smirked. It was never a positive sign when Spock saw that smirk. It usually involves James doing something against at least six different Starfleet regulations.

“That is because you never plan anything.” Spock retorted.

“Therefore I’m not planning to do anything illegal. Spock rubbed circles on his forehead that
emulated James’ logic perfectly.

“I can tell you’re frustrated. So am I. This is a completely fucked up situation and your father feels like he is making the best choice he can.”

“By honoring rules and regulations that keep him away from me.” Spock replied with a touch of anger.

“As said earlier, I did not completely understand everything, but I did understand enough to know that if your father doesn’t play ball you will be the one who will be forced to marry the Princess.” James explained.

“This would not be an issue because I have suitable partners.” Being forced by the Council would be a hardship, but it would be manageable and something he would be willing to do if it protected his father.

“Reed section 26.” James quickly pulled up that part of the document. “From what I understand you cannot bond with somebody who is unable to procreate or you cannot formal mental link with. I don’t qualify because in addition to not having a uterus, I probably don’t even have sperm anymore thanks to the radiation poisoning. Then there’s the situation with Nyota. I doubt these people will consider us as qualifying if we are able to satisfy the requirements as a team.” Logical Vulcans would, however according to his father, elder Sunk was anything but logical. He was also highly xenophobic.

“At least this does not automatically preclude humans.” Spock said angrily. He was personally surprised about that.

“I’m sure that’s the underlined idea.” Jim sighed frustratingly. “They probably didn’t want to risk the bad publicity if they said it explicitly.”

“That is highly probable.”

“You know I hate no-win scenarios, but the only way to beat this is to either play with the rules as written or for Sarek to rewrite them.” That’s when Jim smirked again.

“What are you planning?” Spock asked worriedly because he just knew James was planning
“Nothing illegal, I just need to call a certain legal goddess.” James already had communicator in hand.

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“I wish you would have explain the predicament to me instead of having James to do so.” Spock said the moment that he walked into his father’s office. After his discussion with James he felt it was best to speak with his father in person. Actually, it was Nyota that forced him to come and was currently waiting in the parking lot for him, but he had already decided that this was the best course of action before she arrived at headquarters to pick him up. “It would have been a comfort to know that you did not choose to be with T’Van of your own accord.”

“I wished that you would have spoken to me about your misinterpretation of my actions instead of asking your partners to do so. We all do not get the luxury of choosing our own partners. Fortunately, you chose well.” Under other circumstances, Spock would have found the complement comforting. He was not sure under these circumstances though.

“I did not ask either to speak with you.” Spock said in his own defense.

“But they did.” His father replied matter-of-factly.

“For which I am grateful. However I do not wish for you to sacrifice your own well-being for my sake.”

“Sacrifice of oneself for the sake of their children is one of the key tenets of parenthood.” His father stated bluntly.

“Such sacrifices are not necessary.” Spock handed his father a ‘business card’.

“Not everyone in Starfleet was completely comfortable with a relationship between myself and Captain Kirk, let alone the fact that we have a third partner. Thankfully we found adequate legal representation and things are better now. If you so choose, she would be willing to assist you in freeing yourself from regulations that are not beneficial. However, the choice is yours.” As Sarek grabbed the piece of plastic from Spock’s fingers, it was his sincere wish that this was the first step in removing T’Van from his father’s life permanently.
To be continued.
Chapter 6: Professor Sarah Kelly, but Aunt Sarah to you

Chapter Summary

Do not assume that you know everything because in doing so you prove that you know nothing.

Chapter six The Idiot's Guide to Family Bonding, revised third edition

Chapter Notes

Thank you to everybody who read or reviewed the last chapter. Hooray for finishing all my special projects and The Truth About Love. Fewer stories mean quicker updates on everything. (Although if you want to find out what I was up to check out the story How to Surprise Your Boyfriend at Christmas which is under my profile and the story Last Request by under AshayaTReldai, profile because that was a collaborative effort.)

Of course the moment I finish all that work I came down with some crazy cold like thing that has me vacillating between freezing and overheated within a matter of minutes. I wrote the majority of this chapter on vast quantities of cold medicine and the voice recognition software does not quite recognize my voice very well when I’m sick (or really any other time for that matter. Evil evil software. I hope we caught everything in the proofreading process, but you never know.

I know you want Alexis to completely eviscerate the Vulcan Princess, but it’s going to take a little while and we have other fun family members to meet in the meantime, like aunt Sarah.

Jim was spending way too much time at airports and spaceports in his opinion. (How did his schedule end up being so much more flexible than Spock and Nyota’s?) This time he was at the airport to pick up Professor Sarah Kelly, the woman who had practically raised Nyota. The woman who was there for Nyota when her father chose his new wife over her and always had her back from the man’s harsh criticisms. The woman who showed up to every single track competition and had every single one of Nyota’s medals and trophies on display in her living room. Jim has pictures.

But there was more to the woman than that. Jim was just a little shocked to find out that the sweet redhead from Melbourne was actually one of the top anthropologists in the world. After the shock that was the Princess, of course he’s going to research anyone else that he would have to spend a lot of time with.

She had a reputation for being easily pissed off during her Starfleet career and this reputation carried over to her time in academia after leaving Starfleet. He asked Nyota if all this is true, but he wasn’t
sure how much she knew. She’s been at the Academy for the last few years before Enterprise and Nyota was a toddler at most during her aunt’s Starfleet career. (Yes Jim is the baby in this relationship with Nyota being four months older than him.)

Web anecdotes about the professor included stories about her making students cry and Admirals urinate in their pants. However Jim felt that her three doctorates made her intimidating all on their own.

Discovering this information 15 minutes before the woman arrived outside the security gates just contributed to his nervousness. Really, he should not have done additional research on Professor Kelly (and there’s no way he is calling the woman by her first name right now), but her Shuttle from Melbourne was 30 minutes late and he was bored.

The professor refused to take faster means because the woman pretty much hated transporters. Actually she hated flying in general and usually had to be drugged before boarding (this anecdote completely contradicted everything Jim has read, but he believes Nyota over the press), which is something considering her line of work. According to Nyota, this was a side effect of her wife being in the one Kelvin shuttle that did not get away. Somewhere in Jim’s mind, he thinks Dr. Kelly is going to hate him for surviving the incident when her wife did not.

He’s got a lot of that from the family members of Tarsus victims. One tossed a can of red paint on him. Another knocked him unconscious at a party. Jim understands where such animosity is coming from, but it wasn’t like he didn’t lose anything on that planet. He had to live with seeing the dead bodies and the rapes. Of people eating anything and he really means anything to survive. Although he did not get Donner party desperate, others did. And although his mom is still alive, she is mostly gone from him. However, grief makes people irrational.

Nyota tried to assure him that would not be the case, that her surrogate mother figure was a kind free-spirited woman who was not judgmental and would not hold a grudge. Sure that may be the case with Nyota’s Aunt Sarah, but what about Professor Kelly?

Actually, scratch that. According to Nyota, Aunt Sarah really could hold a grudge. She absolutely hates Nyota’s father. They had to sit on opposite sides of the auditorium for Nyota’s graduation. Things got even worse at the graduation party when Nyota announced that she was going to Starfleet, like the police were called in. Nyota’s mom was ecstatic. Of course she wanted her daughter to follow in her Starfleet footsteps.

Aunt Sarah was worried because she was already a Starfleet widow and did not want to lose Nyota. But she mentioned all these concerns to Nyota before she even applied and ultimately Aunt Sarah decided that she couldn’t stop her if this was something Nyota really wanted to do.
However, the Federation Center for Peace Director was not happy that his oldest child was joining an “overly militarized organization that has completely divorced itself from its original mandate”. Despite her own worries about Nyota following in her wife’s footsteps, the moment he started on Nyota, Professor Kelly had her back. Jim heard the argument that ensued was epic. Okay Jim saw the police reports. Nothing says happy graduation like having to get your parents out of jail.

Her intense hatred for Nyota’s father was at least one thing they had in common. The fact that the man despises Jim with a fiery passion may be reason enough for her to like him. There are some serious issues going on there.

The problem was that Nyota’s stories about Aunt Sarah conflicted with everything he uncovered about Dr. Kelly (except for the graduation story), to the point he wondered for a second if he was researching the same person. However, the image for Dr. Kelly matched the picture that Nyota keeps of her aunt in their bedroom. So either Nyota has a very idealistic view of her aunt or the press is more clueless than ever. In light of the fact that most of the press still has not figured out Jim’s real relationship with the ambassador’s son and his girlfriend, Jim is going to believe the latter.

The woman who walked over to him resembled the woman in the bedroom photo more than the woman in the maroon business suit from the photo on her CV. Professor Kelly was wearing a long flowing dress with lots of layers of fabric. Her red hair was done in spiral curls. She was also carrying a tie-dyed backpack and little else. That seems strange. By this point she should have gone downstairs to get the rest of her luggage. Although maybe she wanted to make sure Jim was there first before venturing to get her bags.

This is just fine because Jim is perspiring and just slightly nauseous. Kings and Klingon generals don’t scare him. The tiny redhead in front of him who can convince Nyota that she deserves better than him because really Nyota does deserve better than him and he finds that just slightly terrifying.

“You must be Professor Kelly. Jim extended his hand and yes it’s slightly moist. I’m Jim, Nyota’s...” Jim is not entirely sure if he should end that sentence with Captain or friend. Both seemed somewhat disingenuous. With Nyota currently transferred to the Academy, he technically was not her captain at the moment. Also the word friend didn’t exactly convey the true depth of their relationship. Of course, the fact that he manages to trip over the backpack that she just placed on the floor takes that decision away from him. Really he didn’t see it, despite the fluorescent colors.

“It looks like somebody did their research.” The professor smirked at him.

“Maybe.”
“Half of what is on my page was written by a disgruntled former student who was cranky because I turned him in for plagiarism. I just don’t have the energy to be that petty. There’s no need for you to be nervous. I promise I won’t bite or try to completely ruin your career like some idiots we are both acquainted with.” Okay apparently Nyota told the woman all about her father or maybe she just knew about the Admiral X issues from the media. Jim chose not to ask questions. Besides he was too busy trying to get off the floor in the most dignified way possible. Great, he was already making a horrible impression on this woman.

“I’m not nervous.” Jim told her once he was back on his feet. “I just didn’t see the backpack.”

“I knew I should have included blinking lights.” She joked, actually putting Jim at ease for a moment.

“That would’ve been helpful. Or maybe some sort of alarm that goes off the moment your foot hits against it. Jim joked. “Trust me I’m not nervous.” She just gives Jim this look that tells him that she sees straight through him. Jim is pretty sure Nyota picked up this particular look from her. And yet Jim continued on rambling.

“I meet Kings and ambassadors on a daily basis. I’m used to big VIPs. I’m not nervous at all.” Of course none of those kings or ambassadors can completely screw up his current relationship with Nyota except for maybe Spock’s dad and that’s not a problem. The new Vulcan ambassador loves Jim, as much as any Vulcan loved anything.

“You’re scared of me because somewhere in your mind you think that I can convince Nyota to leave you and possibly Spock or convince her to leave you and take Spock with her.” Okay apparently this woman is clairvoyant and realizes exactly why Jim is sweating. “You should know by now that nobody can convince Nyota to do something that she doesn’t want to do. Her father has failed many times.”

“As her Captain, I can say with 100% certainty that’s true.” If she thinks his plan is stupid she will be the first one to call him out on it, in the most respectful way possible, but still.

“Well at least you picked up that lesson before her father so that’s one point in your favor.” She smirked.

“You don’t need to justify your relationship to me. You don’t even need to put a label on it. Relationships are what they are. As long as you are Nyota’s that’s all that matters to me. And no I
really don’t care that she’s still with Spock or you’re with Spock as well as long as you both treat her with the dignity and respect she deserves. People are people. Who am I to judge? What you do behind closed doors is your business, not mine.” And that’s when Jim tripped over another suitcase. He was shocked. He wasn’t expecting this at all.

In reality Jim was preparing himself for the same type of hostilities that he was getting from Nyota’s father or the Princess. The Princess hated him because he was human and already landed the Vulcan trophy husband of her dreams. Nyota’s father hated him for a lot of reasons including the fact that he was a “depraved bisexual” who was “misusing his authority” to force his little girl into “a deviant sexual lifestyle”. This was definitely not that.

“I’ve heard a lot of good things about you.”

“I think Nyota is required to say nice things.”

“Not from her. Nyota’s mom has said a lot of good things about you. You have an excellent corridor door reputation among the other captains in Starfleet. Granted in the beginning she was a little upset about your very fast promotion to captain because…”

“But because she was the victim of Starfleet’s supposedly nonexistent gender discrimination and reprisal for having the balls to blow the whistle on X’s long and illustrious history of sexual misconduct and I got my position because Starfleet needed all the good publicity they could get. Making the Kelvin baby a Captain after he saved Earth makes for a really good human interest story to help distract everyone from what’s really going on. If it makes her feel better he tried to block me from keeping the field promotion several times and had my mom reassigned to Tar… somewhere absolutely horrible for not fucking him.” He already mentioned the Kelvin incident, there’s no point in mentioning Tarsus too.

“I’m sure it will. Also the fact that everybody knows what you did for your crew.”

“I don’t see how she can see that as positive.” Jim mumbled under his breath.

“You died for your crew.”

“That’s not supposed to be public knowledge, Professor Kelly.”
“Considering how many Starfleet higher-ups I’m friends with, I don’t think I qualify as public anymore.” That is very true. “Also just Sarah to you. The only people who have to call me Dr. Kelly are students that pissed me off or complete assholes, like Nyota’s father. I still don’t know what Adamma was thinking when she married him.” Okay obviously she was talking about the Admiral although Jim is not sure that’s her first name. It’s not even listed on the woman CV and Nyota refuses to tell him. Nhi still refuses to tell him anything, but that makes sense because even with Jim’s hacking skills he has yet to discover what her real name is.

“He has always been a condescending prick. His brother was so much nicer. Just because some guy gets you… Never mind. Talking about him always makes me angry.”

“I understand entirely.” Jim doesn’t know how someone as sweet as Nyota was sired by such a judgmental idiot. Must be a case of nurture totally wiping out nature.

“Is he still pestering you guys due to the supposedly unconventional nature of your relationship? Which is unbelievably hypocritical since he grew up in a polyamorous matriarchal household,” that’s the first time Jim heard anything about that. He would ask Nyota about that later.

“It’s okay.” Which is true in the sense that it’s okay because Alexis is handling everything and he doesn’t have to deal with the guy directly anymore. Jim got another one of those hateful emails from daddy dearest last night. He just forwarded on to Alexis without even bothering to open the stupid thing. Maybe he should set up a filter to make sure all that stuff goes to his lawyer directly without him even seeing the stupid things in his inbox. However, Dr. Kelly-- Sarah easily saw right through that creative version of the truth if the glare she was giving him was any indication.

“It really is okay because we have a good lawyer. Yes, he’s still causing some problems, but all his attempts so far have failed miserably and Alexis is dealing with everything else.” Like she managed to file a restraining order against the guy without Nyota finding out. However, at the mention of the name Alexis, Sarah frowned a little bit. “It’s really fine. There’s no need for you to bring it up.” Because Nyota still has no idea about the harassing emails. Spock does because Spock has been getting the same harassing emails and they have been silently passing them on to Alexis at Jim’s request.

“Still be careful. Although the vast majority of the new Starfleet hierarchy hate his guts because most of them know exactly what he did to Adamma he still has a lot of friends in Starfleet, some of which are in high places.” These friends of daddy dearest are also under investigation for participating in the grand X conspiracy and don’t have time to harass Jim because they’re too busy trying to save their own asses right now. However, Jim knows better than to say this out loud.

“Is her last name May?” She asked abruptly.
“No. It’s Coulson.” Sarah excelled at that point. “She enjoys eviscerating Admiral X a little too well. Also she is helping Spock’s dad with some legal issues.” I.e. whether the fact the Vulcan Council is forcing him to marry someone against his own free will is within the realms of the Federation charter and New Vulcan Constitution.

So far it appears that the whole forced marriage thing was very against the law. However, Alexis had a brilliantly devious legal mind and they were taking the time to figure out exactly why Sarek was being forced into this in the first place. There seems to be something bigger going on. However, for the sake of the investigation, they were pretending as if Sarek was still passively going on with the arrangement. Which is the whole reason why Spock, the ambassador and Alexis were meeting at their house right now to discuss strategy all while the ambassador continues to play the perfect fiancé to the evil Vulcan Princess.

“Do we need to pick up any more luggage?” Jim asked once things became too quiet.

“If you travel as much as I do, you get used to packing the bare minimum, so no luggage for me.” She said taking her backpack up from the ground. “Are we taking a commuter shuttle back to your apartment or did you drive?” She asked as they began to walk towards the exit.

“I drove because I thought you would have a lot of luggage. I’m surprised you do a lot of travel. But Nyota says you hate flying and transporters and pretty much everything. She also stated that taking the shuttle to San Francisco is about the most you are willing to do.” Jim quickly got in front of Sarah to show her the best way to his vehicle.

“I may not travel as much as you do, but I’m still an anthropologist. I’m just mostly focusing on indigenous Earth culture now and no we haven’t successfully homogenized everyone yet. Just because I don’t like traveling anymore doesn’t mean I want to give up my job. I just have to work through it.”

“Also I’m sure there’s a hypo for that.” Jim joked.

“Yes, there’s always that. The reason why I’m arriving a week before Adamma is that I have an interview at UF Berkeley. I’ve made it to the final round in the search for the new head of the anthropology department at the University.”

Okay now he’s even more impressed with Professor Kelly. UF Berkeley was the crowning jewel of the Federation’s public university system. It was one of the few universities that survived World War
III and the creation of the Federation. Most of the other universities that are part of the Federation system are newer institutions. Although Jim is personally more enamored with the English department. He wanted to be a writer growing up, but eventually he realized engineering was more practical.

“It’s quite an accomplishment just to be considered.” Jim told her sincerely.

“I know. Don’t say anything to Nyota yet. I wanted it to be a surprise.” He knew Nyota would be happy that her aunt would be close by during their time planet side. Nyota seemed a little indifferent to her mom’s return, but extremely excited for her aunt’s visit. So this would probably be seen as good news and be extremely disappointing if it doesn’t work out.

“I won’t say anything.”

“Anyway, I have everything ready to ship over here when I get the position.”

“Not if?” Jim raised an eyebrow at her, imitating Spock perfectly.

“At this point it’s a formality. Besides relocation will happen regardless. It just makes things a little bit easier having employment lined up. Of course if UF Berkeley does not work out, there are a couple of other positions I’m applying for including the director of the New Vulcan government’s Vulcan cultural preservation program.” Why did Jim felt like he was missing something right now? Was there some other reason why she was relocating?

“We can talk about all of this after my interview in two days. I’m too exhausted right now for long complicated discussions. I’ve been up for a very long time and really just want to see Nyota and maybe eat something.”

“As much as I wish I could arrange for the first, that’s not possible because Nyota is unfortunately going to be in planning meetings for the summer semester, despite the fact it’s a Saturday.” And she was beyond angry to be called in for teambuilding activities on a Saturday. Actually as far as Nyota is concerned, the best part of an Academy assignment is weekends off.

“However, takeout as possible. Actually maybe we should bring something to the house. I’m sure Spock, his dad and the legal team are hungry. I will send a text message when we get to the car.”

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When they did get into the vehicle, Jim sent a text message to Spock. As he assumed the Vulcan was too busy going over obscure constitutional law to actually eat something. He may have also text messaged Nyota’s office mate to see if the woman could possibly get her out of there. He has yet to hear a reply.

The drive to Jim’s favorite pizza place went well. He originally wanted burgers because he knew they would be going somewhere super vegan for dinner because the ambassador would be joining. The fact that they were now also having lunch with the ambassador meant they had to get something suited for vegetarians. Pizza was easy because they can order broccoli and tomatoes for the Vulcans and meat lover supreme for everybody else. Sarah liked pizza so it was good.

The drive was spent with her regaling him with tales of Nyota’s misspent youth. His favorite was the story of Aunt Sarah having to go get her out of jail after a protest on the universal legalization of cannabis throughout the Federation went very wrong (which was completely forgiven after the graduation party arrest incident).

This entire conversation came up after he tripped again when she asked him how he and Nyota met originally. At this point he was well aware that polyandry did not scare her off, but he was worried that his propensity for bar fights and stupidity would. Instead, he finds out that his girlfriend has her own colorful arrest record. Because this incident happened when Nyota was a minor it was not part of her Starfleet dossier as was Starfleet SOP. Jim is personally thankful for this provision because otherwise even more people in Starfleet would have extremely low opinions of him.

Now that they had one tomato and goat cheese pizza, one broccoli and tomato pizza, one Italian meat lovers pizza, and one bacon and spinach pizza along with Spock’s guilty pleasure of fried zucchini they were on their way back to the house.

“You know we’ve met before.” Sarah said just before taking a bite of the goat cheese and tomato pizza. She really was hungry and saw no point in waiting until they got to the house to have a piece.

“I think I would’ve remembered that.” Contrary to what Carol initially thought, he is not that big of a prick. The only person he doesn’t remember is Christine and that was completely intentional due to her stalker with a crush tendencies and an incident that he refuses to ever talk about again. Unfortunately, it’s not possible to do that anymore due to the fact that they’re attending ultrasound visits together. Jim is just waiting for her medication to stop working and for things to fall apart again. However, he hopes for baby Pike’s sake that doesn’t happen.

Well you were barely one at the time so it’s possible you forgot. It was at the first Kelvin memorial service.” Which makes perfect sense. Of course Sarah would go since her wife lost her life in the incident. Jim also remembers seeing a picture of aunt Sarah at a Starfleet Memorial in the images that came up during his research. However Winona only went to the first one so Jim didn’t exactly speak
to that many of the other survivors.

“I also changed your diaper in a room full of reporters.” Now that’s something Jim remembers. He doesn’t remember actually having his diaper changed in a room full of strangers, but he does remember his asshole brother bringing it up to his friends and classmates in elementary school. He was such a bastard.

“You’re the redhead in the picture. I kind of almost hoped it was mom.” He said sadly.

“No she was completely out —slightly….” Sarah paused as if she was searching for the right word to use.

“Drunk.” Jim supplied for her. “You can say drunk. I’m well aware that my mom had issues.” Like the fact that some days she still thinks Jim is in high school and living with the Pikes. Although now it was just Mrs. Pike, but whatever.

“She was drunk. That incident made it quite obvious why she didn’t come to subsequent reunions. Not everybody can deal with that type of scrutiny or attention.”

“I’m not surprised. I’ve been told by a lot of people that she did not handle the memorial services well.” She still doesn’t handle any mention of the Kelvin incident very well.

“Losing your spouse is hard on anyone. I’m sure she did the best that she could.” Yes by marrying the asshole and the other asshole, but Jim did not say that out loud. Instead he just nodded his head.

“How is your mother? I haven’t seen her for a while.” Jim does not like this question. He got it a lot his first year at the Academy from people that worked with his mom during various assignments. He always felt uncomfortable telling people that she was sick. However, he felt like he did not need to sugarcoat things with Aunt Sarah. Being another Kelvin widow she may understand the situation in ways others do not.

“Institutionalized.” Jim said bluntly which caused the woman to choke on her slice of pizza momentarily. “Remember when I mentioned earlier about X and mom in the worst assignment ever, that assignment just happened to be Tarsus. Some stuff went down on the planet that I’m not at liberty to discuss and…” Jim stopped there uncertain of how to word things.
“Now she lives at a mental health rehab center?” Sara asked as politely as one could considering the subject matter.

“I found this really great rehabilitation center for her. Some days she actually recognizes me.” Okay even Jim will admit that maybe this is not a conversation you have with your significant other’s mother figure the first or rather second time you meet the person. “You’re probably thinking right now how did my baby girl end up dating this guy with the crazy family?”

“We all have issues. I have to take a hypo before getting on a shuttle. I haven’t been able to fly off planet since my initial shuttle back to earth after my wife’s death. Really, I can’t judge anybody in that regard.” Thankfully, before this conversation could become even more awkward, they arrived at the apartment. Jim carried her backpack while she brought the pizza. Just as Jim predicted Spock was heavily engrossed in research with Alexis and Ambassador Sarek. What he did not expect was for Sarah to drop the pizzas (that thankfully survived intact thanks to the construction of their boxes) and drag Alexis outside for a very loud conversation in the front foyer. He cannot make out the exact words, but the fact that he can hear anything at all was not a good sign.

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Nyota truly hated her job. Seriously, who came up with the idea to make everybody come in on a Saturday for teambuilding activities? Yes the most evil of her office mates were gone, but still she wasn’t looking forward to spending her Saturday with these people especially when she really wanted to see her Aunt Sarah. It’s been over a year since she had seen her other mother figure.

Anyway because of the stupid teambuilding activities, she had to send Jim to pick up Sarah by himself and she really did not want to do that. This is not because she is convinced that Jim would fuck things up, but... She really just wants one parental figure to actually like her boyfriend and Aunt Sarah seemed like the most likely candidate.

It’s already obvious that her dad hates Jim (and Spock now for allegedly dragging her into his relationship with Jim). This is pretty obvious from the fact that her so-called father is actively trying to get Jim kicked out of Starfleet and sending Jim and Spock harassing emails. Seriously, did Jim really think that he’s being so sneaky forwarding those messages to Alexis directly? He forgets that Alexis is working for all three of them and of course she felt it was in their best interest to tell Nyota the truth. Him and

Actually she had no choice, but to tell Nyota the truth when she tried to quit or rather recuse herself from the case. Her father slept around a lot during those last few months of his first marriage. One of his targets happened to be a young Starfleet cadet in the legal track named Alexis Coulson, but then she was going by the last name May (which completely explains why she kept the new last name after the divorce).
When she found out he was married and already sleeping with somebody else on the side, she kicked him in the balls and promptly told Nyota’s mom about everything. The reason why Alexis discovered that he was married and sleeping with someone else was future step mom number one confronted the couple on a date to let him know that the ‘condom broke’. (Is it wrong Nyota is just a little sad that Alexis was not the victim of the defective prophylactic? She would’ve been a nicer stepmom.)

Nyota was fine with Alexis staying on as their lawyer because as she told the woman if she discounted every single person that slept with her father she may never find a lawyer. However they decided to keep this talk to themselves in addition to Nyota not telling her mom who her lawyer was. That way lies awkwardness.

Speaking of her mom, the Admiral may not like Jim for completely different, but thankfully more logical reasons. Her mom has always had very strong opinions about captains and First Officers for that matter sleeping with their crew. Or First Officers sleeping with their captains for that matter and that was mostly that it was a bad idea and could lead to making problematic decisions in the field. Despite the implosion of her own marriage, she still felt it was better to serve on separate ships.

Granted she was never really negative about the situation with Spock, but Nyota wondered if that was because her mom has been in deep space for the majority of her relationship with Spock.

Her mom did have time to express her unhappiness over Nyota serving under the ‘baby captain’. Yes she referred to Jim as the ‘baby captain’. Actually a lot of the other captains referred to Jim as the baby captain. She could understand why her mom felt that way. It took her years to make the rank of captain because of X being a dick. He essentially stagnated her career. If it wasn't for the Vulcan incident and the loss of so many captains and senior personnel, her mom would have aged out of Starfleet before making the rank of admiral. Because of what happened they had to raise the mandatory retirement age by five years. Then Alexander Marcus and X fucked everything up and the good old boys club went crumbling. Now the majority of Starfleet admiralty is female including the highest ranking member. Because of that, they’re expecting a revision to the dress code any moment.

Since her mom was likely to still be a little upset that Jim managed to achieve the rank of captain a good decade before she did, Sarah was pretty much her only hope at this point and Nyota was concerned. Yes Jim managed to win over Sarek, but really it’s a small miracle that he hasn’t punched the Vulcan Princess out yet. (For the sake of legal strategy they were being forced to stay civil.) Because of that, Nyota is not exactly sure how things would turn out between Jim and her aunt. Yes, Aunt Sarah adored Spock, but Spock was Spock.

Sometimes Prof. Kelly could be unnerving even though Sarah was the most inviting woman in the world. Nyota just wasn’t sure who Jim would get. The public persona or the private person. Now if she was there, Jim would be guaranteed to get Aunt Sarah, but unfortunately she is being forced to
do team building and other group activities and Jim was going alone. Spock couldn’t even go with Jim due to a legal strategy meeting with Alexis.

The fact that Jim arranged for her favorite office mate to get her out of the teambuilding exercises (by faking an asthma attack no less) made her particularly worried. Enough that she managed to get to the house in half the time it normally takes.

She arrives just in time to see her aunt fighting with her lawyer. Not good, but better than her aunt fighting with her boyfriend(s). They were so caught up in their own verbal argument that they didn’t even notice her walk off the elevator and into the foyer.

“Why are you even still her lawyer? I’m sure this is an ethics violation of some sort, especially because I know the bastard is being a dick.” Sarah yelled. And this is why she didn’t tell Aunt Sarah about the lawyer.

“My associates are handling anything directly related to the bastard although just the mere fact that they work for my legal firm is enough to intimidate him.”

“You should recuse yourself completely.” Sarah argued.

“I tried to quit. Nyota wouldn’t let me.” Alexis said defensively.

“Probably because she was unaware that you completely destroyed her family.”

“Would you have preferred that I kept my mouth shut? I had no idea he was married and already fucking around with someone else. I would’ve ran the other way if I had known and as soon as I did know, I kicked him in the dick.”

“If only you kicked harder.” Sarah mumbled to herself.

“Nyota is aware of my role in the implosion of her parents’ marriage, but unlike some people she doesn’t hold a grudge.” Alexis spat out bitterly. “I was just as much of a victim in all this as your girlfriend. It was a decade ago. Let it go. I’ve moved on. Even your girlfriend has moved on, although that was probably already going on. Regardless, she’s probably happier with you so I don’t know why you’re yelling at me right now. My main purpose is making sure your daughter gets to live the life she wants to live without certain idiots fucking it up, including the sperm donor.”
“Contrary to whatever that dick told you, we didn’t actually start sleeping together until after the divorce.” Okay she did not hear Sarah correctly. Her mom and Sarah were friends, only friends. They were best friends in the world, but she should know that friends can become more than friends as evident by her own relationship with Jim and Jim’s relationship with Spock. It makes sense. It’s not like…

“Nyota?” Sarah called out her name. Now they noticed her.

“How much of that did you hear?” Sarah asked after a moment.

“More than I wanted to. How long have you been dating my mom?” Nyota’s voice was slightly shaky.

“Off and on for the last 15 years.” She admitted reluctantly. “Although for the last seven, it’s been mostly on. You always reacted so badly to whoever your father was dating that we decided it was best just to not tell you.” Nyota’s only reaction to that was to walk straight back to the elevator.

To be continued
Part seven: Reasonable Levelheaded Boyfriends

Chapter Summary

Do not condemn anyone for doing something you yourself have done. Hypocrisy is very unbecoming.

Chapter Notes

Thank you to everybody who read or reviewed the last chapter. Sorry for going longer than a month without updating. I started a new story (Hydra lullaby: Origin Story) and the first chapter ended up becoming the first three chapters because I couldn’t help myself. I have a writing problem. Hopefully, now I will be able to stay in rotation but I think I say that every chapter. I’m hoping if I say that enough it will eventually become true.

Spock was not surprised at all to find his girlfriend of more than three years with a drink in one hand and a slice of pizza in the other at the bar three blocks from their apartment. Nor was Spock surprised to see the bottle still sitting on the table. The short synopsis he received from their attorney regarding how Nyota accidentally discovered that her surrogate mother figure was engaged in a clandestine long-term relationship with her actual mother prepared Spock to see such a reaction.

"How did you find me?" Nyota asked barely looking up from her slice.

"You always turn to pizza or alcohol in times of stress. This was the closest establishment that served both.” Spock answered taking the seat beside her.

"This is the closest one that serves both and that’s actually good." She took a sip of her drink.

"I did take that into account when creating my list of establishments to check."

"And you decided to come alone to drag me back to talk to my mom’s girlfriend or is Jim with you?" At that moment she actually looked up to survey the space as if she was looking for James or possibly Aunt Sarah.
"James is currently conversing with your Aunt Sarah at our apartment. I felt it was more expedient to come alone." Actually, Spock felt a confrontation was less likely to happen if he spoke with her first.

"I don’t think I can refer to her as Aunt Sarah anymore. Maybe future stepmom Sarah is more appropriate. I mean they’ve been dating longer than I think my parents were actually married." Nyota takes another long drink.

“I only call her Aunt Sarah because I thought that mom and Sarah treat each other like sisters, but sisters don’t sleep with each other.”

“Considering many of Dr. McCoy’s anecdotes about Georgia…” Spock’s words are cut off by a glare.

"That was a facetious comment regarding certain stereotypes about the South of the United States. I really did think that they only saw each other like that. But then again a lot of people say that you and Jim have a brotherly relationship and we know that’s not true considering I woke up to the sight of you sucking his dick this morning. Happier times.” Spock personally wished they were still engaging in such activities, but that will not happen until he can convince her to go home and deal with her surrogate mother figure.

"I know you are familiar with the Vulcan concept of T'hy’la, where an individual can be seen simultaneously as a lover, a friend, and as family. Some relationships cannot be confined to one category.” Spock explained.

"I thought it was an and/or thing?"

"That is a mistranslation of the concept."

"Of course it is. Pizza?” She said holding up the plate for him and he reluctantly grabbed a slice. “Do you want me to order some of the fried zucchini? Did you get to eat lunch? Actually, it’s practically dinnertime at this point?” Nyota mentioned once she looked at the time.

“Zucchini would be preferable.” Nyota signaled for a server at his words.
“I’m not mad at Sarah or mom.” Nyota said once the server left after taking their order for additional fried food. Spock indulged because he did not get to eat any of the food James brought with him. Actually, at some point Sarah threw one of the burgers at their lawyer. In addition, as Nyota stated earlier, it was nearly dinnertime at this point.

“Then why did you leave so abruptly?”

“Emotional overload. I couldn’t process it, so I ran.” Considering Nyota is the more emotionally healthy of the trio, this reaction on her part was somewhat worrisome.

"You were completely unaware of the true nature of their relationship?" Because as intelligent as Nyota was, he was sure she would have seen something. She noticed his feelings for James despite the fact he tried to conceal them from even himself.

"Completely blindsided. And that’s what annoys me." She grabs another slice of pizza.

"Why?"

"Because I pride myself on being a watchful observer. I realized that my parents’ marriage was completely fucked up long before the breakup. I knew all those girls that dad was bringing to our house were not just friends. The only reason why I didn’t know about Alexis at the time was he was lying to her and told her that his ex-wife had custody of me.” Nyota explained.

“ You were already aware that your father carried on a sexual relationship with our lawyer several years previous?” Spock questioned.

"Yes. She explained everything when she told me that we would have to get a restraining order against my own father because he was harassing both you and Jim." She raised an eyebrow at Spock.

"You were aware of that?” James was the one who felt it was best not to inform Nyota about the harassing nature of her father’s correspondence.

"Of course I was aware of that. Very little gets past me. That’s why I’m so upset about this. Normally, I’m good at picking up on things even when people are deliberately hiding stuff from me like the fact my father is being a complete asshole to both you and Jim. I mean I picked up on the fact
that you were head over feet in love with Jim Kirk a lot sooner than you did. I just kind of feel foolish not seeing it now that I think about it. I don’t even think mom slept in her own room most of the time she was planet side, I just didn’t question their excuses.”

Spock now understands Nyota’s reaction. Most people may not realize it, but Nyota is a proud person at times and she despises it when her abilities are questioned.

“As humans would say, you should not be so hard on yourself.” Spock said trying to console her. “There are many logical explanations for why you did not deduce the true nature of their relationship. Could your hypothesis have been flawed due to functioning under the erroneous assumption that your mother was solely heterosexual?” This was the main reason why most wrongly assumed that James is merely an acquaintance outside of their immediate circle, despite the fact that James lives with the couple.

"No. I knew full well mom had girlfriends prior to marrying my father. I’ve seen some of the pictures. Maybe I was expecting her to flaunt it more, like the bastard did. I don’t know."

"You should not be overly upset with yourself for not perceiving their relationship as romantic in nature. I am sure they went through great efforts to keep up the illusion that they were merely friends."

"Which is another reason why I’m not happy. Why didn’t they trust me enough to actually tell me the truth?” Spock had no answers for that question. “Did they just assume that I was going to react so badly that I was going to run away?"

"Is that not what you did?” Nyota’s initial response was a glare.

"No. If I really ran, you would not have found me. I just needed an hour to two get my thoughts together. Besides if I stayed… I couldn’t stay. Besides the pizza is really good here.” She takes another bite of her slice.

"That is apparent considering you have consumed half of that pizza by yourself." He points to the plate sitting next to her that is now devoid of two thirds of its original content.

“It was a small pizza.” It was not, but Spock chose not to contradict her. “I just don’t get why they automatically assumed I would hate the idea. Growing up I secretly wished that Sarah was straight so she could become my new stepmom. Of course Sarah despised my dad so that was never going to
happen even if her orientation was a little more flexible.

"And yet you never considered the situation occurring with your mother despite being aware that she has engaged in non-heterosexual relationships in the past?" Spock questioned.

"That makes complete sense to me now as a grown-up. Spock, humans are not logical. I saw what they wanted me to see. I saw this deep friendship that transcended everything but I didn’t see that there was something more. I would’ve loved for there to have been something more. She was always the good parent and a part of me wanted that to be official and now finding out that it could’ve been like that, it just makes me angry. I could have had the happy family that I always wanted growing up and they kept that away from me. That wasn’t fair."

"Is this the reason why you are so upset?"

"I’m not sure. A part of me is upset that I missed out on growing up in my ideal family. Another part of me is mad about the lying. Then I’m upset that they made a really big decision without consulting me. I just don’t…" Just then Spock’s communicator chimed signifying a text message.

"James wants to know if I located you and if we need to get a new lawyer?" Spock told her after reading the message.

"No. If they can’t bother to tell me that they’re dating or that my biological father preyed on innocent law students then they don’t get a say in my life, including who we hire to keep my bastard father from fucking with my boyfriends’ career." Nyota said angrily.

"Would you like me to send that message to James?"

"I will take care of it." Nyota said looking down at the screen just as her communicator went off this time.

"Also apparently Sarah is letting me know that she’s going to stay at a hotel until mom gets here."

"How do you feel about that?"

"That’s probably a good idea. I’m not ready to have a nice calm conversation about this. I need another drink." They stayed silent until the fried zucchini arrived and eventually he convinced her to
go home to an apartment that was sans Sarah.

"Well the good news is I don’t need a new lawyer." Jim said putting his communicator down after reading the message from Nyota. He was currently alone with Aunt Sarah because his father-in-law felt it most prudent to get Alexis out of there before things got physical again. He has no idea how he’s going to get burger out of the curtains.

"You should…” Sarah interrupted, but Jim would not let her continue.

“No.” Jim pulled up a hand. “I’m trying to make a good impression on you because you’re very important to Nyota. You’re probably the only constant parental figure she had in her life, but you don’t get to decide who we hire to eviscerate your girlfriend’s ex-husband in a court of law. She hates the guy as much as you do.”

"But she..." Jim held up his hand again. Really he doesn’t get why she’s being so irrational on this one point.

"Who probably had no clue that he was still married. Actually that’s what she said before you started throwing food at her. You’re the one who is acting like a toddler.”

"I am not." Jim just glared at her for a moment, utilizing a look that’s normally reserved for red shirts that do stupid things.

"Maybe. But if…”

“I have this life rule where I don’t condemn other people for things I’ve done myself. I’ve slept with a married woman before…” And then Aunt Sarah’s face fell. Jim instantly realizes he should not have said that because apparently cheaters are Sarah’s berserker button.

"Okay, that came out wrong." Jim backpedaled.

"I don’t see how a statement like that could come out right."
"I was 19 and living in this shady apartment working two jobs and going to school full-time. I had to work two jobs because Starfleet was taking their sweet time with the Tarsus survivor reparations.” Sarah looked like she wanted to ask about that, but Jim tried to preempt it. "Yes, I was on that planet with mom during that massacre and no, I don’t want to talk about it."

"Okay." The professor answered simply.

"There was this neighbor who lived across the hall from me. She was beautiful, but she was always really sad. She was always overwhelmed with her kids and her job. She was also really nice to me and I needed that after I had to commit Winona. I needed something to make me feel better and she offered. The next thing that happened was I had a phaser being pointed at my head and her husband telling me that he will kill me for fucking his wife. No, I didn’t know she was still married mostly because I saw the father of her kids making out with someone else multiple times at the bar where I worked. So don’t judge."

"So you’re giving up on trying to impress me?” She asked after his monologue.

"More like I don’t feel like lying in an effort to make you or anyone else like me. It’s not worth it. Also in the last hour I’ve realized that the windows on your glass house are just as smudged as mine."

"That’s a new twist on don’t throw stones if you live in a glass house." The professor remarked.

"I try." Jim commented just as her communicator chimed.

"And I need to find a hotel apparently.” Sarah said after reading. “I’m not surprised. Nyota gets her temper from both her parents. Do you have any suggestions?”

“Give her about three or four days to wrap her head around the situation and then call her. Actually maybe you should send a very big box of chocolate and explain why you did what you did for whatever reasons.” Jim personally would love to know what those reasons were, but he should still try to avoid acting like a complete dick.

“I mean about a hotel. I’m already well aware that I’m going to have to grovel as soon as she’s calm enough to be in a room with me. That’s probably not going to happen until her mom gets here."
“Several, although I can call some of the contacts I have in Starfleet housing and see if they can get the Admiral’s new residence together early. That’s normally the procedure for the domestic partners or spouses.” The paperwork regarding marriage and tandem assignments is a little ridiculous at least until you get to the Admiralty level. Then living with your long-term girlfriend or boyfriend suddenly becomes a lot more acceptable.

“We never actually filed out the paperwork because…”

“It would probably have been a lot easier for Nyota to figure out what the hell was going on if there was a paper trail?” Jim asked maybe a little too bluntly. Sarah just nodded her head.

“So why did you keep up with the subterfuge?” So much for being polite and not asking that question. Really, Jim could not help himself. “Not filling out that particular paperwork could cause a lot of problems if something happened to your girlfriend when on a mission. You wouldn’t have been notified.” Thanks to recent events, Jim is now really familiar with Starfleet notification policies. Of course, Jim did not bother following them and contacted the lovers of any of his crew personally that he was aware of. Because if Jim was responsible for getting their loved ones killed, then he has the responsibility to look them in the eye as they tell him to go to hell. “You also would not be entitled to any financial benefits.”

“I know. I’m a Starfleet widow, I know how ridiculous the system is. Chan and Pike, both Pikes, knew and would have let me know if anything happened immediately and it’s not like I need another flag.” Sarah said bitterly. “You have no idea how happy I was to find out she was on the other side of the galaxy during the Vulcan genocide.” Unfortunately Nyota had a front row seat for the catastrophe. However, Jim felt it was best not to bring up that point.

“So why the secret?” Because Jim knows Nyota well enough to know she would be happy about this. She probably would’ve been ecstatic for her surrogate mother figure to become a real part of her family.

“Nyota never liked any of the people her father dated or married except for the last one. And honestly I think that’s because she no longer lives on Earth.” What she’s really saying is they were afraid that Nyota would be unhappy with their relationship and they wanted to avoid a confrontation therefore they just did not tell her anything. Yet that lie of omission has blown up spectacularly.

“So you both were too cowardly to actually deal with her not being okay with your relationship?” Jim asked in exasperation with hands in the air.
"If she wasn’t okay with it, there wasn’t going to be a relationship.” Which is why you guys went with lying.

"So you thought that sneaking around would be better and Nyota would never be the wiser? Nyota is not that stupid. She would have figured it out eventually even if she hadn’t overheard you screaming at our lawyer, like when she showed up to your new apartment and realized there was only one bedroom."

“I know she’s not stupid. I knew she would figure it out eventually. I guess it’s just easier to ask for forgiveness than permission."

“I’ve learned the hard way that that’s not true. That just leads to discipline hearings that go badly and having your mentor dying your arms. There lies true darkness. What you did was cowardly and it was probably a lot more hurtful in the long run."

“That was not my intention.” Sarah said trying to defend yourself.

“It’s what happened. Did you guys ever think that maybe she hated everyone her father dated because they were all horrible nasty people?”

"Okay, that’s a possibility."

“Some 10-year-olds may have better taste than their parents, but sometimes we are irrationally greedy people who don’t want share our parents with new people. Don’t you think it would have been better to actually talk to her about what was going on instead of just going behind her back? Especially once Nyota stopped being an irrational child and started being a more rational adult? Anytime in the last three or four years would’ve been a good time to have this discussion."

“You’re right. I wasn’t thinking.” Sarah admitted reluctantly.

"See I’m more than pretty blue eyes."

"But she still ran away and took everything badly." Probably because you lied to her for well over a decade and she only found out the truth by overhearing a conversation between you and her lawyer. However, Jim knows not to say that.
"Let me give you some advice. I don’t think Nyota would have hated you if she found out earlier. She doesn’t hate you now. She reacted the way she did because of the way she found out. She was overwhelmed and probably angry because two people that she loves very much lied to her for decades."

“That’s not… That may be highly possible.” The professor said begrudgingly.

“Nyota loves both of you. She talks about you constantly. She’s been excited for weeks about your visit. She sees both of you as her mom. As I suggested earlier, just give her a couple of days to acclimate to things and then try to have a real conversation. At that point you will probably be surprised to realize how okay she really is with everything."

"You believe that?"

"Yes I do."

Of course a week later when Nyota was still not accepting Sarah or her mother’s requests for lunch or any other type of contact, Jim and Spock decided it was time for an intervention.

To be continued.
Part eight: Mothers

Chapter Notes

Thank you to everybody who read or reviewed the last chapter. A lot of you absolutely adored it, which makes me very happy.

Enjoy another expedited chapter courtesy of more snow days for adults, this time brought to you by winter storm Thor.

Warning: grab tissues. There was a scene in this chapter that made me cry when writing it. Cyber cookies to whoever can guess what that scene was.

Nyota’s life was in a good place. For example, the summer students were less idiotic than the freshmen she dealt with last semester. It probably helped that she was working with her own lesson plan instead of using the lesson plan of the dearly departed (who honestly had no idea what they were doing). Okay, maybe it helped that the students did not have to deal with their teacher dying during the middle of the semester.

Also maybe she was the unfortunate victim of substitute teacher syndrome. This time around these were her students and they were not testing her to see what they could get away with, even if 20% of her class was technically older than her. Okay, it probably helped that Kevin Chan, the adopted son of Admiral Chan, was in the class and most students were afraid that he would tell his mom that they were being complete idiots. Or maybe they were afraid she would show up in class again, if the campus rumor mill was to be believed.

Most of her colleagues were halfway nice to her and no one made snide comments about her having two boyfriends. Neither did any of the students for that matter. Again, this probably had something to do with Kevin Chan.

Even better, her father has yet to contact her, or the boyfriends during this week. After last week’s revelations, Jim and Spock knew better than to hide his correspondence from her, but thankfully there was not anything new. Maybe the legal team put the fear of Alexis in him and he finally realized what a Dick he was being. Of course maybe he was just biding his time. Nyota didn’t care because the silence was refreshing.

Since Jim’s professor for his “how to be a captain” classes would be arriving late, Nyota arrived home every day to freshly prepared dinners. Jim really can cook. Even better, Dr. McCoy lifted the sex restrictions or rather moved Jim to moderate sexual activity. There was a new toy in her arsenal that she couldn’t wait to break out after their dinner tonight.
Yes, they were venturing out as a trio in public, albeit to a very discreet, very exclusive restaurant without Spock's father, to serve as cover, she hoped. She likes the ambassador. They’ve had several wonderful conversations in these last couple of weeks since the Vulcan arrived planet side, but they’ve had two dinners with the man this week that Jim has prepared. She wasn’t sure if he was just lonely or wanted to get in as much time with Spock as he could before he had to return to the colony. Of course maybe he was doing this because he wanted to spend as little time as possible with the evil fiancé and really, she couldn’t blame him.

However, needing to spend extra time with Spock’s father was nothing compared to the mom situation. Jim refers to it as the “mothers situation”, but she does not want to acknowledge how accurate that statement really is. Not that she wanted to talk to her biological mother or Sarah (her pseudo-mother that she doesn’t want to acknowledge, but probably should.)

In the last seven days, Nyota has ignored 28 calls, 37 emails, six attempts from Admiral Pike to set up a lunch date between the three, and three in-person visits at her place of employment. Thankfully, they have yet to come to the loft. She’s also very thankful for her Academy assignment. Nyota is well aware that her mom is now back planet side and will be spending a lot of time at Starfleet headquarters debriefing. Jim and Spock have run into her mom six times in the three days that she has been in San Francisco.

Nyota, on the other hand, has only seen her mother one time two days ago and she means that literally thanks to creative use of Kevin Chan. When her mom tried to talk to her about the lying, Nyota used the student as a human shield to keep from having to speak with her after making up some lie about the teenager needing more help with practicing his Romulan verbs.

She did something similar, two days earlier, after Sarah stopped by on her way back from the UF Berkeley interview. According to Admiral Pike, Sarah came by to tell her that she did get the job, which means Sarah would be moving to Admiral Pike permanently to live in happily, not quite married bliss with her mom. It’s so great that they are now ready to be open and honest with her. Why the fuck couldn’t they have done this years ago?

Nyota is well aware that using Kevin Chan and her boyfriends as a buffer is a bad way to deal with things. She should face her mom and Sarah like a big girl and talk about why she’s upset. It would almost be hypocritical not to, but she’s not ready to have that conversation because she will probably say something that she will regret later. She doesn’t want to risk completely derailing their relationship, considering how fucked up things are with her dad. She needs to be on good terms with at least one of her parental figure.

She tried to explain this logic to Jim and Spock this morning when she refused to take her mother’s calls again, but she’s not sure they got it. They just nodded their heads and smiled, okay Spock raised
an eyebrow at her and she’s pretty sure Jim gave her his ‘I’m not going to do a damn thing you just said’ smile usually reserved for the Admiralty. However, they let the issue drop as evidenced by the fact that on the drive to Executor neither mentions Sarah or her mother once.

She took this as a sign that they got over their desire to force her to talk to her mom. Really, she should know her boyfriends better than that.

She should have known something was up as soon as the maître d’ walked the trio to one of the private dining rooms. Actually, Nyota should’ve been suspicious as soon as Spock told her they were dining at a restaurant that had a six-month waiting list for reservations. But she told herself that Spock’s dad is an ambassador. So it really wouldn’t be that hard for him to get reservations. They have dined with the ambassador at many of San Francisco’s top restaurants.

Running into Jim’s doctor, Anna Caraballo, wasn’t that unusual either. The restaurant is owned by the sister of Starfleet therapist Dr. Margarita Cruz (who Spock has been trying to convince her to see this last week). That means most of Dr. Cruz’s colleagues are not subjected to the six months waiting list. Okay the fact that she was there with Admiral Pike should have been a giant red flag, but she put it out of her mind. They were friends. Maybe even more than friends by the way they behaved around each other, and that was good. Nhi seems very sad and she needed people around her other than Christine.

Although she was a little bit upset that the romantic dinner for three was turning into a group dinner for five because Jim just had to invite his stable mother figure to join them. In a way, it was kind of cute to see Jim fuss over the Admiral so much. He drove the wait staff crazy making sure that everything Nhi ordered was baby friendly, or maybe she should say babies friendly. Admiral Pike was having twin girls. The other one was hiding until recently.

She knows this because Nyota has seen the latest baby scan four times (where the other baby is not hiding behind her sister) and Jim Kirk is a closet shopaholic who just loves the fact he can buy two of everything. She really would love to know where he got the ‘my mommy is a badass Admiral’ onesies. His fake bedroom was already filled with gear for the twins and they were not even due until early October and it was just June now.

So for Jim, inviting the Admiral is not strange, but inviting your therapist to have dinner with you just is. But considering Jim slept with his last therapist (sort of, it’s complicated and they weren’t dating during treatment), she didn’t find it that unusual.

No, it wasn’t until Sarah and her mom were walked into the room by the maître d’ that she realized something was seriously wrong.
"This is an intervention isn’t it?” She said before her mom and Sarah even had time to sit down.

"I don’t like the term intervention.” Dr. Caraballo stated. “This is more like an opportunity for the three of you to clear the air, but with really good food.”

"With psychological counseling present.” Nyota remarked darkly.

“Affirmative.” Spock was the one to respond, but eventually.

"I have nothing to say.” She crossed her arms over her chest.

“You had plenty to say this morning when you were explaining why you didn’t want to talk to either of them, and in a way that states you obviously do.” Jim mumbled from beside her, resulting in him receiving a glare from her.

“And you agreed to go along with this setup?” She said turning to Spock.

“Did you not on many occasions urge me to speak to my father to mend our disagreement instead of as you would say ‘nursing a grudge’? I feel that a controlled environment with psychological help present would be the perfect opportunity to hold such discussions.” Why did Spock turned her logic on her? She did not tell him to talk to his dad that much pre-battle of Vulcan only once or twice. Okay, only once or twice a month, but still.

"I know you’re not happy that we’re together, but we both care about you...” Sarah started, but Nyota would not let her continue.

"No, I’m happy you’re together, or I would’ve been when I was 13 and wanted a normal family with two parents, and a non-asshole stepmom.” She said trying very hard to keep her voice neutral. “No, I’m pissed off that you lied to me for over a fucking decade, it has very little to do with your personal life. Considering I’m fucking two different guys simultaneously, sometimes literally, I’m the last one who gets to criticize anybody’s romantic partners.” Her mom gets bonus points for not twitching during her sexual reference.

At that point, Nyota tried to get up from the table to make a dramatic exit because she didn’t want to deal with this anymore, but she could not. She was stuck with both her boyfriends on one side and Dr. Caraballo and Admiral Pike on the other. Neither side was budging to let her out. Yes, this was
definitely an intervention.

"We didn’t lie to you. We just…” Her mom started.

"A lie of omission is still a lie." She told both sternly.

“You always handled whenever your father started seeing someone new badly. We weren’t sure how you were going to react and we didn’t want to disrupt your routine.”

“But what about now? I am almost 27 years old. I am the youngest chief communications officer in the history of Starfleet and currently an actual professor. Don’t keep treating me like a little kid because I haven’t been one for a very long time.” She said sternly.

“I don’t know, the tantrum that you are…” Her mother started, but was cut off by Sarah stepping on her foot.

“How do you feel when people treat you like a small child, even though you are an adult now?” Furious.

"Like I don’t want to be here,” is what she actually said out loud.

"You were never good at talking about your feelings. You throw things, you run away from home, but you don’t talk.” Her mother started.

‘You were never around for me to actually talk to you.’ She thought to herself bitterly before actually speaking. "So that’s why you avoided this big family confrontation?”

“Confrontation is what you do.” Sarah shook her head. “What am I supposed to think when you show up at my door by yourself with a suitcase? Your father was scared out of his mind with the way you left.” Basically, there was a fight between her and the stepmom and she used her mother’s credit account to pay for a one-way ticket to Australia.

"No, he wasn’t. He’s never cared about me, not really.” Sometimes she thinks his freaking out over her having two boyfriends is more about what it will do to his reputation if it ever goes public,
despite the fact that polyandry has been legal for decades within the Federation.

“I’m done with this.” She said trying to get up again, but is still blocked on both sides. “If either of you want a blowjob anytime in the next six months you will let me up from this table.” Spock started to move a little bit, but Jim stayed firm.

"I love your mouth, but I love you more and you need to deal with this.” Jim said firmly. “Kevin told me that you used him to hide from Sarah and your mom on two separate occasions. This avoidance thing is not going to help you.” Of course, Kevin Chan told somebody what she was doing, probably his Admiral mom, who told Nhi, who told Jim.

"Are you of all people lecturing me on the detriments of avoidance? You kept denying your feelings for Spock, until… Actually, you died denying your feelings for Spock. You are the last person who should be lecturing me."

“Or maybe that means I’m the first. Not everybody gets use of magic blood…” Jim is cut off by a glare from Admiral Pike, who obviously does not want him talking about something extremely classified in a very unclassified space.

"How do you even know Cadet Chan in the first place?" She asked in an effort to derail this conversation.

"We were on the planet of the damned together.” There goes any hope of making this encounter less awkward. “Although his last name was Riley at the time. I saved his life after his family was slaughtered in front of him. We stayed pretty close after that, even if he was fortunate enough to be adopted by Admiral Chan. Actually, I kind of think that’s where my mom gets the part of her fantasy about me living with the...." Jim stops before saying the last name Pike, probably because Nhi’s most likely unaware of Winona’s delusion.

"Another thing you don’t talk about."

"Sorry, I thought it would be good that at least one of the three of us had a decent relationship with their mom and since my mom is not all there and Spock’s mom was murdered by a very distraught Romulan, I thought that maybe you would like the chance to actually work things out."

Spock wasn’t saying anything, but the way he looked at her told her that he agreed with Jim’s assessment. Of course, he missed his mom. That was a given. Spock probably thought that she was
illogical for wasting precious time, but he’d had a good relationship with Amanda and things with both of her mother figures were complicated, very, very, very complicated.

“Everyone, calm down. Take a deep breath and step back for a moment. Yelling and shouting at each other is not productive at all. We are going to sit here calmly and listen to each other. We’re not going to shout over each other. We’re going to talk things out. We will listen to one another, completely without snapping. Is that understood?” The doctor said, looking poignantly at everybody in the room.

“Fuck this.” She said, standing up on the bench seat. Despite being in heels, she managed to hop up on the table and walk across it effortlessly to the other side. Almost effortlessly, she may have poured honey ghost pepper dipping sauce all over her foot, but there is no way she is stopping out to wipe off the burning hot sauce. She jumped down from the table and walked past her mom and Sarah, without even looking as everybody called her name.

It’s only when she finally makes it to the front of the restaurant does she acknowledge that the ghost pepper dipping sauce all over her left foot is extremely hot and she needs to wipe it off before she gets a cab to take her to a hotel because she is not going anywhere near her idiot boyfriends tonight. What the hell were they thinking?

"They were only trying to help.” She heard Admiral Pike say as the woman walked into the bathroom looking a lot more pregnant than she actually was. Apparently, she said that out loud.

“They did a bad job of it. Making me deal with my mom before I was ready to deal with my mom was not really helping.” She said, activating the faucet and grabbing several paper towels. It was fortunate that this establishment still carried paper towels. Most places did not because it was so expensive. “The no blowjob thing stands.”

“First of all, that goes on the list of things not to mention in front of admirals, at least those that are not related to you. Second, withholding blow jobs doesn’t work as well when your boyfriend has another boyfriend. They probably would just go on without you and would refuse to let you watch.” Okay, she’s going to blame pregnancy hormones for the extremely straight-laced Admiral making sex jokes.

“Point.” Nyota continued wiped off her foot. “That still doesn’t mean I don’t have a right to be upset. I will be furious if I want to be furious and I don’t need you or anybody else to talk me down. Just let me be angry right now.”

"I’m not here to talk you down.” The admiral told her.
"Then why are you here?"

“I’m five months pregnant with twins that really like to kick my bladder, a lot. Actually, I can’t wait anymore.” She said running into the stall.

"So if I waited another two minutes. I wouldn’t have a foot covered in ghost pepper dipping sauce.” The wet towels were not helping. She is pretty sure she’s flexible enough to actually get her foot under the faucet, but only if she takes off the other shoe.

“Probably.” Nhi said just as the toilet flushed. “Chris didn’t mention the constantly going to the bathroom when he talked me into getting pregnant.” Even though Nyota couldn’t see her, she could hear a touch of sadness in the woman’s voice.

"Look,” Nhi said a few moments later, now that she was out of the bathroom and washing her hands. “Don’t punish her boyfriends because…” Someday you may end up a widow a like me. Nyota was so sure that was what she was going to say that she quickly preempted her.

“I know you’re going to tell me not be angry because life is too short to be angry over something so silly,” even if it was anything but silly to her.

“Actually, I was going to mention that both of your boyfriends have issues with their mothers that they can’t resolve due to various circumstances and they don’t want you to experience the same thing.”

"So they decided to fix my mommy issues?” She asked flippantly.

“In some regards, but really this is more on me then your boyfriends. ”

“How are you responsible for this intervention?”

“Jim came to talk to me yesterday and I suggested dinner. Since you keep rejecting my invitations, we decided to do this set up."
"With a therapist?" Nyota brought out her Spock impression.

"Somebody had to referee and I'm too pregnant right now to physically restrain you." Nhi placed a hand on her burgeoning stomach. This woman had to be more than five months pregnant.

"Point."

"Of course, none of us were expecting you to jump over a table to get the hell out of there." Maybe that was not her finest moment.

"I didn’t want to blow up at mom and Sarah, which is why I didn’t want to talk to them." She said as an excuse.

"I don’t know. At least from my own personal experiences, a fight is better than saying nothing at all." There was that sadness again from earlier.

“What would that be?” She asked really wanting to know why the woman in front of her was so sad.

“I didn’t take the news that Chris was going back into space very well." This is going to be bad.

"How not well?"

“Instead of telling him that the in vitro actually worked and I was pregnant with our kids, I walked out of his office. No screaming. No yelling, nothing. I didn’t take a single one of his calls for the rest of the day and then he was gone. And if I just…” She doesn’t say anything else. Instead she takes her communicator out of her purse and presses play. Instantly, she could hear the metaphorical ghost of Christopher Pike filling the space.

“I’m sorry, Nhi. You know I love you and I didn’t take this assignment to get away from you. I hate being without you. You’re everything. I know I should talk to you, but there’s something going on here. I feel it in my gut. I think X is being his asshole self again and I just need to protect you and Jim. I just need you to trust me right now even though I know you’re not happy about me going back. Actually, I just… I need you to talk to me. Just pick up the communicator and…” The call ends abruptly and a mechanical voice takes over announcing the end of the call. There was a single tear rolling down the Admiral’s cheek.
"I never did pick up the communicator. I never spoke to him again. And now…” Tears were starting to come down harder as her voice began to quiver. Nyota quickly wrapped an arm around her.

"I just wish I picked up the communicator… told him how much I love him. He died not knowing about our baby girls and that’s my fault. I can’t fix that." Nhi sobbed harder, blaming pregnancy hormones.

"I think this is another reason why I’m upset." Nyota finally mumbles out loud after a moment.

"How so?"

“Because maybe you’re right and life’s too short to hold grudges. I could’ve died on Enterprise last February. It was a near thing. Only through the grace of Jim’s stupidity/bravery did we survive. If that had happened, I wouldn’t have known that they were together and that they loved each other. Or what if it was the other way around…” She takes a deep breath, trying not to remember Jim dying in front of her.

“Starfleet is a dangerous place. Mom could die on a mission and I wouldn’t have… I would’ve had no idea that I needed to contact Sarah. I wouldn’t have known what she needed." Nyota said making eye contact with the sink.

“I would have taken care of it.” Nhi whispered.

“You knew?”

"I did.” She doesn’t look at Nyota.

"Why didn’t you tell me?"

"Because it wasn’t my secret to tell.” She really hates that excuse.

"Do they really think I would’ve been such a monster to completely fuck up their relationship?”
"No, I don’t think that at all.” Nyota hears her mom’s voice. When did she get here?

“‘You may want to use the restroom next door, now is not a good time.' Nyota is just a little bit happy that the Admiral, quietly suggested that her mom leave. She completely agree with Jim that Nhi is the greatest.

"I got worried. You’re very pregnant and took 20 minutes in the bathroom."

"It hasn’t been 20 minutes." However, Nhi still checked her watch.

"So you’re worried about her and not me." Nyota asked annoyed.

"I’m always worried about you."

"I did get about one call every hour after the Vengeance incident."

"But you didn’t call me, did you?"

“‘That’s because I was warned that you were in Starfleet medical and I was several light-years away. I knew Nhi would pick up.” If she was thinking slightly more rationally she would find that a solid explanation, but she wasn’t exactly thinking rationally.

“Bullshit. This is what you always do. You left me to your girlfriend, who I didn’t know was your girlfriend, while you had your adventures in space. Before that you left me with dad and you know how bad that turned out.”

"That’s not… You know I’m not even going to defend myself because you’re too angry to listen to me right now."

"Which is the entire reason I wasn’t ready for this conversation.” She was ready to leave. She was almost to the door and then she looked back and saw Nhi’s tear stained faced and realized she couldn’t do that.
"You’re mad at us for not telling you about a relationship, but then you’d don’t want to actually talk about why you’re upset?" Nyota just closed her eyes as she walked back to her mother.

"You waited 15 years to tell me what was going on. I think I’m entitled to more than a week to deal with it."

"Okay, it wasn’t quite that…” Nyota glared at her.

"Okay, it was close to 15 years." Her mom admitted reluctantly.

"So why didn’t you say anything, if you weren’t so sure I was going to ruin your happiness? The Starfleet glass ceiling for LGTBIP captains?" That was a somewhat valid concern, based on some of the horror stories she has heard.

"That was really only applicable during Alexander Marcus’ tenure. Everybody knows that he purposely sent his daughter’s girlfriend on a mission that was bound to get her killed. He was cremated because he would be rolling in his grave if he knew Chan got his job.” Nhi said out loud. Poor Carol. Actually, poor Bones, because that may explain why the scientist is still not quite ready for an actual relationship with Dr. McCoy.

“I wish for not screaming at each other this time. I am too pregnant to deal with all the screaming.” Nhi sighed.

"Wait until the babies are born. You won’t sleep for weeks, but it will be worth it." Her mom actually smiled at her.

"Even when you feel like you have to hide who you are to make your kid happy?" Nyota questioned.

“Yes, I would but, it wasn’t entirely like that."

"What was it like, mom?"
"You hated your dad’s girlfriends." How many times are they going to keep repeating that? This is getting annoying.

"Because they were horrible human beings. Sarah, I liked. Sarah, I love."

“You also adored Lisa.” Lisa was only one of two people that her dad ‘dated’ that she could actually tolerate. Well, three if you count Alexis. Unfortunately, Nyota was unaware of that at the time, therefore the lawyer did not count. The only other one she found tolerable was her father’s current wife. Actually, she doesn’t even know why she stays with him. Okay, she’s expecting divorce papers any moment because her father is an asshole that can’t keep it in his pants.

Which is exactly what happened with Lisa. "And then Lisa realized the man was a Dick and left."

"And you cried for weeks because you really did like her.” That was not true. It was only a couple of hours.

"That’s because she was cool and can speak half of the Federation’s officially recognized languages. She was the first person I met who could speak Romulan.” And she stopped taking Nyota’s calls because her father ordered her to.

"Well, that incident happened right about the time that I realized that we weren’t just fuck buddies and I just couldn’t put you through all of that again. Especially if it didn’t work out." Nyota could hear the sincerity in the woman’s voice.

"So I’m guessing the first five years of your relationship was friends with benefits?" She could hear Nhi snort from the back.

“Stop laughing, Nhi. After things blew up with your father and his brother before that, I wasn’t ready for a relationship and after losing Rose, Sarah wasn’t ready for another relationship either.”

"But you missed sex?"

"Do you want me to answer that question?"
"I need you to."

"Yes, and that’s how things started, but it didn’t stay that way."

"Which is why we always stayed in Melbourne when you were on shore leave?" Nyota asked.

"Well, that and I couldn’t be on the same continent as your father." She joked, mostly.

"Understandable."

"Then you ran away."

"Because step mom number one was a bitch." Nyota justified.

"I’m not arguing that point, but I was angry at your father for bringing somebody into your life that treated you so horribly. And I didn’t want to make that mistake again. So I was careful, very careful about who I brought in to your life."

“I feel like that’s another excuse. Sarah was already in my life. She was my mom, my other mom…” Nyota stops speaking when she realized she had revealed more than she ever wanted to.

“Let’s be honest, Sarah is your mom. She raised you a lot more than I did.”

“That’s not… That’s somewhat true, but not completely. When you were planet side, you were there.”

“But not enough.

“I really did try to change the rules so you could be with me in space, but…”

"Marcus and X were assholes."
"And I wasn’t quite ready to go to Alexis, even though I knew she was really the only one who could take both men down." Nyota could sense that there was some bad blood there.

“From what she told me, I can understand why you were so hesitant.”

“But I should have got over it for you. You know exactly what happened with her and your father and you’re still working with her because it’s the best thing for you and your boyfriends.”

“It’s different. Unlike Sarah, I think I accepted long ago that you and dad should’ve never been married in the first place and the cheating and backstabbing was just a symptom of a bigger problem.” If she really believes that, why did she think all marriages were destined to fall apart? “That being said, why the secrecy?”

“Because I am absolutely horrible at relationships of all types. You love Sarah and she was the most stable thing in your life. If things fell apart between us, I would have put your stability at risk and I couldn’t do that.”

“So you just decided to put my happiness and stability at risk anyway, but not tell me about it?” Nyota asked flippantly.

“I realize I was wrong now. I was just terrified that I would fuck up your childhood more than I already did.” Nyota could tell that was a genuine concern.

"Then why didn’t you tell me when I was an adult, especially after the relationship survived as long as it did?"

"I was planning on it." Nyota glared.

"When? When you guys moved in together in a few weeks?” Nyota asked icily.

“'I was planning to tell you at graduation, but that kind of fell apart.” Considering that Spock was an absolute mess after his mom’s death, which would've been a bad time for such a revelation. “Before that I was going to tell you during my visit, but instead I was introduced to your new boyfriend.” That dinner did not go well. Her mom liked Spock now, but she hadn’t been happy about her dating a Starfleet professor.
“I remember you overreacting to me and Spock dating.”

“You were dating a professor. Yes, you guys are almost the same age, but still.”

“He wasn’t my professor.” After she was advised to withdraw from all of his classes before they started sleeping together.

“Which I was okay with, eventually.”

“After Sarah had to talk you down.” Which involved her mom and Sarah disappearing to one of the bathrooms for about 15 minutes and her mom coming back with smudged makeup and disheveled clothing which under different circumstances would’ve screamed bathroom sex. Except those were exactly the circumstances, and now she realizes how Sarah really calm her mom down.

“I should’ve realized you guys were dating back then.” She mumbled out loud as she sat down on the sink.

“By the way, we purposely didn’t tell Jim about your original reaction to Spock. You’re not going to have a similar reaction to my other boyfriend?”

“No. I am worried that others are going to treat you unfairly because you’re dating your Captain and the first officer of the ship you are on, but I’m not worried about who you’re dating beyond that.”

“You can’t protect me from everything. I’m a big girl and I really don’t give a fuck what they think.” She just wished her dad wasn’t being such an asshole, but she’s been wishing that for a really long time.

"Good. You shouldn’t."

“Are you sure you’re not going to have a problem with Jim? You didn’t like Jim when you first found out I was assigned to Enterprise.” She realized she was directing the conversation away from any discussion of her mom’s love life, but it felt like she was on more even ground discussing Jim and Spock right now. (They may only be sharing a couch by the time she figures out a way to gracefully exit this bathroom.)
"No, I like him just fine. I didn’t like the fact that they were throwing a 25-year-old in the deep end, but I’ll take care of that."

"What does that mean?"

"Somebody in Starfleet really hates your boyfriend.” She heard Nhi say from beside her with a snicker.

"You’ll find out Monday. Then you can stop by my office to yell at me some more.”

“I doubt that.” Mom gives her the look. “I’m trying to wrap my head around everything. And I understand why you did what you did. I think your reasons were stupid, but I understand.

“That’s all I ask.” She smiled sadly. “Can I at least get a hug?”

“Okay,” she agreed reluctantly because maybe she didn’t want her own version of the voicemail. To be continued
Chapter Summary

Sometimes the most important thing is to realize that everyone is two separate individuals, the public persona and the true person. If you ever get to see the latter, consider yourself quite fortunate.

Chapter Notes

Thank you to everybody who read or reviewed the last chapter. I would like to apologize for the lag between updates. I recently moved apartments and that took about two weekends of writing time away from me and then I got bronchitis. The major symptom was having difficulty dictating. Hopefully, I will eventually get back on track. I do not expect to have any more disruptions until the end of June.

Two Years Earlier.

Spock slowly made his way to the Captain’s temporary quarters in the Starfleet facility dedicated to such a function. He came with coffee and pastries because Amanda taught him that such possibly contentious encounters needed a buffer. A ‘peace offering’ of coffee and pastries will hopefully assist in his endeavor to get Nyota’s mother to not necessarily like him, but no longer openly oppose their relationship in such a hostile way.

Her opposition was obvious by their encounter the night before filled with dark glares and cutting remarks. The Captain was actually openly hostile to Spock until Aunt Sarah pointed out the illogical nature of such behavior, before forcing her to leave the table temporarily to do what Spock could only assume was calm down. After returning to the table, her behavior was what Spock’s father referred to as ‘diplomatically hostile’. Cordial on the surface with angry glares directed at Spock when no one else was paying attention. Nyota deserved better than this.

Spock did not ring the doorbell with a hint of trepidation, mostly because Vulcans do not feel trepidation. A few moments later, the woman came to the door dressed impeccably in her uniform. Although closer in stature to her daughter, the Captain’s presence was intimidating without actually trying to be so. A skill obviously honed by her nearly 3 decades in Starfleet.

"I brought pastries and coffee. I wish to discuss your hostility regarding my relationship with your
daughter." Spock felt acknowledging the true situation was his best option.

“At least you are observant and direct.” She said allowing Spock to pass by her into her temporary quarters. “Also, you brought pastries. I assume Nyota informed you of my affinity for such. I never turn down a good cheese danish.”

"Actually, that was Sarah. She informed me that raspberry cream cheese danishes are your favorite. These were procured from the bakery two blocks away."

"Of course she did." She gestured for Spock to take a seat on the couch.

"I’m not hostile to you.” She grabbed the danish from the offered box. “Your record is quite exemplary. I would try to get you on my ship, if it wasn’t for the fact that Chris already called dibs on you for Enterprise."

"Therefore, your dislike must come from you being uncomfortable with the fact I am engaging in a relationship with your daughter." Spock responded in a straightforward manner.

“I don’t dislike you. I am just uncomfortable with the fact that my daughter is dating her professor." She sighed.

"I am not actually her professor." Spock said in his defense.

“That’s a mere technicality because at least you had the good sense to declare your relationship and take the necessary steps to avoid all appearances of impropriety.”

"Yes." Spock answered truthfully.

"It still remains that you are an instructor at the Academy and Nyota is a mere student. You are both in different places in your career."

"A graduate student. We also have an age difference of less than 2.1 years." That was significantly less than the age difference between his own parents.
"The people passing judgment on you would have to actually know you to be aware of that. That rarely happens. People make snap judgments on the smallest fact." Yes, exactly what you are doing right now, simply based on the fact that I am an instructor at the Academy. However, being the son of an ambassador, Spock knows better than to say such things aloud.

"Are you concerned that because of our relationship people will treat Nyota unfairly?" Although Spock disagrees with such an assumption, he can respect it.

"Of course I am. You must obviously feel the same way because you are keeping this relationship a secret. You even took separate cars to the restaurant yesterday." The captain said pointedly.

"As part of our agreement with Starfleet. We agreed to not reveal the true nature of our relationship until after Nyota’s graduation from the Academy. This means we must take measures to ensure that we give off the appearance that we are merely acquaintances." Spock explained.

"Because the appearance of impropriety could be detrimental to both of your careers, more so to hers than yours, due to various sexist double standards that still exist even in the 23rd century." She acted as if she was pointing something new out to Spock. He was well aware of this fact his entire childhood. His mother suffered such treatment.

"Nyota told me about your unfortunate encounter with a fairly unsavory member of Starfleet." Who took great measures in sabotaging your career due to your refusal to provide him with sexual favors.

"Thanks to him, I have a little over a year of Starfleet service left before I will age out and be forced to retire unless I finally manage to become an admiral before then, simply because of reprisal. Barring an outside disaster, I don’t see that happening." Her expression was dark. "Unfortunately, I don’t think Starfleet has changed that much since my own unfortunate encounter with sexism. I doubt Marcus is going to do a damn thing about it, considering the way he treats his daughter.

“You are worried about something similar happening to Nyota?” Spock asked as he began to see past the Captain’s gruff exterior.

"Yes."

"I understand. I witnessed the way my mother was treated because of her relationship with my
father.”

“I’m not sure if you do. I’m not sure if it’s possible.” She sighed before taking a drink of her coffee. “If you had to choose between Nyota and your Starfleet career, which would you choose?”

"Nyota" He answered without hesitation. “I can continue my research at various private institutions or universities throughout the Federation. UF Berkeley is interested in my recent article in the Federation Journal of Computer Science. Nyota is irreplaceable.” She nods approvingly.

"I’m glad we both feel that way. If you continue to take care of my daughter, I doubt we will have a problem with each other."

"Your daughter is able to take care of herself. Any assertion otherwise would be offensive to her.” Spock replied matter-of-factly. “I will endeavor to assist her in all such matters."

“I agree. I would offer to shake hands on this, but I’m well aware that is culturally inappropriate.” Spock wonders if this was an attempt at human humor. He sometimes has difficulty recognizing such for what it is.

"Very so. However, I wish to invite you to dine with us again before you depart in 3.4 weeks’ time. This time I would host at my apartment because I would like to cook for you.” Spock offered.

“Twill have to check with my assistant to come up with a day, but I will make myself available.”

“I look forward to dining with you.” Spock said just before leaving.

The Present

"Did you sleep on the couch?" Jim’s new favorite admiral asked as he walked into her office with decaf coffee (that was about 70 % milk and 10% chocolate syrup) and a yogurt parfait for Nhi because he’s pretty sure the woman doesn’t always eat.
Of course she would ask about the fallout of last Friday night. Jim barely had time to thank her for talking Nyota out of the bathroom before they left the restaurant with an entire bag full of apology cheesecake.

"No, I spent the weekend sleeping in the guestroom with Spock to keep me warm and I was very warm." He winked at her as he plopped down in the seat next to her. She rolled her eyes at Jim.

"I think of you as a son so I don’t need to know that, at all. Ever. Just give me my damn coffee." She tried to grab for it, but Jim pulled it back.

“Not until you eat some of your parfait.”

"You don’t need to feed me all the time." The words were more playful than annoyed.

“Yes I do. I’m in the building anyway because, for some reason, the introduction to being a Captain class is here at HQ instead of at the Academy, where all my other seminars are taking place.”

Jim was stuck at HQ twice a week for four hours for five weeks. It was essentially an accelerated class. However, the rest of the time he would be at the Academy taking various other seminars. This afternoon he had his first of four crisis management seminars. Tomorrow he had to retake sexual harassment for supervisors. All of his classes were at the Academy. Actually, only the Captain class was not on the Academy campus. That’s okay because he gets to have lunch with Spock this way, despite the extra time commuting.

"Because a lot of the people taking these classes are well into their Starfleet careers and need to be here at HQ.” And are not baby-faced 26-year-olds that should still be at the Academy. At least she was kind enough not to say that part out loud, but he knows she’s thinking it.

“You could’ve at least brought me a bagel.” She said, still looking at the parfait dubiously.

"I was trying to get you to eat something not a carbohydrate.” Jim said pulling the bagel out of his bag reluctantly." The babies had a thing for bagels right now, so he knew to keep some in stock.

"Yet, you completely caved in." She grabbed the bagel cheerily.
"You're pregnant. You having your daily bagel is less detrimental than Nyota not talking to her mother for months at a time. I mean her father is a complete bastard. She should be on speaking terms with one parent." Jim explained.

"You have a point which is the entire reason why I helped.” Jim is pretty sure her long talk with Nyota in the bathroom was the only reason why she went home with the two of them. Okay and the cheesecake probably helped a lot.

"Thank you for that. Things went better than I thought they would.” I.e. nobody was arrested. “I may not be getting a BJ from her until sometime in August, but she did have a 20 minute video call with her mom yesterday. So, that’s progress.” He’s sure another long, hopefully slightly less uncomfortable family dinner was in his future.

“This is why you’re taking the sexual harassment seminar again.” Nhi sighed. “I really hope your intro to being a Captain professor can teach you about things not to say in front of the admiralty like anything related to oral sex with your girlfriend or boyfriend for that matter. Actually anything related to sex acts of any kind outside of discussions about sexual harassment policy. I did sign you up for the professionalism seminar?”

“Probably. I know about what I can and can’t say. But your family. It’s different. If I’m going to see you with your legs spread open trying to squeeze out something the size of a soccer ball, I should be able to discuss this sort of thing with you.” He was forced to watch a live child birth video file recently. Jim doesn’t want to think about it at all.

"Two soccer balls. You’re right. You and I will never have a normal Captain/Admiral relationship. That’s why you ended up under Rodriguez. I’m only in charge of your class schedule during your recovery because you actually listen to me, sometimes.”

“Because your eyebrow raises are scarier than Spock’s.” She just glared at him.

“Look, head down to class. I’m sure your professor would not want you to be late. Who is your professor?” She asked nonchalantly

"I already know you know who it’s going to be now.” The original professor was picked up on corruption charges a couple of weeks ago. The only thing Jim knew about the replacement was she was still active in space, which is why they had to delay the class a week for her to get there and that the woman in front of him already knew who it was. “Nyota told me that you know."
"I thought she was not speaking to you." The Admiral shook her head.

"She’s withholding orgasms, but we’re still on speaking terms." Which was torture. He still had Spock, but he missed her.

"Yes, I do know who your professor is and you really don’t want to mention that in front of her. She may castrate you."

XXXX

Jim doesn’t quite get the full meaning of her warning until 20 minutes later when Nyota’s mother walks through the door in the black professor’s uniform and starts to stare everybody down. Her death glare is worse than Nyota’s and that is saying something. Somebody in Starfleet really hates him and not just the prick, Richard, sitting next to him who can’t stop complaining about Jim still being the Captain of the Enterprise. Apparently Jim stole his ship from him.

"I’m Admiral Oddoye and you will call me by that title. Welcome to the advance command class known as how to be a Captain 101.” She said that with disdain. “However, I hate that name because by this point in your Starfleet career, you should have at least half a dozen years of Starfleet experience under your belt and be familiar with how a ship operates. There is no point in me starting at the very beginning. If you don’t, then you don’t need to be in my class because I can’t help you.”

“I think she’s referring to you.” The guy sitting next to Jim whispered in his ear. He didn’t need the color commentary because Jim already felt like the words were aimed directly at him. Really, he should just leave the class now.

“You should all have the syllabus from your original professor. Because I had less than a week to prepare for this last-minute assignment, we are going to stick with his lesson plan, but with some modifications. How many of you picked up the book for this class?” She asked everyone and Jim panicked. No one told him about a book.

Actually, Nhi specifically told him that there were no books for this class and that at this point in his Starfleet career, Jim should know that it’s impossible to learn about being a Captain from the pages of a PADD. Although considering that the hands of everyone else in the class went up, others obviously feel differently. Why did he not read the syllabus? Oh yes, because his favorite admiral refused to give it to him, referring to it by several expletives.

"Why did you not get the book, like all your peers? It was in the course syllabus." She asked him directly.
“Admiral Pike signed me up for the class and told me that there was no textbook. She said that textbooks were unnecessary for a class like this.” When in doubt, blame your Admiral.

"You trust her over the syllabus?"

"Yes.” Even though she would never let me read it. “She was one of the best’s first officers in Starfleet for over a decade…”

“We all know how much you love first officers.” Rich mumbled under breath. Jim glared before continuing.

"And a Captain in her own right before being promoted to the admiralty. She has seen things that I hope I never do. I trust her a lot more than somebody who spends their days just writing about how they think a captain should be."

"Good, because Admiral Pike is right. The textbook that you all downloaded is just an excuse for a certain soon to be former Starfleet official to get more money from Starfleet and yourselves. You might as well delete this from your PADD because we won’t be using it. It is nothing more than a review of various Starfleet regulations and the opinions of someone who was only given a teaching position because of a major fuck up."

“That book is useless. You’re better off memorizing the various Starfleet regulations."

"Apparently, some of us need to memorize those regulations." The neighbor glared directly at Jim again as he spoke.

"And why do you say that, Commander Williams?” The Admiral purposely stressing the commander part of this title. She didn’t even have to look at her PADD to know his name. Why does Jim feel there is a story there?

"Everybody knows how Captain Kirk lost Enterprise.” Actually, most people don’t since, as part of the agreement to keep Jim from going to the press regarding exactly what happened during the Vengeance Incident (including defrosting and brainwashing 20th-century augments), Alexis got Starfleet to agree to expunge all of that from his official service record.

“You mean an instance of retaliation because Captain Kirk testified about the man’s history of sexual
harassment and reprisal against anyone in Starfleet who would tell him no.” It was at that moment, Jim remembered that the woman in front of him was also another victim of X’s special brand of career sabotage. She probably hated the man more than Jim did, and considering the guy was 99% responsible for his mother’s institutionalization, that was saying something.

Yet, his neighbor was not cowed by her words. "He broke the Prime Directive…” He started to say before being cut off with a stern glare.

"I don’t need you to tell me what the Prime Directive says, Commander. We all know it." She looked 30 seconds from kicking Williams out of her class.

"Obviously, some of us don’t."

"You don’t always have the luxury of following the rules when lives are in the balance.” Jim mumbles under breath."

"Exactly.” Jim repressed the urge to crawl under the desk. Of course she heard him. That makes absolute sense."

"Why did you break the Prime Directive?” Jim’s mouth opens wide at that question. Nobody had ever asked him why he did what he did, at least no one in a position of authority over him. Not even Pike, Chris Pike, that is. Although thinking about it now, his wife has also yet to ask that question and it’s been four months since the incident. Has it really been that long?

"Because saving lives was more important.” Saving Spock was more important to him. But the reality of it is, he probably would have done it for any crewmember. It was just with Spock, there was more of an urgency to it. Okay with any other crewmembers, it would not have gotten that far because he would have shot down their dangerous plan for intervention a lot earlier. Now he knows why he was signed up for the managing family and command seminar usually reserved for married couples serving on the same ship with both Spock and Nyota.

“"You have a point there. Now, knowing the consequences of your decision, what would you have done differently?” She asked, still glaring at Jim. He’s thought about this a lot in the last few months. He dreams about it. Actually, entire therapy sessions have been devoted to this. In the end, he comes back to one thing. Why did he not realize this was a setup from the beginning?

"I would’ve questioned why Enterprise was sent on that particular mission when there were three
other ships closer and at least two of those ships had geological experts and shuttles that can withstand higher temperatures. They may have been able to find a more suitable solution that would not have resulted in the need to break the Prime Directive in the first place.” Now that he knows the entire mission was a set up from the beginning to get him to screw up and get kicked out. He sees all the little things that he missed the first time around, like the fact that Enterprise was not the best suited for the mission. Contrary to what certain people assume, Jim’s ego is not so big that he would be unwilling to admit that Enterprise was the wrong ship for that mission.

"So you would’ve avoided being put in a position where you would have to choose between following the rules and saving the lives of your crew?"

"Yes."

"But if put in the same position again, would you have made the same decision knowing the consequences of that decision?"

"Yes." Jim answered without hesitation.

"But the core principles of Starfleet must be upheld at all cost.” Williams complained. Now some may think that this is Spock’s position. But in reality, Spock was for taking the most logical course which did not always coincide with the rules.

"Even if it means the deaths of half your crew and hundreds, if not thousands of civilians?"

"Yes."

"Have you actually served as a captain before, even in an acting capacity?" Jim was wondering the same thing.

"Not yet but I’m the next in line to receive a ship." Which explains his comments about Jim stealing Enterprise from him.

"Then you have no idea what it’s like to actually have no choice except send your crew members to their death for the greater good. So sit down and shut up.” Jim had to stifle a laugh when the guy sat down so fast. It was really brilliant.
"This class is about what it’s really like to be a Captain, not just what they tell you about in the brochure. About being responsible for the lives of every single person on your ship. About what it’s like to be on the bridge, making those decisions that will result in you writing the dreaded condolence letter. Because no matter how many simulations you go through, nothing will prepare you for having to make a real life-and-death decision." She stares at him just a little too long. It was enough to make Jim wonder if she knew about his life or death decision in the warp core.

“By now, various after action reports have been pushed to your PADD. Some are classified, so I hope you are all mature captains and commanders and understand the importance of keeping classified material classified. We’re going to go through these reports and we’re going to look at the decisions they made, why they made them, and then discuss if they made the right call. And how you personally would’ve handled that situation. My goal is that, by the end of this course, when you find yourself in a fucked up situation, you will have the tools you need to make the best decision possible. I have a feeling some of you may need my help more than others.” Surprisingly, it was Commander Williams she was staring at.

The rest of class was more tolerable as they discussed some of the more interesting Starfleet incidents of the last 30 years (thankfully the Kelvin was not among them). The person sitting next to him made fewer snide remarks, most likely due to a certain death glare that Jim was very well acquainted with. Jim is now positive it is completely genetic. You can’t be taught to do something that fear inspiring.

At least the class went well enough that he only sent Nhi one email about not warning him that Nyota’s mom was going to be his professor. Okay, there was another email about the possible conflict of interest. That’s when Nhi pointed out that the professor originally slated to teach this session is currently being held on conspiracy charges related to the Vengeance incident and that he had a better chance of being treated fairly by Nyota’s mom. Seriously, how many enemies in Starfleet did he have? Was Chan still mad at him for teaching Kevin how to hack?

Yet his professor still wanted to see him after class.

“What do you want to talk about?” Do you want to yell about me dating your daughter? Because really, after hiding the fact you have a girlfriend for over a decade, you have very little ground to stand on.

“First of all I wanted to see if you’re okay with me being your instructor for this class?” Jim wasn’t sure she actually cared. If she did, she would’ve told Jim before class actually started. Last Friday after Nyota practically wrecked the table to get away would’ve been a good time to mention that. At this point it was moot.
"It was pointed out to me by someone I respect greatly that of all the options to take over the class, you are probably the one least likely to kill me." Which was a serious positive in Jim’s estimation considering some of the messages that Jim has received from Nyota’s father.

"Nyota would never forgive me if I did." She actually joked.

"Also it’s not like anybody knows I’m dating your daughter." That secret was more classified then the fact Jim has a Lazarus complex.

"Who decided on that?" She asked taking a drink of her water.

"Starfleet, before certain members of the admiralty were kicked out or arrested. However, I think it’s a good idea to see where things go without extreme public scrutiny.” And they’ve already encountered a lot of public scrutiny, despite how few people know. Jim is not quite ready to deal with that from crew members that barely respect his authority as it is. “Besides, half the ship already thinks that Nyota became chief communications officer on her back.” and I became captain on my knees.

“I don’t want to give the idiot anything else to use against her," and myself. Not that Jim wants to mention that to her because he wasn’t quite sure of her opinion of him. They have been too busy working on operation ‘get Nyota to calm down’ to actually form an opinion of one another

"And Spock?"

"Same thing. Actually it’s the other way around.” Jim sighed realizing that he was going to tell her more than he wanted to. “Everybody already thinks that Spock is doing my job for me. You heard what Williams said. When they find out we’re together, they will probably just assume I’m paying him with sex.”

“But that’s not the case?"

‘It probably keeps him from turning in his resignation,’ but Jim knows not to say this out loud.

“Spock hates incompetence. Despite our personal relationship, he’s going to call me out. Actually, I
think he’s more likely to call me out because of the relationship since he hates accusations of impropriety.”

“Such as assigning Nyota to a different ship and reporting exactly what happened during the Volcano Incident?” Seriously, who told her about that?

“Exactly. And we weren’t even really together at that point.”

“But the feelings were there?”

“Yes, but I wasn’t going to do anything about it. After one unfortunate incident when I was a lot younger, that I’m sure your girlfriend told you all about, I’ve learned not to fuck up other people’s relationships. So I’d resigned myself to nursing an unrequited crush and spending my days with the Kitty cat twins during shore leave, but then…”

“You died.”

“So you do know about that?”

“Nhi told me.”

“Of course she did.” Jim sighed to himself.

“That changes your perspective on a lot of things. Nyota came up with this option and I like it.”

“So contrary to what her idiot father believes she was the one who proposed this?”

“Yes. 100% her idea.” Jim just appreciates that idea wholeheartedly.

“I see.” She said noncommittally.
“I’m well aware I’m nobody’s first choice as a significant other for their daughter or son. There’s this tiny part of me that’s weary about bringing the other two down with me. I’m sure 90% of my crew think I’m an irresponsible slut. I’m sure you heard half the things that Williams was mumbling under his breath. I’ve not been able to change that misconception, even by working my ass off. The only thing I can really do is shelter Spock and Nyota from my bad reputation.” Which is the only reason why Jim’s going with keeping his relationship on the down low.

"By whatever means necessary?"

"No. I won’t leave.” He said looking directly into the woman’s eyes. “I can fade in the background. Pretend to just be their friend and wait for things to calm down. But I’m not going anywhere. Despite what your ex-husband wants."

"I haven’t cared what my ex-husband wanted since the divorce papers were signed. The fact that you sent him an email where you told him to get fucked caused you to go up several points in my esteem.” She actually smiled at him.

"You heard about that?” Even Nyota didn’t know about that.

"He forwarded the email to me. And I told him that gave me a reason to like you." She actually smirked as she said that

"At least you have one reason to like me."

"At ease, Captain. I don’t hate you. I think you’re a little rough around the edges, but you’re aware of that." That’s an understatement.

"Very aware of.” I just wish I realized that before I got Chris killed. Jim thought to himself bitterly.

“There is another reason why I wanted to talk. We will be going over a lot of after action reports and surprisingly, you were personally involved in several incidents that just happen to be great examples in Captain decision-making. Before I pushed these action reports to anyone’s PADD, I wanted to see if you would be okay to cover these in class?” Jim looked slightly shocked that she’s even asking. Nobody else cared before. Let’s just say the Kelvin incident was really popular at the Academy.

"Please tell me we won’t be discussing the battle of Vulcan or the Vengeance Incident?” Williams
would have too much fun going over both of those reports.

“First, both of those incidents are above my security clearance, especially the Vengeance Incident.” Jim exhaled in relief. “Second, you were the decision-maker in both of those instances and as much as I would love a deep discussion about what happened, I want you to stay a student in this class.”

“And what incidents do you want to talk about?”

“The Kelvin incident and Tarsus.” He’s not surprised. Both incidents were studied in other classes, but nobody actually talked about what made his father do what he did or why Captain Chan ignored orders. It was basically a dry retelling of the Starfleet version of what happened.

“I want to discuss why Captain Chan ignored orders and proceed on to Tarsus.”

“And why my father went head-to-head with an angry Romulan?” Jim added.

“We didn’t know that at the time.”

“Tarsus I can offer insight into because I was old enough to remember, but I only understand why my dad did what he did because I did the same thing.” Jim admitted reluctantly and the professor frowned.

“As I stated earlier, I want you to stay a student. So maybe we’ll skip the Kelvin incident. All the other classes cover it anyway. However, in the case of Tarsus, I would do most of the discussion with Admiral Chan stopping by to discuss why she made the decision she made. No one in this room needs to know that you were there.”

"And that my mom is now in a mental hospital because of it." Jim added offhandedly.

"Especially that part."

"I’m okay with it as long as we go over what really happened and not the sugarcoated Starfleet version.” Jim literally threw up reading that version of ‘the incident’. How can they refer to something that horrific as just an incident?
"That’s why Chan is coming in, despite her busy schedule. Actually, her second act as head of Starfleet was redoing the Tarsus curriculum to be as accurate as possible, including acknowledging that Starfleet did not do the right thing in the beginning." It was at that moment that Spock appeared in the door to the classroom.

“If we really talk about what happened, then it will be okay. I have to go. Spock is here and he gets cranky when he doesn’t get his lunch before 2 PM.” Jim told her as an excuse to leave.

“Vulcans do not become cranky.”

“See what I have to put up with.”

“I will see you Wednesday. Make sure you read all the files being pushed to your PADD.”

“Will do professor.”

XXXXX

"So my mom is actually your instructor for the class? Nyota asked incredulously as Jim tried to teach her how to make French bread pizza. (She’s less likely to screw up if she doesn’t have to make the actual pizza dough.)

Spock had a similar reaction on the walk to lunch, which consisted of raising an eyebrow and ordering a mudslide when they got to the restaurant despite the fact he was working that afternoon. Jim is going to take that as the Spock equivalent of ‘better you than me’. The traitor! (Who eventually made up for it by giving him a hand job before Jim had to be at his next seminar.)

"It’s fine. She even defended me from certain idiots in the class. Apparently everybody knows about what happened on N..."

"She should have told me.” Nyota interrupted him mid-word.
“Didn’t she tell you that she was planning on helping me improve my Captain skills Friday night during your bathroom confrontation?” He remembered hearing this detail some time during the long ride home.

"Yes, but…” Nyota slams her knife down just a little too hard on the pepperoni. “I really would like to stop trying to read between the lines of my family. Can they just tell me what’s really going on?"

"I think that’s pretty much impossible with all families.

“Are you sure you’re okay with spending eight hours a week with her?"

"It’s okay. She promised not to kill me. Now that you’re done massacring the pepperoni, you can start putting it on the pizza."

"I’m not that bad at cooking."

"You’ve improved.” He said before starting to assemble the pizzas himself. What went unsaid was ‘by improved, I mean, you only started one fire this month.’ Jim’s reward for not saying it out loud was a gentle kiss on the lips.

“Does this mean Spock and I will no longer be sleeping in the guest room tonight?” He asked her, just as she put the now assembled pizzas in the oven.

"Maybe.” She kissed him again.

They did end up having pizza that night, but it was delivery because they got distracted. Besides Spock did not get home until late due to another meeting with Alexis, so it was fine.

Xxxxxx

"You brought raspberry danishes? Although, it’s a little late for breakfast.” Nyota’s mother said as she ushered Spock into her apartment.

"I’m aware, but I could not find the cookies you prefer.” Spock answered walking towards her
"I’d never turn down a raspberry danish." She smiled at him as she grabbed one of the danishes.

"I should thank both you and Jim for at least getting Nyota to speak with me, even if I’m sure you’re still on the couch because of it."

"We are not sleeping on the couch. We are currently in the guestroom. However, I believe we will be back in our room tonight."

"That’s good to know. So why are you here?" She asked after a moment.

"Why do you assume I have an ulterior motive?"

"Because you do."

"I was made aware this afternoon that you will be James’ instructor. I want to ensure that your personal bias will not influence you during your evaluation of his performance."

"You are aware that I did not ask to be his instructor."

"Admiral Pike informed me of the circumstances."

"Yet, you’re still here."

"Because I care about James greatly."

"I’m aware." Her voice was neutral.

"But that does not change how I feel about your daughter."
"I’m also aware, more so than Nyota’s father."

"I’m glad we understand each other."

"Of course. Also, you should be made aware that Commander Richard Williams kept making various inappropriate comments about James during today’s lesson." Spock had the man in one of his classes during his first year as an instructor. Spock also believes he is a distant cousin of Dr. Marcus.

“James neglected to mention the commander’s name. However, now that I’m aware, I will take care of it.”

“It’s best that I don’t know what you’re going to do."

“That would be logical.” Spock answered directly before leaving, making it just in time for pizza night, mostly because the first attempt was currently charred ruins sitting in the recycling bin.

To be continued.
Chapter Summary

Some people see a family as a concrete concept with certain prerequisites such as the inclusion of a mother and father and 1.3 children usually related by blood and marriage. That is a very narrow definition, excluding many, such as an uncle raising his nephew, grandmother raising her granddaughter, sister taking care of her younger siblings, your best friend taking care of your children after you have passed or maybe just you and your best friend without children involved. For the purposes of this book, family is defined as a group of people who love and care for each other greatly. Blood has nothing to do with it.

Chapter 1 of The Idiot’s Guide to Family Bonding, revised third edition.

Chapter Notes

Thank you to everybody who read or reviewed the last chapter. Sorry for the wait. Real life takes too much time away from fun things like writing.

On this idyllic first Saturday in July, Nyota’s life was good. Her summer students were still manageable and she managed to finish grading all of her assignments last night. Only two of her coworkers were talking behind her back about her ‘unconventional’ love life and she hasn’t heard from her father in weeks, directly anyway.

He switched tactics to utilizing other family members to convince her that Spock is just using her. That wasn’t working. Step mom number two believes her dad is being an idiot who refuses to let his baby girl grow up and her sister Ivy believes the same thing. Okay, Ivy wants all the dirty details, most of which Nyota won’t share with her barely legal half-sister. (She seriously needs to remember to send a late graduation present. Thanks to the dad situation, she was filtering all emails from family members and she missed the graduation invitation.)

Thankfully, Nyota is on better terms with her brothers than her dad is. They really haven’t talked to her father since the divorce, but they email her weekly. Ray was going to be in town in August for some sort of business meeting and wanted to meet the boyfriends. Although considering he had a husband, Ray was probably going to be her most open-minded sibling.

However, in the meantime, she had another family dinner with her mom and Sarah. Things are better with her mom, mostly because she hasn’t been making Jim’s life a complete living hell in class.
despite the vast amount of homework. It was enough to make her think that maybe they could try
dinner again, this time with Jim and Spock doing all the cooking.

Her mom was a little worried about being invited for a home-cooked dinner because she remembers
the grill cheese/small kitchen fire incident when Nyota was 15. However, once her mom realized she
was not going to be doing anything more dangerous than slicing the zucchini, she agreed to dinner
tonight.

As a consequence, Jim was now panicking on the inside and was obsessing over trying to make the
perfect dinner. Because of that, they were dragged out to the Castro farmer’s market on this
wonderful Saturday morning when she could be sleeping in and by that she means pre-breakfast sex.

Spock went to get bread and she was stuck watching Jim spend 15 minutes trying to pick up the right
tomato. He was planning to make the tomato sauce for his zucchini lasagna from scratch. (So it turns
out Spock doesn’t necessarily hate Italian, he just doesn’t like actual pasta. Take out the noodles, he
was a happy Vulcan.) She’s pretty sure Spock left to get bread because if he spent one more minute
around an indecisive Jim obsessing over tomatoes, he may be tempted to break out the nerve pinch.

“Jim, pick one.” She said exasperatedly.

“But it needs to be perfect.” Jim whined as he grabbed another tomato from the bunch. They all
looked the same to her. A tomato was a tomato.

“Seriously, when did you get this scared of my mother?” She shook her head as she grabbed five
random tomatoes from the case in front of her. “Jim, we’ll take these.” The guy scanned her credit
chip before Jim even had time to object.

“No, I like your mother, mostly because she hates your father as much as I do.” Jim said as they
started to make their way to where Spock would probably be.

“However, I’m absolutely terrified of the Admiral and I’m not sure who we are actually having
dinner with. You forgot to tell me that she was…”


“A real ball buster when in professional mold. Don’t get me wrong, she’s a good instructor, mostly
because compared to 90% of the professors I had at the Academy, she can actually teach. More importantly she knows what she’s talking about from personal experience. It’s obvious she is not just repeating the Starfleet party line. At the same time, a quarter of our class has already dropped, mostly because of her natural ability to make you piss in your pants by just giving you her ‘you are a moron’ look.”

“I don’t doubt that because I’ve seen her do it, but you’re exaggerating. There were only 12 people in your class to begin with and two were arrested on treason, terrorism, and corruption charges, during class no less. The other one who dropped the class went into labor 10 weeks early. Her dropping out had nothing to do with my mother’s intimidation skills.” She said in her mother’s defense, even if she was really happy that her mom was teaching at HQ and not the Academy.

“And let me just say how much it warms my cold little heart that Richard Williams was one of those picked up on corruption charges for helping uncle dearest. I have pictures of them dragging him out. That’s my new moment of Zen.”

This incident happened last Wednesday and Jim has been happy ever since. Williams was arrested after Carol supplied Starfleet with various documents that she found cleaning her father’s house at Spock’s behest, although Jim doesn’t know about Spock’s role in the entire thing. She’s not even supposed to know that, but Kevin Chan has a really big mouth, especially when she’s helping him with his Romulan.

“I can tell that you didn’t like him.”

“He didn’t like me and I’m done dealing with people who hate me for no good reason, especially when so many tried to kill-- I need basil.” Jim said as he became distracted by the display they just past.

“We have basil at home and if we don’t, just replicate some.

“What is wrong with you? You do not use replicated spices even when you’re in the middle of deep space. You’re better off using nothing at all. Besides, that’s a basil plant. The house has nothing but windows.” Who is this guy and what did he do with her boyfriend?

“Dr. Caraballo says I need a hobby. Gardening might be good and a spice garden would be great. Although, since it’s not really my house, I guess I should talk to Spock about that first before I start landscaping.” Nyota frowned at that.
“Later. It’s my day off and I would like to do something other than watching you fill up on zucchini and tomatoes. Let’s go find Spock.” So I can yell at him for making you feel unwelcome in your own house.

“I thought you’d like watching me filling up Spock’s zucchini.” Jim gave her advice to the screen.

“I will hurt you.” She glared.

“I think The Exotic Coffee Stand is two Isles over with various roast imports from all over the quadrant. Get yourself some caffeine and a pastry and Spock and I will meet you later… As soon as I figure out why he’s holding a two-year-old.” A two year old that looked a lot like the baby picture of Jim that Winona kept on her dresser and her desert rehab room. The eyes and hair were uncannily similar to Jim. Said two-year-old also had a very big bruise on his wrist.

“Why are you holding a kid that looks like my mini me?” Jim asked apparently picking up on the obvious similarities in appearance.

“This is Peter. He is lost. He lost his mother around stand 142. We are currently looking for her because he does not remember her communicator extension.” Of course Spock would be helping the kid find his lost mother. That is such a Spock thing to do.

“Do we have any idea what we’re looking for?” Of course Jim offered to help because that was a Jim thing to do.

“Apparently his mother’s name is Arlene and she has the same color hair as Peter.” At that, Jim got a strange look on his face.

“Peter, how old are you?” The child held up three fingers at Jim’s gentle question.

“The universe is full of coincidences.” Jim mumbled under breath.

“Is your daddy Sam with you?” The child tensed up at Jim strange question.

“Daddy’s gone. Mommy said he’s not coming back.”
“Don’t worry about that. I will help you get back to mommy. Let me just see if I happen to have her number. I may not because she rarely calls me. Actually, the last time she called me was to tell me you were born. Although right now, I wish she’d given me a picture so I would know it’s really you.” Okay, why would Jim know about this kid unless…

“Please tell me this is not the kid of your ex-girlfriend. He looks like your clone.” Jim’s glare became ice at her words. She instantly knew she should not have said that.

“Contrary to popular belief, I was never that reckless. I always took my shot or at least I did before radiation fried my sperm. We don’t have to worry about that now.” Now she kind of feels like a bitch for saying what she did earlier. You can’t come back from the dead without consequences and in Jim’s case, he is now sterile. Every time she sees him interact with a small child, it is obvious how much he wishes he could have something like that and unfortunately it’s not going to happen.

“Nyota’s comments were in no way intended to paint your previous behavior as…”

“A word we can’t say in front of a three-year-old.” Jim joked, but his smile did not reach his eyes. “I totally expect S word shaming. It’s okay.” No, it’s not.

“This is my nephew, I think because it’s not like Sam actually bothers to even send me a picture or even call every once in a while. I didn’t even know they were back in San Francisco. Actually, I didn’t even know they were on this planet.” That doesn’t surprise her at all. They tried to contact Sam after the incident without much luck. They did get a hold of his girlfriend and she actually sounded worried, but not Sam himself.

“Found it. Apparently, she actually called after the Vengeance incident and now I feel bad for not calling her back.” The fact that she actually called moved her up in Nyota’s esteem.

“At least she did call.” Jim said as he grabbed his communicator out of his pocket.

“Now you return my call at the worst possible time.” A frustrated voice said on the other side of the line which obviously belonged to Arlene. She could hear this because she was standing right next to Jim.

“Sorry for being a di… inconsiderate person. I was busy being unconscious and I sort of never went through the 400 messages I received when unconscious. Are you at the Castro farmer’s market?
“Actually, yes. But I can’t talk now I need to find Peter. He ran away from me again He’s getting a tracking chip when I find him.”

“Does Peter happen to look like me at two, but dressed in blue and plaid?”

“You found him.” The relief was evident in the woman’s voice. “Thank God you found him. How did you find him?”

“Not me, my boy -- my friend, just my friend, Spock ran into a really cute three-year-old when trying to find me the perfect baguette for the meet the… for dinner.” ‘Seriously, you are usually better at lying then this.’ Nyota thought to herself.

“Say boyfriend.” She says, being completely serious. “I know you want to. Sam is a bastard. Don’t believe a damn thing he said. I don’t care if you’re gay, you’re still you.”

“I’m well aware of that and the situation’s more complicated than Sam. A lot more complicated.” Like intergalactic politics complicated. “I’m just surprised you’re aware of Sam’s imperfections since you agreed to marry Sam in the first place.

“I came to my senses before the wedding.” Again, there was that sense of relief in her voice.

“There’s a story there.” Considering Peter tensed when the name ‘Sam’ was mentioned, Nyota was sure there was a story there and it probably was the same story Jim went through with stepdad number one.

“Unfortunately, it’s not a story for little ears. Meet me at the Exotic Coffee Stand. You can get a cup of coffee as you give me my kid back. I’m sure you still have a caffeine problem.” Definitely the same story.

“We will be there in five minutes.” Jim hung up his communicator.

Without words, Spock gave Peter over to Jim and they started making their way to the coffee shop. However, she stayed back with Spock.
“Are you okay?” She whispered.

“There are many ways to answer such an ambiguous question.” That was Spock for ‘no, I’m not okay, but I’m not going to tell you that.’ She sighed.

“Yes. And we’ve been together long enough that you know what I’m asking.”

“I am physically well.” Avoidance was never a good sign with Spock.

“You’re apprehensive about something. Dinner tonight? I told you, my mom does actually like you now.”

“I am aware. When I asked Peter about his father, he started to cry and asked for his mother instead.” She frowned at that.

“That’s not weird. His mom was the one he was with and apparently his father was gone.” Considering his lack of concern for Jim when he nearly died, this doesn’t surprise her. However, Nyota would really like to know the story behind what happened.

“When Peter grabbed my hand, I could feel his fear at the possibility of being with his father. Now that I’m aware that the man in question is the same individual who did not inquire about Jim’s well-being post incident, my apprehension has increased.” She doesn’t blame him. She was also concerned. You couldn’t trust somebody who couldn’t even be bothered to visit his mother or brother when they are in the hospital. But they don’t know the whole story. Relationships are often more complicated than what they appear to be on the surface.

“Understandable. But I think the woman hugging Peter for dear life is good.” She said, pointing to the reunion between mother and son and she could literally see the tension in Spock’s demeanor decrease exponentially.

“Don’t scare Mommy like that. I was afraid that Sam…” The child tensed in her arms as she stopped abruptly. "I was afraid someone took you.”

“Sorry.” The little one mumbled into her chest.
“Don’t do that again.”

“So this was a very interesting way to meet my nephew for the first time.” The smile on Jim’s face was obviously fake. She knew that he hated being so detached from his family.

“I know.” Arlene looks down at the ground. “It was just hard to schedule something because…”

“I’m no longer on speaking terms with my brother and we were all in different solar systems for a good portion of that time. It’s okay.” That was Jim Kirk for ‘no, it’s not, but I’m not going to tell you that’.

“I guess we’re just going to have to fix that if you’re going to be around for a while. I’m staying with my sister for the foreseeable future.”

“I’m planetside until at least January. Charity? The one who lives in a studio in the not so nice neighborhood?” Jim asked with worry in his voice.

“Actually, it is Cara. She’s now up to a one bedroom in an only slightly questionable neighborhood. We’re only about five or six blocks away from the market.” Which would put you in the still not yet gentrified part of the neighborhood.

Okay, now Nyota was sure, something was going on. You don’t make that type of move unless you have to. And she says this as somebody who cleaned out her savings account to get away from a step mom that liked to hit her.

“I promise to come over and you can tell me all about life and how Sam managed to get 16 very important urgent phone calls in a period of six hours.” 12 of which came from Spock.

“That he returned none of.” Nyota mumbled under breath.

“That conversation is going to require vast amounts of liquor, but I’m more interested in why you’re staying with your sister. Let me buy you a danish.” Jim pointed to the stand behind him. The place was 90% pastries with the smell of exotic coffee filling the air.
“I would love to mostly because I want to know about your friend and his other friend, but we both know Peter won’t stay still that long.” The three-year-old was already squirming out of her arms, his earlier tears already gone.

“Nor should we have that conversation in front of a three-year-old.” She heard Jim mumble, in Vulcan no less.

“I guess I should introduce you to my roommates before you run away and I don’t see you again for four years. This is Nyota and Spock. We all serve on Enterprise together.” Arlene gives Jim a strange look as Nyota extends her hand to shake.

“It’s nice to meet you. I think we may have spoke on the phone when Jim was in the hospital.”

“I believe we did. I’m glad we spoke. It would have been awful to find out what happened on the news.” Which was the entire reason why Nyota was trying so hard to contact all of Jim’s family.

“We could watch Peter while you and Jim discuss what is necessary.” Spock offered. Of course, Jim was giving him one of those looks that pretty much told her that’s exactly what Jim wanted Spock to say at that very moment. It was obvious to her that Jim wanted to ask Arlene about his brother, but couldn’t with Peter around. Also, the woman looked exhausted and probably needed the coffee.

“I couldn’t impose.”

“It’s no trouble at all. Peter can go with us to pick out the new herb garden for his uncle Jim. Would you like that?” She said extending her hands to the toddler. He actually reached out for her, which made Nyota happy.

“You can trust Spock and Nyota. Spock is my first officer and always keeps me in line and Nyota is the one who keeps him in line.” Jim said with a smirk.

“So you both are already professional babysitters?”

“Something like that. He will be fine with us.” At that, Arlene nodded her head reluctantly.
“Thank you.” Jim said as he pulled Arlene to the line for coffee. “I promise to get you something sweet, possibly with chocolate.”

Xxxx

“So obviously, you want to know what’s going on, since you had me hand over Peter to two people I don’t know.” Arlene said once they sat back down with a danish and coffee in hand.

“Spock and Nyota are good people. I trust both with my life.” He almost set hard.

“Because you’re sleeping with one of them. I’m just not sure which. I mean, Spock looked like he wanted to jump you, but Nyota was the one who called me on the verge of tears when you nearly died. You idiot!” Arlene said angrily. “I’m halfway tempted to slap you for scaring me like that.” He knew that Arlene was genuinely hurt. Jim has always had a better relationship with his pseudo-sister-in-law than his actual brother.

“You wouldn’t be the first.” Jim took a drink of his coffee. He missed this so much. He’s so happy that caffeine was now a regular part of his diet again. “So why are you here in San Francisco and why does Peter flinch every time Sam is even mentioned? What’s going on?”

“I left Sam.” She said with a shaky breath.

“I figured that out from the fact you are living in a one-bedroom apartment with your sister.

“And her girlfriend, and their three dogs.”

“Which tells me there must be a good reason for you to do that, especially when you were on another planet the last time I checked.”

“Sam lost that job because alcoholism is apparently a learned behavior. He blames me and Peter for everything going on in his life and took a play out of the Frank handbook. So I packed a bag to get the hell out of there and here we are. It’s a good thing since my stupid birth control shot failed again.” Jim closed his eyes at her words.

“I noticed the bruising on Peter’s arm, but I wasn’t going to say anything.”
“No, that’s from Peter falling off the bike that his aunt got him.” Jim just gives her a ‘you have got to be kidding me’ look.

“I used that excuse a lot growing up.”

“Well, in this case it’s actually true. The bruises from Sam are already gone, the physical ones anyway.” Jim understood that, considering he’s in therapy again and Frank comes up a lot.

“You did take pictures in case…” You need proof of how big a bastard he really is.

“I need to get a restraining order.” Arlene suggested. “Don’t worry, I have one. I did that before leaving.”

“What about a lawyer?” Things could get ugly because Sam could be a vindictive little prick.

“If I could afford a lawyer, I would not be staying with Cara, the puppies, and the girlfriend. I barely could afford the shuttle ticket here. I’m sure it’s going to be a while before I can find a job.”

“I can take care of it.” He could help her that much. Plus, he would actually like to get to know the new niece or nephew from the beginning and not have their first meeting happen by random circumstance at the farmer’s market.

“You don’t have to.”

“We are family. Family help each other out. I already have a lawyer on retainer. Actually it’s more like an entire law firm on retainer, Alexis and Associates. It’s mostly going to be the associates right now because Alexis is on New Vulcan.” Jim knew there was a Shawn on staff that was good with family law.

“What type of lawyer goes by her first name?” Arlene asked barely looking up from her coffee.

The type that’s planning to level a big fat lawsuit on the Vulcan government as soon as she gets back
from her exploratory mission on the Vulcan colony. She has legal proof that forcing Sarek to marry the Princess was as illegal as hell. Now Alexis and her team of investigators are trying to figure out why. Which means fear and loathing on the Vulcan colony. “A really good one, who happens to be the personal lawyer to the Vulcan ambassador to the Federation.”

“Definitely not one I can afford.”

“But I can. As I said earlier, family helps each other out and you have always been more family to me than Sam ever was. Let me help.” I couldn’t do anything with Winona because I was too young. Let me help now. Of course, Jim didn’t even think about saying that part out loud. It would raise too many questions.

“I will accept on one condition. You tell me which one you’re dating.”

“Both.” That caused Arlene to choke on her coffee.”

“I wasn’t expecting that. How did that happen?”

“I have no idea. But it’s good and I’m happy.” Jim answered truthfully.

“And I’m happy for you.” Arlene said as she drank a cup of her decaf coffee that he now recognizes as the same pregnant lady special that he always orders for Nhi. Things stay quiet until Spock, Nyota, and Peter return with a miniature spice garden. Of course, he stayed silent trying to come up with another way he could help Arlene. Why did he have a feeling that was going to take more than coffee to figure out?

To be continued
Chapter 11: Love Wins

Chapter Summary

Your true family are those who are related to you by affection. They will never ‘say I told you so’ only open their arms wide when you realize that maybe you should’ve taken a different course. Their love for you is universal and unconditional. Chapter 1 of The Idiot’s Guide to Family Bonding, Revised Third Edition.

Chapter Notes

Thank you to everybody who read or reviewed the last chapter. It was fun getting to know more of Jim’s extended family and we will continue to do so in this chapter. Some people were worried about the way Jim ran into the mother of his nephew. Don't worry, Spock also found it a little too convenient.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"Again, why are you making tomato sauce from scratch?" Spock heard his girlfriend ask as she watched him and James cut up ingredients from the sidelines. Due to James' nervousness, he would not allow Nyota to participate at all in the food preparations. Therefore, Spock ended up being his unofficial sous chef.

"I know not to suggest something as silly as using replicated sauce again, but there are three jars of really good pasta sauce in the pantry. Maybe it would be a good idea to use one. My mom is not going to care that you use something out of a jar, especially when you spent most of the afternoon making a blueberry pie from scratch."

"Because you got me an entire spice garden this morning and I want to use it. The rosemary and basil will be perfect for this." Jim said as he walked over to the miniature spice garden now resting by one of the windows in the kitchen.

"There are some days where you act like a three-year-old with a new toy." Nyota sighed.

"Since we are on the subject of three year old children and your spice garden, I would like to know what transpired during your conversation with your sister-in-law." Spock asked.

"Technically she is not my sister-in-law because she had the good sense to leave the bastard before
the wedding. But she is family all the same. Actually she is more family than Sam ever was because hey, at least she took the time to call me when I almost died. That is a hell of a lot more than Sam ever did. Arlene would even visit mom when they were planet side. Sam never gave a fuck." James' tirade was very bitter. However, the fact that Arlene was willing to visit Winona put Spock's mind at ease somewhat.

"Spock is convinced that Arlene meeting up with us at the Castro market was completely engineered for purposes only known to her." Nyota explained.

"I did not say that."

"Not in those words, but you did say something about the improbability of such an event happening at random."

"Despite everything that happened with the Vengeance incident, not everything is a conspiracy." Jim sighed. “The Castro farmer’s market is like the closest nice place for groceries near her sister’s hovel of an apartment. Otherwise, she would be living on government-subsidized replicator food.” In 23rd century Earth, starvation was a thing of past due to such programs. However, fresh food was still the privilege of the wealthy. Places like the Castro farmer’s market tried to correct the imbalance.

"If Arlene was that cunning, she would have never ended up with Sam in the first place. She definitely wouldn’t have been the victim of his lies about contraceptives twice." James said dismissively as he continued chopping.

"This whole thing is as coincidental as me meeting your other self on the ice planet of the damned. Completely improbable, but it still happened. Meaning that the theists are right and there is some divine power manipulating everything or my life is really a fictional story told by someone completely willing to force things for the sake of plot."

"You just said she was the victim of faulty contraceptives twice, yet we only met Peter. Do you have another niece or nephew that we are unaware of?" Spock asked.

"That depends on your philosophy of when life begins. She’s pregnant, which is the main reason why she decided to pack a bag and go to her sister’s den of iniquity after Sam had a Frank moment." James said as he started to toss all the ingredients for his sauce into a large pan.

"By that you mean physical abuse of some nature." Spock asked for clarification.
"Unfortunately yes. Sam hit Peter because… You know I don’t even know why he hit Peter. Arlene said something about losing his job and crawling into the bottle full-time because of it. But that doesn’t justify beating the hell out of someone who is barely 3 years old." Spock could tell James was furious.

"So that’s what happened." Nyota said thoughtfully. "I noticed some bruises."

"She said those were from falling off his bike, that the ones from Sam were already long gone." James shrugged. "She could be telling the truth because I don’t even know how long she’s been here."

"Probably after the accident, considering she doesn't look that pregnant right now." Nyota suggested.

"She's about four months and if you know, you can see it. Otherwise, you just think she's wearing really baggy clothing. And you're right about her arriving after the accident. She probably would have visited otherwise.

"Yet she has not." Spock was slightly offended on James’ behalf because of that.

"It wasn’t like I actually bothered to call her back after she tried to check up on me post incident." James said in the woman's defense.

"You received a great deal of correspondence during your incapacitation. It is unreasonable to believe that you would have responded to every message." Spock is well aware that Nyota is rolling her eyes at him at this moment.

"But I should have responded to Arlene. She’s a good person with absolutely awful taste in men. Hell, I've known her longer than Sam. We went to school together. She actually packed a bag and ran away, which was something my mother never did until it was way too late." At that moment James left to grab a bottle of wine. Spock was certain he was going to pour himself a drink despite still being under an alcohol restriction.

"Do you think your mom would be okay if I put wine in the tomato sauce?" James said abruptly changing the subject.
"Mom? Yes. Actually, the more alcohol, the better. She likes a good wine and even better brandy." Nyota joked.

"I can work with that." James snarked.

"However, my sister may break out in hives. Ivy has a food allergy to alcohol."

"I’m so sorry." Nyota shrugged at Jim’s words.

"That’s another family dinner for you to worry about which won’t be happening for a few weeks."

"All of these family dinners are going to kill me." James shook his head.

"Ivy is quite enjoyable as is the majority of Nyota’s family." Spock said trying to reassure James.

"Outside of my father.” Nyota mumbled under her breath.

"We can go with that." Jim said, just as the doorbell rang. “Especially because I’m sure your mother just arrived 90 minutes early."

"I doubt that.” Nyota was proven wrong when Spock went to the door to find both the Admiral and Sarah standing there with boxes of pizza in hand. James was not amused.

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"So she actually did not believe that Jim can cook and brought pizza just in case things became disastrous?” Alexis asked via the video screen in front of him.

He was currently conferencing with his attorney via a secure channel. However, instead of speaking about the reason for her visit to the Vulcan colony, they were discussing the family dinner two night’s previously with Nyota’s mothers. He is sure there is some logical reason for this discussion, but Spock is yet to discern what that is.
"Yes." Spock sighed.

"How offended was Jim by her bringing pizza?"

"Only slightly. He saved the sauce for another day and prepared grilled zucchini and eggplant to go with the pizza. However, his homemade blueberry pie was enjoyed by all."

"Why does your boyfriend only make pie when I’m on another planet?" The lawyer actually pouted.

"I will remind him to prepare a pie upon your return, once your fact-finding mission has concluded. When will you be returning to Earth?" Spock hoped it would be soon because that meant she found what she needed to find to keep his father out of a loveless marriage of political necessity.

"Soon. Nyota’s father has been too quiet. That worries me and even though my team is dealing with him directly, he is more cooperative when he knows I'm close by."

"He has been systematically trying to convince various members of her family to alienate her." Alexis just closes her eyes at that comment.

"How’s that going?"

"Her sister will be arriving to visit with us very soon and in the meantime, keeps asking Nyota very detailed questions about our sex life." Spock remarked dryly. Alexis responded with a smile.

"I hope this is not the only reason why you’re returning. I would like the situation with the Vulcan counsel resolved as soon as possible."

"No. The Vulcan Princess has agreed to break off her engagement in exchange for not revealing to the entire Vulcan community that she is nothing but a money obsessed person of poor morality who agreed to marry your father when promised a vast amount of money. She’s very concerned with my entire legal team making it difficult for her to secure a new husband of good standing."

Any type of scandal would make finding a new bond mate quite difficult for the young woman. Especially because, despite appearances to the contrary, most of her personal wealth was lost during
the destruction of Vulcan. Unlike his family, the princess’ family were too proud to invest substantial amounts outside the planet. This would explain why she was in such a hurry to marry someone with considerable wealth so she could maintain the lifestyle she is accustomed to.

"Who is the person that organized this business arrangement?" Spock asked concerned.

"Right now we believe it to be her distant cousin, newly appointed Elder Sunk." Spock is vaguely familiar with the young Vulcan since the man's father tried to kidnap Spock as a small child. "But there could be others involved."

"And what was the motive?" Other than greed and race purification.

"His main motivation is taking over as head of your family and everything that comes along with that, including the Council seat. Other than you, although several generations removed, he is one of the last members of your house. If he can get your father to resign because he refuses to marry, he believes that he could take over everything. However, he miscalculated your father's willingness to do anything to protect you."

"Many underestimated this, including myself. However, I wonder why this person assumed they would easily be able to take over the seat, considering I am still alive."

"You’re in Starfleet. It’s possible he just assumed you wouldn’t be interested in politics and he could take over the seat and your position as head of household. Also maybe he just assumed that because you had a human partner for the last three years, you would not be willing to give her up to secure your own political power. Of course, this is not an issue anymore since the council has so graciously changed the requirement to producing offspring by whatever means necessary once they were ‘informed’ of the unconstitutionality of the original policy." Alexis snarked. Spock is quite happy with this change.

"However, you believe there may be another possible reason why he did not consider me a threat to his plan?"

"I’m sure a human supremacist and Vulcan supremacists can find mutual ground somewhere in their mutual hatred for a multi-species individual of Vulcan and human ancestry." This explains why Alexis asked for this conversation to happen over a secure channel.

"Are you looking for connections to the recent incidents at Starfleet?"
"I’m looking at everything. Right now the immediate danger has past. The Princess is out of the picture and the law has been adjusted because at least somebody on the council has the good sense not to want to deal with the public scandal."

"So at this time there is little chance that Sarek will be forced to marry someone else of the Council’s choosing?"

"I’m pretty sure anybody else they would choose would be better than the princess, but as the rules stand now, as long as he is popping out babies of at least partial Vulcan ancestry, they have to stay hands off your father’s love life." The lawyer joked.

"Don’t worry. I will handle it. I’m the lawyer. Let me handle the ins and outs of arcane Vulcan marriage/reproduction law in addition to all of the political conspiracies. I don’t think they can try anything for at least a little while and maybe your father will find someone he can actually tolerate on his own when he’s ready to do something like that. He’s actually a sweet guy in his own way and he cares about you a lot. He’s very datable." Spock just raised an eyebrow at that.

"I may be your lawyer, but I have eyes." The lawyer said in her own defense.

"Also tell Jim that Shawn is very happy to help Arlene keep her son’s father a good 200 meters away at all times at least until he successfully completes anger management and alcohol counseling. Shawn would’ve done this pro bono even if Jim wasn’t willing to pay for services.” Spock just looked at her in complete puzzlement. “My ex-husband had a mean left hook, so I get it. I had a lot of good people help me get out of that mess. So I try to pay it forward whenever I can. Hey, I have to go. I will give you an update before I come back.” With that, the lawyer was gone before Spock could ask any more questions.

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Spock is concerned because he knew nothing about this, not that he was opposed to actually helping Arlene. James should discuss this stuff with him and Nyota first before making any offer of assistance that would have a great financial impact. However, when he asked Jim about this when he arrived home, he just shrugged and said it was the least he could do and it was his money so he could do whatever he wanted with it. Spock did not like that response.

Knowledge of this information brought back some of Spock’s earlier concerns. He felt the best way to deal with these concerns was to talk to Arlene himself (because apparently James was too blinded by emotion to be concerned for himself). This is how Spock found himself at the one-bedroom apartment where she was staying, Wednesday afternoon when Jim was in classes.
When he opened the door, he instantly realized that the apartment was actually a very small studio, as evidenced by the bed and couch crowding the living space.

"You told James that you were staying in a one-bedroom apartment." Spock remarked as he walked inside the very cluttered space.

"Well, I lied. I know Jim. He will give you his last credit to save you if he believes it is the right thing to do because he’s that type of person. I honestly don’t know how that happened, growing up in the environment that he did.” Spock did not understand how it happened either.

“Look, this place is overrun with beds and blow up mattresses. Let me convince Peter to put on some shoes and we can go to the playground in the nice neighborhood." Spock quickly agreed because he did not want to sit on an air mattress.

Putting on shoes actually took several minutes with Peter demanding his dinosaur shoes and Arlene repeatedly telling the three-year-old that is not possible. However, they did eventually make it out the door.

"Why is he unable to wear his dinosaur shoes?" Spock asked 20 minutes later once they were at the playground. Peter was currently preoccupied with one of the swings.

"Because they are several light-years away. We did not have very long to pack. Maybe 15 or 20 minutes. I didn’t want to risk Sam waking up before we were out at there." Spock could sense the woman’s fear every time she said Sam's name.

"You left in the middle of the night?” What did he do to you to make you want to leave that fast? However, he didn’t, not comfortable asking that question.

"I did what I had to do to keep my son safe."

"I understand."

"I don’t think you could ever really understand unless someone you have been in love with for five years started using you as a punching bag. Continuously blaming you for everything that’s going wrong in their lives."
"I was bullied a lot as a child for being multi-species." I was kidnapped and nearly killed by Vulcan supremacist terrorist group.

"Did your father ever hit you?"

"My half-brother did." He put Spock in the hospital after nearly killing him.

"And your father just let it happen?"

"Sarek kicked him out of the house and disowned him from the family. As far as I know he died before the destruction of Vulcan, although I am unaware of the circumstances." Spock responded.

"Maybe your father would understand." Arlene said taking a drink of water.

"In case you're worried about me taking advantage of your boyfriend, I do plan to pay him back every penny he’s spending on legal fees to keep Sam far away as soon as I find a job that pays better than being a server at a retro family diner." Considering what he knows about her education, Spock was surprised by this.

"I am aware that you met James at University. What was your area of study?"

"Biology. I was never able to finish my graduate work. Peter derailed those plans, not that I minded. I'm a lab assistant or I was until Sam managed to get both of us fired. Actually, he managed to get himself fired. Then he got me fired by showing up every day and harassing everyone. They were really nice about it and promised me a glowing letter of recommendation as long as I promised to get the hell away from Sam."

"Which apparently you have done."

"Not soon enough. Unfortunately, in 2259 most jobs that involve my skill set in the San Francisco Metro area require you to have a really high security clearance. That takes time to get and most places don't want to go through all that with me already being pregnant. I can only take so many days on my sister's couch in her ridiculously tiny apartment."
"Which explains why you are willing to work as a waitress despite being significantly overqualified."

"Which explains taking a job that can be done at night when my sister and her girlfriend are there to babysit. Trust me, I would much prefer an administrative job if I could get one because at least I could sit down. Right now, I’m going to take anything. I’m not a freeloader. I wasn’t seeking Jim out for help or money. It was just a coincidence that you found Peter. Honestly, I was avoiding him." The statement worried Spock.

"Why?"

"In addition to Jim's tendency to try to save people, I didn’t feel like dealing with 'I told you so'."

"I doubt James would say that to you directly."

"No, he would just think it. And he would be completely in his right to say something like that to me. I know you’re aware that Jim and I went to school together. I actually met Sam when he interrupted one of our study sessions. Only now do I know he interrupted said study sessions to get money from his brother. I was a fool who fell for a pretty face and lots of lies." A sad expression was evident on her face.

"Jim told me repeatedly that Sam was not a very good person. Actually, I think his efforts to get me away from Sam are probably the reason the brothers are not speaking to each other. Jim was right. I found out the hard way and stayed too long. I didn’t have the strength to leave until…” She was on the verge of tears at that point.

"Until when?" Spock questioned.

"Until Jim almost died. That was my wake-up call. I couldn’t stay with somebody who hit me, who wouldn’t even let me check up on his brother who for all we know could of been dying. That’s when I decided I needed to leave as soon as I could. Sam hitting Peter sped up my timeline."

"Because of that, you were not financially prepared and instead of coming to James for assistance, you are staying in a studio that can barely fit the current occupants?"
"Yes. I blame pride."

"Pride is not logical."

"I’m well aware of that. If it wasn’t for pride, I would have left Sam a long time ago."

"You want to do what?" Nyota asked somewhat surprised because this could not be the same Spock who just this morning was extremely suspicious of Arlene. What could’ve happened to make Spock propose something like this?

"James' nephew and mother are currently staying in very cramped quarters and do not have the financial resources to move. Although I have sent her resume to several of my contacts in the area, it may be months before she has the monetary stability to move into her own apartment. With a new child coming soon, that may prove more difficult without additional assistance, despite legislation regarding pregnancy discrimination."

"Yet you want her to move in here?" She asked again, still blinking in shock.

"It is the logical option. We have the space. Both could have their own bedroom and we would still be able to have a guest room for Ivy to stay in when she visits." That means they would have to get rid of Jim's 'room' which is perfectly fine with her.

"I’m pretty sure she’s going to be staying in a hotel with big brother, but having a guestroom would be a good thing. You never know when your father may stop by."

"This would make it even more logical for her to stay with us until she is in a more stable place. Especially in light of the fact that she insists on reimbursing James for paying for all legal services related to the situation with Sam." That would explain the change in attitude from this morning.

"So that is why you no longer think she’s a gold digger?"

"I never assumed that." Nyota sighed at that.
"You were wary."

"I have a right to be. After discovering that several members of Starfleet used social engineering to essentially send James to his death. "And you as well, but let's not talk about that.

"Not everything is a conspiracy, Spock."

"In that case, will you allow Arlene and Peter to stay with us?"

"You do know this is going to be a big change. We are going to have a kid here living with us. That means toys in the hallway and Crayola marks on your pristine white walls. No sex in the kitchen." Like this morning.

"I believe we can keep all activities of that nature confined to our shared bedroom. Peter can have the room that was originally delegated to James."

"That he's never actually used." Nyota mumbled under her breath.

"We can put in a play area. I believe there is something called blackboard paint that can be used on one of the walls."

"Okay, you have put some thought into this. Planning on having children sooner rather than later?" She joked.

"To a certain degree, especially in light of recent changes regarding the Vulcan counsel charter. Participating in the Vulcan repopulation efforts is something that I will eventually need to do whether I eventually take my father's seat or not." She's not surprised by this because she is well aware that over since Vulcan was destroyed Spock's biological clock has been ticking. She just wanted to slow it down a little bit.

"And in five years, once we are done with said five-year mission, we can sit down and talk about that sort of thing." If we're still together in five years. She hoped that they were. But she was a realist. She had to be after her parents’ marriage imploded the way that it did.
Then again, her mom and Sarah have been together for a very long time. Decades if you count their years of friendship in addition to their romantic relationship. Maybe things could work out. But she wasn’t going to pop out a kid and then gallivant around the galaxy. If they were going to have kids together, they were going to raise children together.

She wouldn’t wish her childhood on anybody, especially her own children. Not going to happen. Not at all. Besides considering all the fertility issues involved with the couple, the probability of an unplanned pregnancy was extremely low.

"I can assist in the repopulation efforts the same way my father is. It is not necessary for you carry the child to term."

"This is a conversation that we will have at a later date. One that will actually involve all three of us." Fortunately at that moment, Jim walked in carrying dinner.

"I’m okay with Spock wanting to donate his sperm to the Vulcan repopulation cause. I’m fine with it, considering the circumstance. I would donate some to the cause. If I actually still had some." Jim said after putting the food on the table, but before kissing each of them. She wondered how much of their conversation Jim just heard. "However, I can help with securing the sample. We could practice now."

"At this time, I have not decided yet if I would like to participate in such a program. However, I will discuss all decisions regarding that with both of you."

"Good. You’re learning. Now discuss the other thing you need to discuss with Jim." Nyota suggested.

"I wish for your nephew and sister-in-law to live with us until she is able to secure adequate employment and financial independence." She had no idea what to make of Jim's shocked expression.

"If I thought that you would agree to it, I would’ve suggested it days ago. Wait, why are you suggesting this?"
"Because we live in a multi-bedroom loft in one of the most prestigious neighborhoods in San Francisco and apparently your nephew is living in a very cramped studio with three other people and two dogs in a neighborhood of questionable reputation.

"And apparently, she has been there since March." Nyota recalled something from her earlier conversation with Spock.

"Damn it. I knew she was lying. Why didn’t she say anything?" Jim said running a hand through his hair.

"I believe she does not want to accept any charity and believes that you will overextend yourself."

"Okay, that’s true. She worked two jobs in college, just to pay for it."

"I thought most college education on Earth was federally subsidized?" Spock asked slightly puzzled.

"Yes, but not the housing and books. Some people do not want to live on replicated ramen noodles for the majority of their academic career." Jim said poignantly.

"Look, I would love for her to be here so I can help with Peter more, but I don’t think she will accept, no matter how bad things are. I barely got her to accept help with the lawyer."

"Which she is planning to repay you for, once she is financially stable." Spock added.

"See."

"Didn’t you receive a lot of reparations from the Kelvin incident? Would not Sam be entitled to some of that money? Therefore, should not some of that money go to his son?" Spock suggested.

"Sam pretty much drank most of his money until I was named executor. I put some stuff away for Peter, but I still don’t think she will accept anything. She’s a very proud person.” Which doesn't surprise Nyota at all.
"Could we try talking to her? Convince her that this would be the best for Peter." Nyota suggested.

"If you're volunteering, then I promise free foot rubs for life. Actually if you succeed, my mouth will be yours for whatever purposes you want." Jim said before they actually started eating dinner.

“She’s your family.”

“If you’re with me, then that kind of makes her and Peter your family too.”

At some point during dinner the offer was increased to unlimited oral sex from both boyfriends and she finally gave in and agreed to talk to Arlene because they both felt she would be the most persuasive.

It only took 6 cups of coffee (on her part), one ridiculously large tip, and a customer pouring orange juice all over Arlene to convince her that maybe it would be okay to live with the group for a couple of weeks.

Nyota only hoped that the current houseguest will be a lot better behaved than the last. Considering that the last houseguest was the Vulcan Princess, that wouldn’t be that hard. Besides she was doing a good thing and keeping Peter and his mom away from his deadbeat dad and she was getting unlimited servicing from the boyfriends out of it. Really, it was a win-win situation.

To be continued.

Chapter End Notes

I’m glad I was able to post this chapter today. Today marks a very important anniversary for me. Four years ago today I was hit by a van walking to work and I survived with only five broken bones and lots of physical therapy. It was a long road to recovery and I still cannot sit down and just right for anywhere near as long as I used to, but I am now 99% recovered. Recently, for reasons unknown, I went back and looked at some of the reviews from that time. It’s only now looking back that I realize how much I needed those words of encouragement to keep me going back then. Thank you.
"This is your room." Jim said as he showed Arlene to the giant bedroom across from his. He will never stop being amazed at how big the bedrooms were in this place. This room has a king size bed, a library/office nook, couches, and a walk-in closet big enough to be converted into a nursery. Sometimes he wondered exactly how loaded Spock’s family really is.

"I think this is bigger than my sister’s entire apartment." Jim is pretty sure he could put the entire apartment in here and still have space.

"Even better you do not have to share your bathroom with four people and two dogs. Aren't you glad you let Nyota talk you into moving in?" Jim said ever so sweetly.

"No I only have to share with Peter. I can take out the couch and put Peter’s bed over there. Maybe even put some screens in for privacy. Really this room is huge. How is this not the master suite?"

"Originally this was the master suite, but it was not to my satisfaction." This was Spock for ‘I did not want to live in my dead mother's former bedroom and therefore spent a small fortune on renovations to create a new master bedroom for myself’.

"There is no need to move a bed in here for young Peter. He will be staying in James’ former bedroom." Spock suggested and Jim could tell that Arlene was hesitant so he decided to talk up the new bedroom.
"It's going to be great. I may have already taken the liberty of ordering a race car bed. OK, I've already set up a race car bed. If he doesn't like it, we can get something else."

"Actually, let me show you." Jim grabbed her hand to drag her to the room where Peter and Nyota were already playing dinosaurs.

"I don't want to kick you out. Peter can share with me. It's a really big space. I'm sure we can get the race car bed in there, which you didn't have to buy in the first place."

Yes he did because Jim always wanted a race car bed growing up and Winona couldn't afford it because Frank pretty much drank or snorted most of their disposable and sometimes not so disposable income. Jim is going to make sure that Peter had everything he wanted.

"OK first of all, I never actually use that room." Arlene gave him a strange look.

"OK I only used that room for the week that Nyota was pissed at both me and Spock for forcing her to talk to her mother, but we have the guestroom for when we inevitably fuck up again. The whole purpose of me having a supposed bedroom was to make Bones happy and at this point, I'd rather just do something useful with it."

"We're going to have to start a swear jar or something.” Arlene suggested, bemused. “No cursing in front of the three-year-old."

"I do not believe such an activity would prevent James from using inappropriate language at an opportune times. It may be more advantageous to teach Peter the appropriate time to use such language." Spock interjected.

"Anyway, I'm thinking of turning the library part of the room into a full playroom. We have to go to a toy store later to stock up. I just picked up some of the basics.” And maybe some of those action figures came from his own collection. The ‘adult’ coloring books definitely did. (It was Dr. Caraballo’s idea.)

"Two shelves full of Legos and dinosaurs are the basics?" Arlene asked incredulously. Some of those may also be his.
"For Jim? Yes. I barely got him not to pick up the Avengers 72 playset.” Nyota said from the floor.

"Because it includes the Miguel as Spiderman action figure. I need that.” Jim whined.

"The box said for children six and up.” Spock reminded.

“OK maybe I am getting some of the stuff for myself but Peter can play with it. Yes, I’m trying to make up for my absolutely s…” Jim stopped himself from cursing when Arlene glared at him.

“I’m not going to be able to keep you from clearing out an entire toy store?” Arlene looked exhausted as she sighed.

“Not really. Besides, I’m currently getting an ‘I’m sorry one of the admirals almost got you killed bonus’.” Okay, it was more like a settlement, so they won’t sue for wrongful technical death, but whatever. “I might as well do something fun with the money. It’s not like I was able to send Christmas or birthday gifts for the last three years. Let me do this for him.”

“As long as you're getting it for yourself. I give up.” She actually threw her hands in the air.

“That’s good, because we are definitely going shopping later. Although we probably only need to pick up more bed linens for Peter unless you hate the stuff in the living closet. I don’t see you as an ocean sea breeze type of person so it may be a problem.”

“Anything’s better than what I had. It’s fine. I’d rather save my money for important things like food.”

“I’m buying. Also, groceries are included as long as you stay here. Unless you want a cheeseburger then you’re on your own, because…” Spock glared at him, and he changed the subject quickly.

“I forgot to show you the giant walk-in closet when we were over there, but it's so big I thought maybe you could turn it into a nursery. We should look at nursery furniture.” He needs to decide what he’s getting baby Pike anyway.

“Why am I not surprised? I would make a joke about you marrying up, but you're not married yet.”
"Not by human standards anyway." Nyota mumbled under her breath.

“I appreciate what you're doing Jim, but you don't have to overdo it. We have at least three or four months before I'm going to need a nursery. Actually, I’m hoping that I will be on my own again by then. I have job interviews all day Monday and Tuesday at places that do not require you to say ‘Do you want fries with that’.

“It’s not a problem. Baby World has the cutest cribs ever. Are we going with green or purple?”

"Purple because it’s my favorite color, not because I know the gender of the baby. I haven’t had time to do a scan yet. But really, there’s no reason to create a nursery for a baby who probably won’t live here.”

“I’ll talk to Dr. Elizabeth tomorrow. She is an OB legend in San Francisco.”

“That’s not… Why do you know who is the best OB in the San Francisco area? Is there another reason why you want to start working on a nursery?” She asked directly looking at Nyota or rather her stomach.

“No. No! No. Nononono no. Not possible not at all.” Nyota said vehemently from the carpet.

Seriously, did she have to say no that many times? Jim will acknowledge that this would totally be the wrong time for an unplanned pregnancy, but it wouldn’t be that bad right now if such a thing where possible.

"If you're having s-e-x, it's always possible." Arlene said as she made her way to the race car bed.

Jim wanted to make some snide remark about pregnancy being completely impossible if your sperm was fried by large quantities of radiation. That's probably not the type of statement he should make in front of a small child. Also he really doesn’t want to talk about his fertility issues or any long lasting side effects of his dying. Not today. Not ever really.

“Admiral Pike is pregnant and because I’m mostly responsible for her single parenthood, we are probably going to be doing a lot of babysitting. It makes sense to have a nursery here.”
“In addition my father also occasionally uses this residence when conducting business on planet. He prefers it to the Embassy. I’m sure he will find a nursery facility useful within a year’s time.”

“Why would he need a nursery here?”

“Well, when you’re an endangered species and you don’t want to get married and you have a good friend who happens to be a lesbian in a committed relationship, you decide to have children the in vitro way and co-parent in different households on different planets. This is usually where he stays when the Embassy becomes too much. Spock’s new siblings, young enough to be his children, will probably be here by this time next year and I won’t be around to pick out decent furniture then.”

“I think you have a shopping problem.” Arlene mumbled under her breath.

“See, I’m not the only one who thinks that.” The conversation was ended at that point by realizing that Peter had discovered the vintage Crayolas that Jim got him and started drawing on the walls when the adults became too busy to actually pay attention. Seriously, how did the child get so fast?

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“Okay, why are Spock and Arlene making lunch and we are stuck in here cleaning off the walls?” Nyota asked as he continued to scrub the gray walls. Maybe they should just repaint. Gray is not exactly the best color for a kid’s room.

"Because I bought a three-year-old Crayolas and you can burn water.” Jim replied cheekily as he continued to try to remove the purple crayon without much luck.

"I’m getting better." Jim just glares at her, probably remembering her burning a grocery store pizza the day before.

"A little bit better. I get distracted and I thought I’d put the timer on before I started talking to Kevin Chan about his latest exam. Why did I give my students my home communicator number?"

“This is because you are a thoughtful, intelligent, and compassionate person who cares about her students’ well-being.”
"Possibly," Nyota went back to scrubbing the very stubborn red crayon marks. She had a feeling that Spock’s designer did not use childproof paint. Sarah never had this much trouble when she decided to write on the wall.

"Being that you are a caring, compassionate person, I don’t get why you are completely freaking out about possibly being pregnant. I mean, it’s not like you’re going to be your dad or your stepmom. I think you would be a good parent. You did not need to say no that many times." Jim seemed angry and he was taking it out on the poor wall. She was starting to see plaster.

"So good that I’m already cleaning Crayola off the wall," She replied snidely, conveniently forgetting the fact that she only colored on the walls at Sarah’s house because she trusted the woman not to smack her for doing something so kid like.

Did she mention that stepmom number one was a little on the violent side? She would love to say that her father left when stepmom number one did that with her baby sister, but the truth of the matter was he left because he caught her sleeping around.

"We were in the room when that happened. You really can’t stop kids from coloring on the wall. We just need to get blackboard paint to keep this from being a regular occurrence.” Jim said, throwing his rag on the ground. “I’ll call a painting company Monday. Maybe we can do kid friendly colors in here.”

“It’s possible I was having a tiny flashback to being shipped around to various family members when my parents were gallivanting in space.” She admitted reluctantly.

"So that was a ‘not now’ and not a ‘never ever don’t even think about getting me pregnant or I will cut off your dick.”

“I like it too much to do something like that.” She joked. “With Spock’s biological clock ticking due to possible extinction, it can’t be never." Nyota needed to help with the repopulation efforts as much as anybody in a relationship with a Vulcan right now.

"And if that wasn’t an issue?” Apparently, they were getting to the point in their relationship that Jim could really read her. “He could always do what his dad is doing.” Not happening. No boyfriend of hers is going to jack off in a cup and get some random person pregnant. Not happening at all.
“He’s planning to co-parent though. And do we really want to share Spock with another person?” Jim gives her weird look. “I don’t mean the kid. I mean the mother. You know I like kids, but they are a lot of work. Do we really have time for kids right now? All three of us nearly died a couple of months ago in the line of duty and I just don’t feel like making my parents’ mistakes. Besides, it’s not like we can have a serious unplanned pregnancy.”

"I have too many fertility issues for that." Jim sounded bitter. Other than making the occasional snide joke he won’t talk about that particular long-lasting effect of dying and they really need to.

"We have too many fertility issues for that.”

“Spock has special snowflake biology that we also have to contend with.” Jim quipped.

“That’s not what I mean. Did you forget that there are three people in this relationship and you’re not alone? That you don’t have to deal with this all by yourself? Do you realize that what affects you affects all of us?”

“I know that. I just-- I think dinner is ready.” She lets Jim lead her into the kitchen without pushing. The issue doesn’t come up again during dinner and well, they had better things to do once they were in bed, things that could get her pregnant if Jim did not have an infertility issue that he refuses to talk about.

Xxxxxxxxx

"What are you eating?” Spock heard young Peter asked that morning at breakfast. He was currently sitting across from Spock wearing the Spiderman T-shirt that Spock is certain James picked out.

"Grain cereal.” He replied without looking up from his bowl. Spock had exactly 17.3 minutes to eat before his 8:30 AM conference call with Lieutenant Commander Scott regarding Enterprise’s reconstruction. Due to James’ academic activities, these meetings fall to him presently. Thankfully he was being allowed to do these activities from home so that he may watch young Peter during his mom’s job interviews today.

"But it's not blue and it's hot.” The three-year-old said looking at him strangely.

"Not everybody eats blue Spaceship Crunch for breakfast.” Arlene said passing a bowl of bright cereal to the child with pieces that were supposed to resemble starships, if starships were to look like giant round pieces of breakfast food. “You've had oatmeal before.” Peter proceeded to make the
same face James makes any time he is asked to spend time with any member of the admiralty that he hates.

“Do not make that face at me. Otherwise you will be eating oatmeal tomorrow and not the type with fake dinosaur eggs or chocolate pieces. Eat your cereal.” She said exasperatedly.

“What are the black seeds?” Peter asked still paying more attention to Spock’s cereal than his own.

“Chia. Vulcans do not consume protein that is derived from the killing of animals, therefore it is necessary for me to utilize alternate sources. Chia is very high in protein. It is also something that James is not allergic to.” In an effort to prevent James from being hospitalized again, Spock has removed any item that James is allergic to from his diet.

He is currently grateful that chia, sunflower, and flaxseed do not trigger any sort of allergic reaction in James.

“It's better than quinoa.” James said as he kissed Spock on the cheek before sitting down next to him.

"Are you guys sure you’re going to be okay taking care of Peter by yourself while I’m at my job interviews today. I could make other arrangements." Considering they were still trying to see if Peter qualified for Starfleet day care by virtue of being James’ nephew, he was uncertain of what those options would be.

"I’m a Starfleet Captain and Spock is my first officer. We usually have to babysit 800 at a time. One kid cannot be anywhere near that hard." Spock personally did not feel that confident. He has spent very little time with small children. He was still shocked that he was able to save young Peter when he found him separated from his mother less than a week ago.

“Do you remember how you met your nephew for the first time?” Arlene looked skeptical.

“Obviously you’ve never dealt with sophomore interns.” James had a valid point. They have had to rescue more than one cadet due to inappropriate behavior.

"Says the guy who became a Captain straight out of the Academy."
"There is a very big difference between 19 and 26." Jim said pointedly.

"Yes, you can afford to buy your own Captain Marvel action figure." Nyota quipped as she sat down on the other side of James with toast in hand.

"Because she’s awesome. We could go to the toy store later today. I definitely want the Avengers 72 playset, for Peter of course.” Spock doubted that to be the case.

“No toy stores without me there. You’ll buy him everything.” Due to James’ misplaced guilt at his inability to protect Peter from Sam’s abuse, he is trying to make amends with material things. “I could call my sister."

"Spock will be here the entire time. Spock is like the most responsible adult I have ever met. He was kind of in love with me and still reported my major fuck up to Starfleet.” Which was socially engineered to happen, from the beginning, according to current reports.

“Yes, but will you be here?"

“I will be here most of the time, but Nhi has a baby checkup at 9:30 AM and I have therapy at 4 PM. But all other times I will be here. We should go to Pizza Forest for lunch. They have a ball pit and they let parents go inside with their kids.”

“You know this how?” Arlene asked one eyebrow raised.

“Occasionally, the heartless bitch throws Bones a bone and JoJo comes out for an occasional weekend.” James shrugged.

"I don’t have class today until one. I can work on papers from here if it makes you feel better." Nyota volunteered.

"It does actually." Arlene said relieved.

"Okay just because she’s female doesn’t mean that Nyota is better at taking care of children than either of us."
“Yes, but due to having a step mom who didn’t care about anything other than herself and a father who was too busy with his own political career, my brothers and I pretty much raised our sister Ivy by ourselves.” This is the first time he heard anything about this.

“Good point.” Jim said before turning his attention back to his coffee. He didn’t want to talk about the fact that most of his childcare experience came from taking care of the kids who saw their parents murdered during the Tarsus genocide, including a really young Kevin Chan formally Riley. That is just not good breakfast conversation at all.

The baby checkup went well. Baby Pike was right on schedule for a baby approaching 30 weeks. The creature in the scan looked like an actual baby and could be delivered, if necessary. Actually, if he’s doing the math right, Nhi was farther along than Winona was when he was born in the neutral zone.

The only downside was having to spend time with Christine, who was just as icy as ever. Christine is not exactly thrilled that he’s in a monogamous relationship with her ex-boyfriend. She is also not happy he’s in a serious monogamous relationship with the woman who Christine is convinced stole Spock from her. Really he thinks Christine needs her medication readjusted, but he’s not going to say anything about that because he wants to get home to Nyota, Spock, and Peter before Nyota has to leave for the Academy.

Of course, Nurse Williams grabbed him before he could make a run for his car. The woman hates him for reasons unknown.

“Like always I sent a copy of the baby scan to your personal email address. Dr. Elizabeth also said she has no trouble seeing Arlene. Does July 16th at 3 PM work for you.” Before he could say he would need to double check with Arlene, but he’ll take the appointment for now Christine just had to interrupt.

"So you accidentally managed to get somebody pregnant before you settled down to a life of relative monogamy.” Christine commented snidely and Jim wished the nurse had just sent him an email. He was trying to keep the Arlene Sam catastrophe from being extreme public knowledge and he really didn’t want to.

“Christine, I love you, but calm down and stop making snap judgments about things you don’t understand.” Nhi chided her niece. Even though they were only nine years apart, the woman had the best ‘don’t mess with me’ aunt voice ever. She was absolutely terrifying like this. “Arlene is his
sister-in-law. Due to circumstances that you’re not entitled to know about, she’s living with Jim right now."

Nhi knew all the dirty details because she was helping him get Arlene and Peter on his health insurance and trying to get him any other possible benefits. Thankfully Starfleet health insurance had provisions for ‘nontraditional families’. However, day care was taking a little bit longer to get approval.

"Technically she never married Sam. He completely fucked up before then.” Jim mumbled the last part under his breath.

"Must be a genetic trait." Christine snickered. Jim was about to make a comment about mental illness that would be in very poor taste, considering his mom’s institutionalization, but was cut off by Nhi before he could say anything too stupid.

“Just because it didn’t work out between you and Jim does not mean that you need to be nasty because he happens to be dating your ex-boyfriend. Let it go. You are even engaged to someone else now. Can we just get through one baby checkup without you two at each other’s throats?"

"You're asking for the impossible." Jim sighed. He could only take so much Christine time before snapping back.

"Probably, but I'm pregnant and I get what I want."

“This means we are stopping for pizza right before dropping you off at Starfleet?” Christine sighed.

“Of course.” Nhi smiled.

“You really should eat healthier.” Jim was thinking the same thing, but he already gave up on that front.

“I’m getting the ratatouille with eggplant, zucchini, and squash.”

“This is the most we can ask for right now.” Jim grabbed his communicator to ask Spock what pizza
he would like for him to bring home. He was no longer in the mood for Pizza Forest and Arlene said nothing like that unless she could be there. Apparently Peter has a tendency to go wild when in a ball room.

"So how are things going with Arlene and Peter? Is she settled in yet?" Jim was still technically listening to her but he was paying more attention to his communicator. He was already reading his various messages. The first one he read was Spock asking him to ask the Admiral if a decision has been made about Peter being accepted into Starfleet day care. The next text message was from Nyota with seriously ridiculous pictures of Spock and Peter playing fashion show.

“Good, although Spock would really like to know if Peter qualifies for Starfleet Day Care.” Jim passed a picture of Spock wearing one of Nyota’s nicer dresses with a feather boa and lipstick to the Admiral. Nhi couldn’t stop laughing.

Xxxxxx

It was completely a testament to how energetic Peter was that he was excited to be at his Starfleet required therapy session. He likes Dr. Caraballo. She’s a sharp woman with a wicked sense of humor and she doesn’t treat him like a toddler. That’s always a plus in his opinion when it comes to therapists.

But he’s not always comfortable talking about his feelings with anyone. However, he just spent the last three hours playing blanket fort and honestly, he just wants to take a nap. Which explains why he actually yawned during the middle of the session. This led to a line of questioning he didn’t want to deal with.

“How are you sleeping?” ‘I only wake up from nightmares twice a week now and most of them are no longer about Tarsus. That’s good.’ Jim thought to himself.

“I only got six hours last night, but we were busy doing other activities.” Jim smirked at the doctors so she wouldn’t probe too much.

“Were any of those other activities nightmares?” Okay, this doctor already knew him a little too well.

“Not last night. I usually do not have nightmares after orgasming.” Dr. Caraballo scribbles something in her therapy PADD. Jim wonder what the doctor wrote down during her sessions.

“What about any night since our last session?”
“None of them were about Tarsus. That’s a plus.” They were all about Christopher Pike dying in front of him.

“If I ask you what your dreams were about, will you tell me?”

“Probably not.” Jim sighed.

“Let’s talk about your homework assignment. Did you find another hobby?”

“I got an herb garden. Actually, Nyota and Spock got it for me.” Jim smiled at her.

“I am pleased that you have partners that are willing to help you. Is the garden helping?”

“Do I still want to punch certain idiots I work for in the face? Yes. But we have fresh herbs for dinner. I make a really good Rosemary garlic potato with real butter.” He was going to make that again tonight if they decide not to take Peter to the toy store after his session. Okay they were taking Peter to the toy store after the session so it looks like another night of takeout.

“So cooking is your real hobby?”

“I find it relaxing to a point. Although I don’t think anything not involving orgasms will take my mind off of dying or working for an organization that pretty much got me killed.” He said snidely and Dr. Caraballo scribbles more notes.

“I don’t want you to stop thinking about it. I want you to talk about it. How do you feel about what Starfleet did?” Why does he get the therapist that never stops asking questions?

“This morning I accompanied Nhi to her baby checkup. A checkup that Chris should be at, but he’s not because of what happened and that’s my fault, just as much as it was the people who set up the fucking conspiracy in the first place.” Jim said angrily.

"Were you firing the gun at him?"
“That Harrison or whatever the hell his name was.”

"Then you are not responsible.”

“I don’t believe you.” Jim made the mistake of yawning again.

“Would you rather we talk again about why you’re yawning?”

“I’m not exhausted because I was up all night with nightmares. I wasn’t even up all night, because Nyota and Spock both had work this morning and I had the baby checkup. Okay, time with Christine is always mentally draining.”

“I’m sure.”

“However, instead of quality time with my boyfriend during lunch, I chased a three-year-old around the living room and had to make a grilled cheese with processed cheese product because three-year-olds will not eat ratatouille pizza or anything made with real cheese. Also Peter decided to use Nyota’s lipstick on the couch, so that’s probably going to be my bed for a few days. So more sleep.” Okay, the main reason they were going to the toy store was to get supplies to childproof most of the house because they have too much white furniture.

"Who is Peter and why did you give him lipstick?"

“Peter is my nephew and Nyota believes in gender nonconformity child rearing. Although maybe we should have attempted to take the makeup away after Nyota left.”

“Or teach him that makeup does not belong on couches.” The doctor snickered. “Is Peter the son of your brother who you’re no longer on good terms with?”

“Yes. I don’t think I’ve ever been on good terms with Sam. From the moment I was born, he blamed me for dad dying and our relationship went downhill from there. It made me very grateful that we lived on other planets even if I never really got to see my nephew until a week ago.” That’s the one thing he really hated about Arlene moving so far away with Sam.
“Doesn’t matter anymore because Arlene has moved back and my lawyers are doing everything possible to make sure Sam will never see Peter again.”

There’s a story here you’re not telling me.” The doctor said before scribbling something else in her PADD.

“I think we’ve already had the ‘my brother is an asshole’ session. Actually, I think we’ve had three of those sessions. Maybe four if you count the long rant that was in one of my Winona sessions.”

“It may be time for another one of the sessions if lawyers are now involved with whatever issue you have with your brother. Why are lawyers involved?”

‘To punish Sam for being an abusive asshole.’ Jim thought to himself.

“To get Peter and Arlene on my health insurance.” It was a semi-valid reason.

“Why?” That his therapist obviously did not buy.

“Did I neglect to mention that Arlene and Peter are now living with us?” He said with fake innocence.

“Yes you did. I think you should have brought this up at the beginning of the session. This is a big change. Why is this happening?” Okay, he’s had too many sessions with Dr. Caraballo. She’s too observant.

"I told you. Sam is an asshole."

“Would you like to elaborate on that?” Dr. Caraballo asked patiently.

“I prefer not to.” He crosses his arms over his chest and he could tell that the doctor was trying everything possible not to look visibly mad at him.
“I prefer that you do. You have time. 25 more minutes in fact. So start talking.” She smiled at him. It was her ‘you are going to tell me what I need to know or else ‘smile.

“I think the last session I told you about the great dinner party fiasco.” And completely left out any run-ins with my pseudo-sister-in-law.

”And the fact that you’re very upset about Nyota’s biological mother doubting your cooking skills.” Most of their last session was focused on his future mother-in-law and her ruining his dinner by bringing pizza.

"It wasn't just the cooking skills, it was more like her overall doubt of my abilities. I'm not a complete incompetent idiot. I can make something as simple as homemade zucchini lasagna from scratch.” The doctor just stares at him for a moment. Maybe he should avoid this rant.

"Anyway, when I was picking out the perfect tomatoes that I was never going to actually get to use, I may have ran into Peter because he managed to get away from Arlene at the farmer’s market. It’s a long story.”

“You are my last appointment for the day. I have time.”

With a resigned sigh, Jim told her all about his conversation with Arlene and his efforts to try to help her. Jim smiled when he told her about Nyota and Spock’s willingness to help as well. The two being willing to open their home to Peter and Arlene made him... Honestly, it was the first time he felt like maybe the three of them really were going to be forever and that they were in this for the long haul. That he was an equal in this relationship and he belonged there. That was a good feeling.

"That explains your statement about keeping Sam away from Peter and why lawyers are now involved.” Dr. Caraballo said after she listened to the story that definitely took more than 25 minutes.

"I don’t like people who hit their children.” He always promised himself that he would never be like that to his kids, but that’s not really an option anymore.

"Because of what happened to you as a child?” They’ve had several Frank sessions so of course she’s going to see this as a Frank issue.
"You know that not every fucked up thing I do now is because Frank used to beat the hell out of me?" Jim’s annoyance was evident.

"Of course not. You also survive the Tarsus genocide. You died less than four months ago. You have experienced a lot of unpleasant stuff that has obviously affected you. I’m here to help you work through these issues."

“The keyword is survived. I survived things. I get over them." And then move on to the next disaster.

"But you don’t necessarily deal with those events. Did you ever seek counseling after Tarsus? Did you see anyone after you had to institutionalize your mom? What about when you were put in the foster care system?" Why did he get assigned a good therapist this time around?

“You know the answer to that question. You have seen my patient history. Do you realize that you’re the therapist that I’ve actually spent the most time with?”

“This worries me greatly.”

"Don't be worried. Things are OK. The lawyers are working on keeping Sam aw..." His words are cut off by his communicator ringing.

“You were supposed to put that on silent.” The doctor actually glared at him.

“It’s not my fault. I did put the thing on silent, but there’s an override feature if Spock, Nyota, Admiral Pike, or the lawyers call.”

“The Admiral is 30 weeks pregnant; you probably need to take that.”

“Hello.” Jim answered still being glared at by his therapist.

The person calling turned out to be Shawn. Because Alexis was still on New Vulcan making enemies and blackmailing Vulcans, her associate was in charge of the case. The good news was he got a hold of Sam. The bad news is he’s still a self-centered prick. Despite being well aware of that,
his reaction to what Shawn told him involved a communicator to the wall.

“That mother fucking bastard! Fucking asshole! I don’t even know how I ended up related to that asinine prick!!!”

“I want you to calm down,” he feels Dr. Caraballo’s hand on his shoulder. “Let’s try the breathing exercises we went over last week.” She says in a voice that was a little too calm.

“That’s not going to help. I can’t even...” Say anything else without utilizing more curse words.

“Tell me why you’re upset. What did you find out on that phone call that made you break something in my office?” That’s when Jim realize that he managed to break one of her lamps with his communicator.

“Sam is a really big asshole.” Jim actually lay down on the couch.

“We’ve established that multiple times. What did he do that made you throw your PADD against the wall?” She asked very calmly.

“My lawyer spoke to him. He’s perfectly willing to terminate his paternal rights to Peter and the new baby and stay many light years away if I give him control of what’s left of the Kelvin reparations, including my portion. Actually it would all be my portion considering Sam has already drank his way through his own.” Jim was shaking as he spoke.

“Why does this make you angry?” Really, she’s going to ask that question?

“That he sees his kids as a paycheck or human punching bags. Of course that’s going to make me furious. But at least I took it out on my communicator, not an innocent three-year-old. How can he not appreciate Peter?” Jim asked her bitterly. “I’ve lived with Peter for two days and I have loved almost every minute of it, except when I was cleaning the walls and the couch. If he were my kid, I would take care of him. Give him everything he could ever ask for. I would love him with every part of me. I would be there for everything. The only bruises he would ever have would be from actually falling off a bike.”

“But Sam doesn’t give a fuck. He’s a self-centered prick. This is all just some scheme to get more…” He pauses for a moment, too angry to keep speaking.
“It’s not fair. He can get as many women pregnant as he wants and I can’t…” Tears were starting to sting his eyes.

“Your can’t what?”

“I can’t have children, not like Sam can anyway. I know there are options, but…”

“Because of what happened in the warp core.”

“Yes, I am this way now because I died. Because the radiation completely destroyed my body and… And I know there’s options. I would have to use such a method with Spock regardless, but not Nyota. But Sam gets to have that and he doesn’t even want it. Why do people who shouldn’t have children do and people who should have children can’t? How the fuck is that fair?”

“For generations, people have been asking that question and none of us have the answers. But it’s okay to be angry and mourn. Crying is perfectly healthy as well.”

“But I didn’t actually lose something. Why should I be mourning?” Jim asked the doctor unsuccessfully holding back his tears.

“But you did lose something, the future you thought you would have. Dead dreams deserve to be mourned as much as anything else.” Jim wasn’t sure how to respond to that.

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Jim was exhausted by the time he got home and very thankful that he never told Peter that they were going to go to the toy store this afternoon. He is not up to it anymore. The session lasted another 20 minutes after his tear filled confession. Maybe tomorrow after classes.

“How was therapy?” Spock asked as he continued to stir the soup he was making. Jim was thankful that Spock was cooking because he just does not have the energy.
“Good.” I cried twice and I’m going to have to get a new communicator tomorrow, but I’m not going to tell you that right now.

“Is Nyota back yet and where’s your little shadow?” He asked trying to change the subject. Thankfully, Spock let him, but he was still looking at him suspiciously. He obviously knew that something happened.

“Nyota is arriving late because she’s having coffee with her mothers.” Jim hoped that was a good thing. Considering he used the plural form, Sara had to be there too. She would keep the peace.

“Peter is currently in his room playing with my PADD.”

“Why did you give a three-year-old a PADD?” Jim asked slightly amused.

“I did not give him anything. He took it. However, it kept Peter occupied and allowed me to start working on dinner. He only moved to the bedroom 10 minutes ago when Arlene arrived from her job interviews. Spock explained.

Because he felt it best to let Spock finish cooking on his own, he left to find Peter and Arlene. Besides he should probably tell Arlene about his less than pleasant conversation with Shawn. However when he arrived to the play room he couldn’t tell Arlene what happened. He just couldn’t risk Peter overhearing. He didn’t want the little boy to know that Sam cared nothing for him at all.

Instead they played superhero and Jim wished that he actually had the power to make everything okay. Unfortunately, he was already well aware that no such superpower existed.

To be continued
Thank you to everybody who read or reviewed the last chapter. I am sorry this chapter took more than a month. I’m at a very critical place in my story Alex Suarez and I really would like to get it done sooner rather than later. I only have three or four chapters left. So I moved that story up in rotation.

Once I have that story done, I’m not going to begin a new story until at least January. (Except for doing part 4 of my winter series.) I want to devote more time to what I’m already writing and I also want to finish Dear James and maybe even this story before the new movie comes out in July. (But now I have two more weeks since they just changed the release date to July 22)

During their relationship of 3.72 years, Spock has learned not to ask questions about Nyota’s family or her family life outside of her relationship with the woman formerly referred to as Aunt Sarah. (In recent weeks even that was a taboo subject, due to the discovery of her romantic relationship with Nyota’s mother and the fact that that relationship will soon be legally codified by the usual human ceremony.) Considering the recent interactions with Nyota’s father, Spock could see the logic in a moratorium on family-based conversations. It is quite apparent that her relationship with both parents is complicated.

The Admiral, while kind and well-meaning, can sometimes be slightly overbearing. James is still unhappy about her ruining his perfect family dinner by bringing pizza. It is also very obvious that Nyota gets her unwillingness to divulge major information about her state of being from her mother. Yet, by comparison, the Admiral is still the good parent.

According to the legal team, Mr. Uhura was threatening to do something that would sabotage his daughter’s happiness if she did not give in to his demand that she leave both he and James immediately. However, the man has yet to make his move and they are uncertain of what he will actually try.

Spock was now very aware that the man was close-minded and highly hypocritical. He has the audacity to condemn Nyota’s choice of relationship when he cheated on Nyota’s mother. He claims to be a pursuer of peace and understanding when the man can’t even do that in his own household. His hate filled emails show that the man is wholly unqualified to work anywhere with peace in the title.

Under those constraints, it makes sense that Spock does not know the actual name of her first step mother. Spock was also unaware of the existence of her brothers until he actually met both at a
siblings’ event last year. He only met Nyota’s father once at an official function that he escorted his mother to and technically that was before he even met Nyota.

Mr. Uhura’s third wife, De’bor’ah happened to be a contemporary of Spock’s mother in the movement to end sentient trafficking and sexual slavery in the galaxy. Spock has actually met her multiple times, but it was not until his mother’s death that he found out that she was ‘stepmother number two’.

Because of Nyota’s reluctance to talk about anything family-related, her younger sister was mostly an enigma to Spock, which is why he was initially looking forward to her planned visit. They have met each other on multiple occasions at various events related to their mothers’ work. Of course he did not know she was Nyota’s sister at the time. Actually, Spock was unaware that she was not De’bor’ah’s biological child because she always introduced the young woman as her daughter. Spock is unaware of the complete history regarding that, only that Nyota’s first step mother was not a very good person and ‘shouldn’t be allowed to take care of a goldfish, let alone a small child’.

Up until this point, he has spoken to her very little, just enough to know the superficial about her, including her GPA and the name of her junior prom date. Spock is aware that she is supportive of their relationship to the point that she occasionally sends emails asking for inappropriate details that Nyota says he is not allowed to divulge. She also interviewed him last semester for her project for intergalactic social studies on Vulcan culture.

However, he does not know her well enough to understand why the 17-year-old showed up at their house unannounced, two weeks earlier than initially scheduled. He also does not understand why Nyota told the young woman she could stay as long as she needed to. James is also equally perplexed, yet he left to prepare the guest room without request, bringing Spock with him.

"I don’t think Ny knows what’s going on yet.” Jim said as he grabbed a new set of sheets from the linen closet. Arlene once again offered to give up Peter’s private bedroom, but James vetoed that idea stating that Ivy would be more comfortable in a bed designed for an adult.

"But you have a theory as to why Ivy arrived unexpectedly.” Spock removed the sheets that were currently on the bed. It was necessary to replace the bedding because they may have engaged in certain activities on that bed that morning.

"Spock bear, I always have a theory.” James smirked at him.

"Do not call me that ridiculous nickname." ‘Especially when you kept something very important from me for the last five days’. However, that part went unsaid.
"But you’re so cute. You don’t move up your visit to your sister a few weeks unless there is a reason and that reason probably has something to do with the way she flinches anytime anyone tries to hug her. Her father is a manipulative bastard. An abusive bastard isn’t that far off." His words were angry.

"That would be she who will not be named. I haven’t lived with my biological mom for a very long time. I can change my own sheets. I don’t want to put you guys out more than I have to by showing up unexpectedly.” She reaches over to pull off the sheets only to stop abruptly.

“What is that spot on there?”

'Strawberry lubricant and chocolate body paint, along with other organic substances.' Because James did not inform himself or Nyota about the true depravity of his brother, James will not be engaging in any of the activities that led to the stains anytime soon, regardless of their additional houseguest.

“I think Peter must have spilled his lunch or something on there.” Jim lied. “You’re a guest, even if we had no idea whatsoever that you were coming so soon. Otherwise we definitely wouldn’t have…” James stops speaking when Spock glares at him. “I’m just going to go get the disinfecting spray from the bathroom.”

“What is the catalyst for your unplanned visit?” Spock asked as soon as James left the room.

“You’re always so forthright, honey.” James yelled out sarcastically from the bathroom.

“One of us needs to be.” Spock mumbled under his breath.

“My sire, because he is definitely no father of mine and he hasn’t been for a long time, decided two weeks before my 18th birthday to kick me out for supporting my sister’s right to have two boyfriends at the same time. He was also unhappy about my decision to join Starfleet, but not as much as Nyota dating both of you. He hates that he can’t control me or Nyota for that matter." The young woman explained as she sat down on the couch in the room.

"That behavior seems in character from what I know about your biological father." Spock replied darkly.
“Kicking out your child seems like a bastard sort of thing to do, so perfectly in character.” James walked back into the room and proceeded to spray down the mattress.

"Thankfully, he decided to send me on a one-way trip to San Francisco since I want to join Starfleet so badly after cutting me off from all my accounts. He completely forgot that Nyota is living here for at least the next six months.” Spock hoped that was the case, but he was wary of the man and wondered if there was an ulterior motive. They will need to discuss this with their legal team.

"Our lawyers are making sure of that fact. We probably should call Shawn about this. It may not be related to the case, but they probably should know that the man is a bigger bastard then we all thought." Apparently, James was of the same mind.

“Are these the lawyers that you three were arguing about when I arrived half an hour ago?” Ivy asked pointedly.

"We were not actually arguing about the lawyers. We were arguing about me having dealings with the lawyers without actually consulting anyone else because Sam is a bastard.”

The situation was more complicated than that. Five days ago James was informed that Sam would be willing to terminate his parental rights in exchange for monetary compensation. However, James neglected to inform anyone else, including Arlene, that such a conversation took place. Spock and Nyota found out about it this afternoon when Shawn called Arlene to see how she wanted to handle the situation unaware that James never told her, even though he told Shawn that he would. It is completely understandable that both women reacted in anger.

However, Nyota’s reaction involves vacating the apartment. Both he and James followed this time, instead of allowing her to hide at the nearest establishment that serves pizza until she was ready to converse.

In hindsight, Spock realizes that maybe they should have allowed her to decompress before forcing any sort of confrontation. The fact that they were arguing with one another in front of the building when they encountered Ivy was testament to that.

“Let’s just say everybody is mad at me because my lawyer has a really big mouth. However, it is my hope that now that you’re with us for a few days, your sister will completely forget about what happened and not force me to sleep in the racecar bed. I don’t want to kick Peter out."
“Sorry I’m taking the good guest bed, but I hope the racecar bed is comfortable. You’re going to be there a while. How long have you known my sister? She can hold a grudge forever. She still has yet to forgive me for destroying her perfect teddy bear when I was three years old. Whatever you did is probably going to require a bigger gift. Possibly jewelry.”

“Or shoes and chocolate. Lots of chocolate.” James looks directly at him when he says this.

“Although, what if the only reason why I didn’t say anything was because Peter was always around and I didn’t want him to realize what a bastard his father really is just yet? Also, Nyota was really upset about her mom getting engaged. Really, I was just waiting until the right time.”

The simple meeting for coffee that Nyota had with her mother’s five days ago was not just a simple coffee between mother and daughter, but actually a formal announcement of the fact that she and Sarah have decided to legally affirm their relationship through marriage and were planning for the ceremony to take place sometime during the fall or winter. To say that Nyota was upset about the development would be a gross under-simplification of the situation.

It was also true that Peter rarely left his mother’s attention unless it was to play with him or James or Nyota.

“What is your explanation for not informing me of the situation?” Because Spock did not completely buy his justifications.

"If I told you, but not Nyota, she would be even madder at me because that would mean I’m favoring you and I think she thinks that anyway, because I sort of fell in love with you first. But that’s only because of the ears. They are so cute." James then proceeded to kiss said ears. Spock responded with a glare and an angry eyebrow raise.

"They really are. The Admiral is getting married again?"

“Yes, although she hasn’t set a date yet.” Because she wants to guarantee that Nyota will actually come to the ceremony and that may take time, but Spock was working on it.

“Good for her.” Ivy seemed genuinely happy. “After what my sperm donor put her through I thought she would have given up on the male species entirely.”
“Technically she did. She’s marrying Aunt Sarah.” Jim replied cheekily.

"That explains so much.” Unlike her older sister, Ivy did not seem surprised at all about this revelation. “I wonder if the sperm donor knows that. He’s going to be furious. I need video of that reaction.”

"I’m sure De’bor’ah will tell him and maybe she’ll be kind enough to record it.” Nyota said walking into the room glaring at James the entire time. “If she doesn’t file for divorce first. I think this was the final straw for her.”

“With all of the arguing happening lately, I knew it was coming eventually. At this point, I think she’s just waiting until she can move enough credits out of the main account to live off of for a few months. That was what I was planning to do on my 18th birthday, but the bastard has too many damn friends at an institution that he hates and somebody tipped him off. So I assume that you talk to my only decent parent?”

“I have to because I actually like her and I know she would worry about you.”

“Unlike the man who sired us.” Ivy mumbled under her breath.

“De’bor’ah is happy that you’re safely here and would like you to know that she had nothing to do with what the man did and is currently staying at Anne’s house. I would tell her that I would pay for the divorce lawyer, but I actually want to check with the other two people in my relationship before I make a major decision that will affect both of them.” Her gaze was trained squarely on James.

"I was actually going to tell you about the Sam situation before I informed the lawyers of my decision.” That caused her glare to become even darker.

"After you made your decision.” Nyota shot back bitterly and even Spock was of the opinion that was what James was going to do. Too often James tried to make decisions solely on his own. Sometimes those decisions have very dire consequences, like James dying.

"I didn’t even tell Arlene yet, but I was going to. Just as soon as I could find a moment alone with her.”

“If you would have just told us what was going on, Spock and I could’ve taken Peter out for ice
cream, so you could talk to her about the whole thing like a grown-up. She is also very unhappy with you."

Arlene’s exact words were, ‘don’t give that bastard a fucking penny’.

“I realize that possibility now.”

"You should’ve told me… us what was going on with Sam. We could help.”

“I agree with Nyota. It is not necessary for you to make all decisions alone.” Spock added.

“I was eventually, but it just wasn’t the right time yet. I found out only hours before you were told about the engagement. You have been obsessing about it ever since and I just didn’t want to put anything else on you.” Jim’s words seemed sincere.

"I think it would be…” Spock tried to interrupt.

“I’m hungry because it wasn’t like I was given enough credits to even get a Sandwich at the spaceport. Since this is not my house and I will not move about your kitchen alone, I need help. Also because you tend to burn water, I’m going to take the boyfriend more likely to make me a cheeseburger.”

"I guess that means me because Spock will barely let you eat a hamburger in front of him.” Jim said, moving to Ivy.

“Does he make you use mouthwash afterwards?"

"Only if kissing will actually be involved. Not if it’s just…” James was cut off by Nyota.

"Do not tell my sister that. Same rules as with Peter."

"I know the sperm donors still thinks I am three, but you should know better. I still want to know if you’ve tried double pen…”
"Peter, get back here right now." Arlene yelled as she chased the three-year-old into the guest room. A three-year-old who happened to be covered in water and completely naked. This was becoming a normal occurrence during bath time. Peter really did not like bathing at all.

"That’s why we don’t have conversations like that until the three-year-olds go to bed." James said as he grabbed squirming naked toddler and handed him over to his mother.

"There’ll be nothing new to converse about for at least the next four days." Nyota replied in perfect Vulcan.

“I’m well aware I’m going to be on the couch for a few days.” James replied back in the same language.

“Let me help Arlene successfully complete bath time and then I will make you a cheeseburger.”

"And you can tell me everything I want to know. How does your relationship work? Do you take turns and have like a bedroom schedule?"

“I’m not answering those questions. I never wanted to know what Sam did with all the girls he brought to the house.’

"Because your brother was a bastard.” Nyota mumbled under her breath again in Vulcan once they were down the hall. Actually, they’ve mostly been cursing in Vulcan or other languages since Peter arrived. Spock is concerned this will mean that the three-year-old will be able to curse in seven different languages.

"Seriously, what type of person would ask for money in return for terminating their parental rights? Well, other than step mom number one." This is the first time Spock has heard anything about this.

"What did she do?” Spock asked, concerned. Maybe this will provide him with more insight into why Ivy is there now.

"She only wanted to keep custody of Ivy for the child support check. Despite all of his shortcomings, the sperm donor wasn’t going to let that happen because maybe just maybe, he realized how evil a
person she really was. As soon as he agreed to pay her alimony in excess of what she would be getting in child support, she was willing to give my father full custody with visitation rights, visitation rights that she never actually utilized.” Nyota sat down on the bed. She seemed exhausted.

“So the use of monetary compensation was successful in that case?”

“No, it wasn’t.” Spock waited for more details, but Nyota did not elaborate.

"So you really didn’t know about the Sam situation?"

"I found out the same time you did. Apparently, Jim felt it would be unfair to tell me and not you. He did not want to burden you with what happened until you were in a better place emotionally or at least that was his rationale for doing so."

“But you don’t believe him because I’m not going to be in a better place emotionally about my mom getting married. And by mother, I mean Sarah. It doesn’t make sense. They have been living together for over a decade by Starfleet standards anyway. Why change now? Why fix what is not broken?” She has asked that question multiple times in the last few days.

"Would you like me to list the numerous benefits of a legally recognized union?"

“You mean again. You gave me that list four days ago.”

“If something were to happen to you, your mother and father would have final say in all matters pertaining to your physical well-being. Your father could actually prevent us from even visiting you. The only reason why the three of us qualified for tandem assignments is my status as an endangered species. Normally, we would have to be married by federation standards to receive such benefits.” Spock chooses not to mention that his psychic bond with James is also part of that consideration.

"Valid point. Because I really don’t want my father to make any life or death decisions about me right now.” She said ignoring his statement about tandem assignments.

“But that could be fixed with something other than a marriage license. I will meet with the lawyers. I can do what Jim did and set up a power of attorney. Which is probably a good idea considering I don’t think Sam should be allowed to take care of a goldfish and I’m just really glad we did not have to deal with him when Jim was in the hospital."
"I agree with that assessment." Because Sam seems like the type of individual who would have ended life support for monetary compensation.

"Jim still should have told us what was going on. It was obvious something was. I had no idea why he was so distant these last few days. I was worried. I just wish he would actually talk to us." Spock almost said something about Nyota’s inability to do the same, but he decided he did not want to find out if the racecar bed could hold two people of adult size.

"I assumed it was because the situation with Peter reminded him drastically of his own childhood."

"Which is probably more accurate than my psychologist’s theory that he’s having a hard time adjusting to the long-lasting consequences of nearly dying, a.k.a his newfound infertility.” Spock also believed that to be a possibility, but chooses not to discuss it at this time.

"Are you okay with Ivy staying with us until she can move into the dorms next month? Because even if he crawls here on his hands and knees to apologize, I’m not sending Ivy back there anytime soon."

“Should you not be asking both James and I this question? You stated earlier that you prefer to consult both of us simultaneously with such matters.” Spock responded pointedly.

"He went five days without mentioning the Sam thing and he was already in here to prep the guest room without even asking.” Most likely to avoid another confrontation and to keep your younger sister from discovering what happened in the guestroom earlier today. “I will take that as his consent.”

"I also assisted James in preparing the guestroom.” ‘Because I was the one who suggested using the guestroom due to the fact that the headboard works better with scarves so we could take advantage of Arlene and Peter checking out Starfleet daycare together this morning.’

"I am familiar with what happens when a parent is unhappy with your choices. However, in my situation. I was able to divert most funds into a separate account.” Spock explained. “I realize not all are so fortunate."

"Also, this place was in your mother’s name.” Nyota remarked.
“There might be something else going on. De’bor’ah only knows what that man told her and most of what he told her doesn’t line up with what Ivy said. Actually, he told her that you and Jim sent Ivy the ticket and she left on her own. We all know that’s complete bullshit.”

“Unless it was a surprise, I would notify you of such a purchase.”

“And you would’ve already had the guestroom disinfected if that was the case. We really need to figure out what’s going on. Don’t see this as me punishing you, but I’m going to sleep in here with Ivy tonight. Maybe she’ll give me more details.”

"I thought you were going to make James find out if a full-size adult can sleep in the racecar bed."

"I like the way you think. Also you don’t kick in your sleep, but I do need to talk to her."

“You could do that over food. I believe we have chocolate ice cream in the freezer.” Nyota responded by kissing him.

“Sometimes you’re brilliant.”

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As cool as the racecar bed is, Jim discovered that it was not designed for somebody who’s almost 6 feet tall. Nor was it designed to sleep two people comfortably. He’s sure Peter had a good night’s sleep because he had his favorite uncle-shaped pillow, but Jim is really glad he does not have classes today. It really was his own fault for not moving Peter after he fell asleep post-story, but he was just too cute. And Jim enjoyed being held on to by someone who was currently not mad at him.

Jim was well aware he needed to make an ‘I’m sorry I fucked up’ breakfast. Spock was the only one, other than Nyota’s late arriving sister, who was not furious at him and that’s only because he’s being really Vulcan right now. After successfully extricating from an exhausted three-year-old with the help of Ivy, he set out to make his signature apple pie pancakes. And since the teenager was already up, she offered to help.

"Let me just say I’m so happy that your knife skills are significantly better than your sister’s." Jim was a little reluctant to let her help in the kitchen because he was afraid she inherited her sister’s abilities but that was not the case.
"Mom taught me how to cook, but by that point Nyota was already living with Sarah full-time.”
From context alone, Jim knew that she considered De’bor’ah her real mother. “While Sarah is a
wonderful human being, the only thing she really knows how to make are replicator orders,
sandwiches, and reservations.”

"And cocktails along with her signature cookies."

“The cookies are store-bought and I’m not old enough to try the cocktails yet.” Jim just gives her the
look.

"The egg donor was an alcoholic. I really don’t have much of a desire to follow in her footsteps and
anything."

"That’s probably a good idea. I wish Sam would’ve been that smart, but apparently the moron
decided to follow in Frank’s footsteps and he’s not even a biological parent.” Thus proving that
nurture is more important than nature.

"Biology is overrated. De’bor’ah and Sarah were probably the best parental figures Nyota and I had
growing up. Both of my brothers would call Sarah over our biological mother if we had a serious
problem. I haven’t heard a lot about your brother, but I think you’re father material. You do the
voices at story time and you survived bath time.” Ivy said as she folded the chunks of apple into the
batter.

"That wouldn’t be hard.” Jim poured the first of the pancake batter onto the hot griddle.

“Look, you can also cook. I think you’re going to be a good father of my future niece or nephew. He
doesn’t even bother to apologize, let alone make apology pancakes.”

"I always strive to be better than your father.” He pours a second pancake. “Unfortunately, I won’t
be giving you any nieces or nephews anytime soon.” Or probably never outside of repopulation of
the Vulcan species and this will be coming from Spock because of the endangered species thing.

"And that right there is why you will be a much better parent than the guy who put me on the first
shuttle to San Francisco.”
“What happened?” He asked this question last night, but did not get much of an answer.

“I wouldn’t let him control every aspect of my life. Even though he only pays attention to me when I do something that he doesn’t like. My biological parents had children that they weren’t psychologically ready to take care of and other people ended up doing it. Then daddy dearest gets mad when we don’t turn out the way he wants us to, even though he had very little to do with our development in the first place.” Ivy proceeded to chop an apple in half with one swing of that gigantic cleaver in her hand.

“You seem surprisingly well-adjusted.” ‘Please don’t do that to my dick once your sister decides to leave me behind.’

“I’m not surprised things turned out that way. Raising a child while in Starfleet isn’t the best. I think the admiral wanted to be part of Nyota’s life. It’s just that the job made it hard for her to do so. But at least she tried to make an effort to be in Nyota’s life. I mean, she actually called Nyota and sent presents all the time. She even sent me presents and I’m the reason why her marriage fell apart.”

“That would be your father’s inability to keep it zipped.” Jim flipped over his first pancake. It was perfectly golden brown.

"That’s what the admiral said.”

“The admiral is wise. The Starfleet lifestyle is why we will not be participating in ‘operation rebuild the Vulcan population’ anytime soon.” Especially with the prospect of the five year mission on the horizon.

“Outside of a ‘how the fuck did my birth-control deactivate’ situation.” Ivy joked and Jim frowned.

"Peter has really big ears and I don’t want to be the one being blamed for him learning a brand-new vocabulary word, especially that one.” He already got in trouble for the lipstick thing twice.

"Point.”

“That’s not going to happen. Spontaneous conception between a human egg and Vulcan sperm is 8.2% and its 0.3% when you’re on that happy hormone shot. If you’re going to ever get a niece or nephew, it will be a very planned pregnancy with fertility experts and in vitro involved.”
“I’m well aware that you’re sleeping with my sister as well. You don’t have that problem.”

“Never make assumptions.” Jim sighed as he decided that he might as well explain everything, even though he doesn’t want to. Dr. Caraballo did tell him that he needs to actually talk about what’s going on. If he actually talked about what was going on in his life, he would not have ended up sleeping in the race car bed last night.

“Did Nyota tell you that I was in a coma for three weeks?”

"She said that you almost died doing something stupid and that made both her and Spock realize that they were kind of sort of in love with you." Jim smiled for half a second.

"In addition to getting a new girlfriend and boyfriend out of the entire experience, I also will never have to pay another penny on birth control. Radiation does really bad things to your ability to procreate." Ivy’s face fell.

"Oh. I think the next batch should have chocolate." That’s a new reaction.

"That will mess up the flavor profile."

"Okay you can use chocolate."

"I’m over it.” Ivy glares at him. It’s an angry Nyota type of glare. The type that makes him confess everything instantly. Apparently, that glare is genetic.

"Okay, maybe I’m a little upset because Sam can have kids and I can’t. That’s an entirely different set of issues."

"De’bor’ah is my good mom, my real mom. She was the one who took me to the mother daughter breakfast at school and second grade. She is the one who explained everything to me that time when I was 10 and woke up bleeding from down there and had no idea what was going on. That was really hard for her, considering puberty was a completely different experience for her. She’s the one who brought me my first bra and took me to the doctor to get my happy hormone shot because she doesn’t want grandbabies from anybody but Nyota in the next 10 years.”
“I think she’s going to have to wait more than 10 years.” Jim mumbled under his breath.

“Every time dad started to say something nasty about Nyota dating both of you, De’bor’ah would have her back. I’m sure Nyota would say similar things about Sarah.”

"Before the wedding announcement. Although I’m pretty sure she thinks her mom is not good enough for Sarah and not the other way around. It’s all really confusing." Jim really wishes Nyota would actually talk about it instead of just ranting. Yes, Jim realizes how hypocritical that statement is, but he was really going to tell Nyota and Spock about the idiot brother thing as soon as he could talk about it without punching a wall.

"I’m sure Nyota told you that my mom is an advocate for refugee rights and the efforts to end the intergalactic sex trade, along with sentient trafficking."

"It’s one of the things about her family that she enjoys talking about. Also Spock mentioned that she was a contemporary of his mother."

"Which says more about how screwed up our family truly is then anything else could. It’s public knowledge, but she doesn’t talk about it too often. De’bor’ah was forcibly sterilized before escaping. They did it in a way that can’t be reversed."

"Fuck." Because that meant some truth butchery occurred.

"I thought you were trying not to use that word." Ivy smirked at him.

"The situation called for it."

“Nothing in the world is fair. Not at all and it never has been. So maybe it’s time to focus on what you have instead of what you don’t have."

"Which is why you’re not freaking out over being cut off."
"I knew that was going to happen eventually. I didn’t want to study law at the University of Pretoria."

"Apparently, you want to study it at Starfleet." This is one thing she did mention while they were cooking yesterday.

"This way I will be exposed to every legal system in the Federation and a few outside of the Federation. Klingon legal proceedings are fascinating. I’ll be at UF Berkeley part-time as well, which will provide me with the traditional experience."

"You could have done undergrad at Pretoria and Starfleet later when your father was no longer freaking out about your sister engaging in deviant sexual behavior." And you would have time to financially prepare yourself for the fallout.

"If I give in, it will never stop. I learned that with my biological mother."

“How so?”

"My biological father gave in to her demands for more alimony just to get full custody, but every six months or so she would demand more money in exchange for not challenging him again. De’bor’ah was the one who stopped the games by giving the money she wanted to the lawyers instead."

"Your sister said something like that last night before sending me to the race car bed although there were more Klingon curse words involved."

"Maybe you should listen." Probably.

XXXXX

Nyota really doesn't know how she ended up spending her Saturday shopping with her baby sister. Or maybe she really wants to know what exactly happened between her sister and her father. De’bor’ah only knew so much.

“So how was the makeup sex this morning?” Ivy asked as she grabbed a pair of purple shoes off the rack. Nyota glared at her. Yes she did enjoy the apology pancakes and she was going to allow Jim back into the bedroom, but that wasn’t going to happen until tonight.
"Why do you want to know so much about my sex life? I don’t have to buy you anything."

“Because you actually have one and I knew that because the bedroom table in your guest room contains strawberry lube, the Pleasure Seeker 3000, and lots of scarves. That’s the entire reason why I slept on the floor last night after noticing suspicious stains on the couch as well.”

Nyota just stared at her in openmouthed shock. She swore that stuff was moved to the bathroom after Arlene and Peter moved in. She should just be happy that it was Ivy that found the supplies and not a certain precocious three-year-old.

“You really don’t really need to buy me anything. Even though Jim promised to do so if I babysat Peter. Except for a new instant guest bed because I’m not sleeping on that bed ever. Peter is kind of cute and I enjoyed playing with Legos while you three worked out your issues on top the kitchen table.”

“We did no such thing. You can’t … You were the one who came with no notice.” Nyota spluttered. This is not a conversation that she actually wants to have with her sister.

“Because I had no notice. Trust me, I would have called to give you time to disinfect the guest room if I did. However, I did manage to grab a few things before being kicked out so it's not like I'm going to be handwashing the same outfit in the sink every day. Besides, I’ll be wearing nothing, but Starfleet uniforms in about five weeks.”

“But considering you did not have warning to what was going on, I bet it was a near thing. Besides you're going to want to have lots of options once school starts anyway. Actually you should get lots of leggings. Admiral Chan is working on getting the uniforms changed, but it's probably going to be a while. Despite all the scientific advancements in the world, they are still not able to figure out how to make the lecture halls at Starfleet Academy not be 2° above freezing.”

“You may have a point and I am traumatized by finding your stash.” ‘Then why do you keep asking questions about my personal life?’ Nyota thought to herself.

“Also Jim said he was going to get the stuff for you so that means we actually have to get it ourselves. Jim will just have a bunch of things delivered to the house and maybe only half of it would be wearable.”

“Seriously?”
"Have you seen the bedroom that Jim put together for his nephew? Half of that stuff was delivered yesterday because Arlene doesn’t want to go to the toy store with Jim to buy new things for Peter.” Although thinking about it now, maybe Jim was planning to use the shopping trip to break the news about Sam.

“He likes shopping a little too much. The only reason why he's not with us is Spock and Arlene dragged him to the lawyers to deal with the entire Sam thing.”

After having an adults only breakfast that involved Ivy watching Peter in the playroom while the four adults talked about what to do about the Sam situation, it was decided that they would use the fact that Sam try to sell his parental rights as a means to terminate them. Spock said that he would rather spend money on lawyer’s fees then give a single credit to Sam. Nyota agreed with that sentiment completely.

“I didn't even know they made that many Avengers action figures.”

“Jim gets carried away, especially when he feels guilty.” Overcompensating for his crappy childhood. And she gets why he didn’t want to tell Arlene about what happened and maybe she understands why Jim did not want to put another thing on her with her just finding out that her mom is actually getting married. She just wants him to learn to let people in. And no, she was not happy about finding out about Jim’s jealousy over Sam still being able to have kids from overhearing his conversation with her sister. And no, it doesn’t make her feel any better that Jim purposely did not tell Spock because he did not want to make her feel bad.

“This explains why we started with shoes.” She said, pointing to the several racks surrounding them.

“No, we started here because Spock allowed Peter to play dress-up and my favorite pair of shoes ended up in the toilet yesterday.” Also because Ivy is currently only wearing flip-flops and you cannot wear flip-flops to Starfleet orientation. You just can’t.

“And yet you didn't make Spock share the race car with Jim last night?” Because he didn’t tell me about it until this morning.

“I thought about bunking with you last night just so I could figure out what really happened. Why did our mutual sperm donor send you away in the middle of the night?”
“You already know. I took your side even though you forgot to send a graduation present.” She didn’t forget. It was just that she was purposely ignoring all emails from her father and Ivy did not bother to send her own graduation announcements.

"We are picking that up today. I'm sure you can use a new PADD.

“That would be good since I had to leave mine behind. Although, can we get that after the instant guest bed?” She was never going to live this down.

“Good idea.”

“I actually like Jim.”

“Because he's giving you free range of his credit chip.”

“Not only because of that. He did prepare the guest room, no questions asked, last night and unlike a lot of people I know, he actually can acknowledge when he screws up.”

“He’s getting better at it.”

“You already know that I like Spock so I’m feeling a lot more comfortable with my decision to support you despite the consequences. Besides, I was planning to leave as soon as I turned 18. This just sped up the timeline.

“Because he got you 110 on your intergalactic social studies assignment.” Nyota smirked.

“That and he’s really good to you. Most significant others would not be okay with you getting another boyfriend. Also, that assignment counted as 20% of my grade.” Nyota was just about to explain that she was the one who graciously allowed Spock to have a boyfriend, but then she realized that Ivy was right in a way. They really were both dating Jim. She wouldn’t have been so mad at him yesterday if that wasn’t the truth.

“Since I pretty much got kicked out of my home for supporting the boyfriends, I would really like it if you would not make it in vain because you guys broke up before I even started the Academy.”
“That's not going to happen.” Her voice was full of conviction.

“I think it will because you're in self-fulfilling prophecy mode and the one who is causing problems in your life is you.” Nyota is pretty sure her therapist said that exact same thing to her during a really long phone call last night, but she refuses to acknowledge that.

“I think that would be Dad.”

“The only person responsible for your happiness is you. You can’t let what other people say bother you. You have to let it go.”

“Considering what other people say about me, I’m pretty good at letting it go.” Nyota started.

“Maybe or maybe not. Or maybe the bigger problem is due to the stellar example of our three biological parents, you expect all relationships to fall apart in the most spectacular way possible.”

“Statistics are on my side.”

“Math is not the answer for something like this.” Ivy threw up her hands in frustration. “There are good people in the world and love actually does exist. It's not just some sort of fairytale. Jim and Spock are not dad and you’re not your mother or De’bor’ah for that matter. Things will not implode the moment you actually make a true commitment.”

“I know that. Mom and Sarah have been happily together for over a decade, even if I didn’t know that at the time.”

“Yet you’re completely freaking out over the M-word. A marriage license does not automatically mean things are going to fall apart.” Ivy says a little too wisely. “My best friend’s grandparents had been married for 85 years. See, some relationships do last longer than breakfast.”

Thankfully, Nyota did not have to respond to that comment because her communicator started ringing. It was De’bor’ah probably calling to check up on Ivy again.
“Hi De’bor’ah, do you want to talk to Ivy? She’s standing right next to me.”

“That’s good to know.”

“Where are your boyfriends?” De’bor’ah asked concerned.

“With the lawyers because Jim’s brother is a moron and they also wanted to discuss the legal ramifications of the bastard kicking Ivy out of the house.”

“That means that your father’s latest scheme will definitely not work even if it had very little of a chance of working at all. He bought Ivy’s ticket to San Francisco with his regular credit chip. Moron.” De’bor’ah told her angrily.

“What did he do?”

“He tried to press kidnapping charges against your boyfriends for Ivy’s ‘disappearance’.”

“You have got to be fucking kidding me.” Nyota said out loud which caused everyone in the room to stare at her, including Ivy.

“That he will be happy to drop if you just leave both of them.”

‘Hell no!’

“He has finally lost his mind. Does he actually think this will work?” One, she would not leave even with that threat. Two, their lawyers could easily prove that he was the one responsible for Ivy leaving. And finally Ivy’s testimony would completely damn him which is the thing that really mattered in a proceeding like this.

“Probably because I’m pretty sure he is crazy, actually crazy. I’m pretty sure he needs to be hospitalized and given sanity in a hypo. I’m looking into the requirements for an involuntary 72 hour hold for a psychiatric evaluation.” De’bor’ah said in all seriousness. “My lawyer thinks that it’s highly probable.”
“Let me know if you need any help. I’ll have my lawyers call your lawyers after I tell them what is happening. I’ll talk to you later. Also, next time you see my sperm donor tell him that I plan to never speak to him again outside of inviting him to my wedding to Jim and Spock.” She said, ending the call.

“What did that man do? Did you just say that W word? I thought all synonyms for marriage were absent from your vocabulary?”

“That was hyperbole,” ‘maybe’. “I’ll tell you in the car. Go pay for our shoes. We have to go visit the lawyers.” Nyota said, knowing that this entire thing would be nothing more than a nuisance, but she was really getting tired of her father fucking with her life and Ivy’s for that matter.

To be continued.
Chapter 14

Chapter Summary

Families are created by love and commitment. Any paperwork that comes after that is merely affirmation of what is already there.

Foreword of The Idiot’s Guide to Family Bonding, revised third edition

Chapter Notes

Thank you to everybody who read or reviewed the last chapter. Your reviews help me get through a lot of stuff. I apologize once again for the lag between updates. Lots of family stuff going on with my mom. At the end of September, she slipped and fell and had to have surgery and ended up spending more than half of October at a rehab center. She’s doing better, but there’s a lot going on. This means lots of delays. Unfortunately this is the reason why the final part of my Jim and Spock holiday/winter series probably won’t be coming out until January at the earliest. There’s just too much going on.

"How were you able to obtain six bags worth of items in 48 hours when you arrived at our house with nothing but a backpack?" Spock asked as he deposited Ivy’s newly acquired possessions in the guestroom of his girlfriend’s mother’s home. The Admiral and Sarah offered their home to Ivy when it was decided that even though Nyota’s father’s charges were completely erroneous, it was necessary to avoid any appearance of impropriety.

"Your boyfriend’s credit chip, but we only had time to get shoes before we were called to meet with the lawyers so I’m not even sure where the other three bags came from. There was no time after that because we spent yesterday and most of today with several investigators and various representatives of Federation child services explaining in great detail that my father is an insane liar who made the whole damn thing up.” Ivy slammed the various bags in her hands against the mattress.

“Jim’s sister-in-law procured the other stuff this morning when you guys were busy.” Sarah explained. They were all quite busy this morning recounting to various authorities the various threats that they have received from Mr. Uhura since March of this year. “Just some basics like underwear and sweatpants, but enough to get by for a few days.”

“I do not consider seven pairs of shoes basic.” Spock said, one eyebrow raised.
"Your girlfriend picked them out for me. Nyota said I would need different types of shoes for different activities at Starfleet. According to her, this is just the starter pack." Considering Nyota had to keep half of her shoes in his closet on Enterprise, he really should not be surprised by her definition of a 'starter pack'.

"Nyota has always had a shoe fetish. It was all she ever wanted for Christmas." Sarah added.

"It did make shopping easier." Ivy smiled

"We will pick you up more things in the morning after you get a good night’s sleep. I’m sure you're going to want something other than Starfleet issue… everything. I was always sending my erstwhile girlfriend socks because she thought the Starfleet ones were itchy." Nyota had the same opinion as did Jim.

"You don’t have to do that just because your fiancé’s ex-husband’s bastard child got kicked out. I don’t want to put you out and I know you’re only doing this to keep me from ending up in an emergency shelter until I turn 18." Which was the unfortunate alternative due to the legal disaster Mr. Uhura created by his false accusations.

“You know I never pass up an opportunity to fuck with your sperm donor. Besides, you got kicked out for supporting my daughter so that means I’m going to support you in any way I can. You were always my favorite."

“You’re already putting a roof over my head because the lawyers say that I can’t live with my sister right now. You don’t need to take me back to school shopping.”

“We are actually funding your back to school shopping experience because Nyota informed us that we have yet to send a graduation present.”

“Because you are avoiding all correspondence from he who shall not be named, including my graduation invitation. You don’t have to bribe me with more shoes. Besides the lawyers think that they’ll be able to get my bank account restored considering I earned almost all the money in there myself as a semiprofessional babysitter.” Ivy answer nonchalantly.

“A few things will be from us because we didn’t get you anything for graduation either and I still need to pick up a lot of things for the new house. Also, my fiancé is an admiral now. Which means
we are going to actually be somewhere for more than six months at a time so she can have more than the contents of a backpack. We need to have a decent guest room anyway."

“Not that I don’t enjoy the blankets that look like Muppets.” Ivy said referring to the fuzzy blankets on the guest bed. Spock instantly recognizes them from James’ pretend bedroom. James must have asked Arlene to bring this stuff along.

“Actually, those are on loan from our house.” Spock added. “However, they are conducive to a restful slumber according to James.”

“That’s not happening. How do you expect me to sleep after my father kicked me out of the house and then tried to have it framed as a kidnapping? Then I’ve spent most of the last two days being interviewed by cops, lawyers, and social workers. Really you expect me to sleep now?” Considering neither James nor Nyota slept the night before, he sincerely doubts that she can.

"We could contact Dr. McCoy for a non-habit-forming sleep aid if necessary."

“No pills. I’ll be okay.” Ivy said in a way that told Spock she was anything but okay. Sarah picked up on this as well because she sat next to Ivy on the bed and placed an arm around her.

"I know you’re upset about what your dad did. But there’s nothing you can do about it now. The police have your statement and I have a feeling they all believe you over your father.” ‘Especially with account statements supporting your version of events.’ Spock added mentally.

“But there’s no point in giving yourself a sleepless night. Just let De’bor’ah and the lawyers deal with this today.

"You know I’m not 12, and this actually involves me. I should have a say in any decision making process." Ivy complained as she pulled out of Sarah’s embrace.

"And you will in the morning, but it’s been a long couple of days. Rest." Sarah slowly got up from the bed and walked to the front door. “I promise I won’t let them make any big decisions without talking to you.”

“Okay.” Ivy said begrudgingly as they left the room.
"Thank you for allowing Ivy to stay with you." Spock told Sarah after the guest room door was firmly closed. "It was fortuitous that you are a registered foster parent."

"It came in handy when Nyota ran away. I just kind of wish I managed to get Ivy away as well. Her mom was a real piece of work. It's never good when the asshole is the good parent." Sarah told him as they made their way to the living room where James sat anxiously on the couch and Nyota was just ending a call of some sort.

"Did you get a hold of De’bor’ah?" Spock sat beside Nyota and wrapped his hands around hers.

"Yes, despite the fact that it’s barely 6 AM her time." Nyota sighed.

"I doubt that she slept tonight or rather last night.” Jim grabbed Nyota’s other hand. “Institutionalizing your relative day rarely goes well for anyone involved." Jim mumbled this part under his breath, but Spock still heard him.

"So your father has been forcibly hospitalized?" Spock asked.

"Well between the fake kidnapping allegations and threatening to kill both you and Jim repeatedly, it was pretty obvious to the judge that he was a danger to himself and others. De’bor’ah said it took the judge less than half an hour to make up his mind. We should be glad Mr. Uhura was stupid enough to send his violent death threats via email." The fact that Nyota referred to her father as Mr. Uhura showed how severely their relationship had deteriorated.

"Do you want to go to Pretoria to help De’bor’ah out? We can be on the first shuttle out in the morning." Actually James already arranged for tickets, but Nyota does not need to know that.

"No. I told De’bor’ah earlier that I was never going to speak with him again outside of informing him that I’m marrying the two guys he threatened to kill. Seriously, why did you not tell me about the death threats?"

“You did know about some of the threats. I just neglected to mention the one sent after Ivy arrived on our doorstep. Since we were already busy with him kicking his youngest daughter out of the house right before her 18th birthday, I just didn’t have time to mention it. I had no idea he would try something as crazy as framing us for kidnapping, despite how badly the whole thing was executed."
Considering everything I’ve gone through with Winona, I really should’ve known better.” James looked at the ground.

“Probably.” Nyota sighed. "Spock, what’s your excuse?”

“Probably.” Nyota sighed. "Spock, what’s your excuse?”

“You were already aware of the situation and needed to focus your attentions on your sister. You being made aware of new details would not assist you in your decision-making process. Also, James asked me not to mention it until after we consult with our attorneys.”

“I’m not even sure where to start. Don’t keep things from me just because you think I can’t deal with it. You don’t get to make that call. There’s three people in this relationship and we all need to make these decisions together.”

“I let you in when you let me in. I know you’re mad about what your father pulled, but you’re not talking about it. You’re just going through the motions. Sometimes I feel like you’re just waiting for a moment to leave because you don’t believe that any relationship can really work. And I’m such a screw-up that I can give you a whole lot of material to feed your insecurities.”

“You’re not a screw-up. It’s just… you see what I had to grow up with. You should get it. You grew up in an equal fucked up environment.”

“But I’m not actively trying to sabotage things, it just kind of happens. Probably a side effect of having no good examples.”

“I’m not actively trying to sabotage things either. I’m making things work. I was even the one who convinced Arlene to come live with us.” Spock was currently trying to figure out how to diffuse the situation or at least figure out a way for it not to occur in front of Nyota’s mothers. “Do you agree with him?” Unfortunately, Nyota had to ask him that question.

“You guys can fight or have makeup sex in the car. Cookies?” Sarah said holding up a tray of baked goods. Spock was never more thankful for Nyota’s mother figure than in that moment.

"Ivy says these are store-bought." James remarked, taking a cookie.

"They are homemade. I just didn’t make them in my home." She placed one in Nyota’s mouth. “We should check the car one more time to see if there’s any more of Ivy’s stuff there. You two are going
to help me.” Sarah said forcibly leading both out to the hallway.

“Are we actually checking the vehicle for items that Ivy may have left behind or was that an excuse to allow Nyota and her mother to converse in private?” Spock asked once they were in the hallway.

“Have you always been this observant?” Sarah asked.

“Pretty much. It’s one of his best qualities.” James kissed him. “How long should we wait before we go back inside to rescue them?”

“Not until we hear breaking glass.”

“What do you want to talk about that required your fiancé getting my boyfriends out of the apartment?” Nyota asked seconds after the door swished shut.

“Why do you think that?” Her mom asked too innocently.

“Because it’s something you would do.” Because Sarah was too obvious about it and Nyota made sure that Spock grabbed every single shoe they bought yesterday.

Of course, there’s stuff we need to talk about. The first time you call me since I told you about the engagement was to ask if I could take Ivy in.” Which she only did because she knew Sarah was still a foster parent and could get emergency custody.

“Which you didn’t have to do. We could have made other arrangements.” Other arrangements involved calling Kevin Chan and asking if his mom would do them a favor to guarantee that one of her new cadets would make it to freshman Boot Camp in 2 ½ weeks.

“An emergency shelter. Not happening.” Her mom said firmly. “Besides I like Ivy. It’s not her fault that her mom and dad are horrible people. I don’t hold that against her.”

“This is such a mess.” Nyota sighed. “I bet you’re glad you got out before he went completely off the deep end. Poor De’bor’ah.” She felt horrible for her stepmom and did want to help, but she couldn’t be in Pretoria right now. She needed distance. Being on the same planet was about all she
could handle at the moment.

“I think she’ll get through it though. She’s a strong person.”

“Very strong. I have no idea how she ended up with dad in the first place. Probably alcohol and desperation.” Nyota remarked bitterly.

“Your father was not always an asshole, at least not when he’s trying to sleep with you. It’s just once you’re married, he becomes a complete dick.” Anger was dripping from her mother’s every word.

“After that experience, I’m surprised you would ever consider marriage again. I think that’s why I was so shocked when you told me.”

“You choked on a muffin.”

“I was just surprised. You know I love Sarah.”

“I’m well aware I’m the stepmom in this scenario, even though I gave birth to you.”

“It’s not like that.” Nyota said defensively.

“Yes, it is. But we’re going to be on the same planet for at least five more months so we might as well spend more time with each other.” Her mom gave her a sad smile.

“Just as long as you don’t drag me to every bridal place in creation.” Nyota does not get the desire for obsessive wedding planning. You should just be able to grab a nice dress off the rack, say your vows, and have a nice dinner afterwards with people you actually like.

“I’m having a standard Starfleet ceremony with minimal fuss. I’m even getting married in my dress uniform. Although I’m sure Sarah does want you to go dress shopping with her.” She’s sure Jim would do the same thing. Actually, she would be halfway tempted to do the same thing. Although Spock would prefer Vulcan robes. Okay, why is she planning her own future wedding? Not happening.
“That might be a good idea. We could bring Ivy. She needs a distraction.”

“I don’t regret marrying your father because I got you. Yes, it turned out badly, but that doesn’t mean I’m going to stop living my life because it turned out to be such a disaster. Sarah is not your father.”

‘Thank God.’ Nyota thought to herself.

“And Jim and Spock are definitely not your father. You have to stop waiting for the other shoe to drop. I know it’s my fault you’re the way that you are. I’m sorry I couldn’t give you the example of what a good, stable relationship was growing up.” Nyota could tell that her mother was on the verge of tears.

“You could have if you let me know what was going on with you and Sarah. That’s kind of why I was upset at first when I found out. I always wanted us to be a real family.”

“Baby, a piece of paper doesn’t make a family. It’s love. We were always a family.” Her mother hugged her.

“Honestly, up until you were in college, it was mostly friends with benefits and I wasn’t going to take away your good mommy figure. I needed to be certain this wasn’t going to fall apart. And maybe because of how things were with your dad, it took me a lot longer to realize that this is permanent. But I did get there and someday you will too.”

“I don’t think I am an engagement ring type of person.” Nyota stared at the ring on her mother’s finger.

“I didn’t think I still was either, but things change. Marriages aren’t for everyone. There’s other ways to say that you’re in this for the long run. You just need to figure out what those are.”

“Maybe.” Nyota said before hugging her mom. “Good night.” A few moments later she found her boyfriends waiting for her outside of the door.

“You guys could have waited for me in the car.”
“The garage isn’t heated.” Jim was obviously lying. She doubts they went down there at all.

“I assume that your mother wished to speak to you about the situation with your sister?” Spock pressed the button to the elevator.

“No, more like trying to get me more comfortable with the wedding. The good news, it will be small, but we’re probably going to have to go in our dress uniforms.”

“So much fun.” Jim frowned as they stepped on the elevator. “I assume that you’re almost okay with the wedding now?”

“I’ll be there and I’m probably going to help Sarah pick out the dress. I was always planning to be there. Can we please talk about something else?” Nyota said as they finally exited the elevator. Thankfully, the car was right there so it would be easier to bring Ivy’s stuff upstairs.

“Would you prefer talking about your father? Despite what he did, he’s still your father and…” Jim started to play with the keys.

“We would not be offended if you wish to assist in his care.” Spock finished for Jim.

“What he said.” Jim opened the door for her.

"I don’t want to talk about my father.” She says before they all get in the vehicle. Actually, she got in the back because it will be easier to avoid questions about her father back there. “The lawyers comfortable with our plan of action regarding Sam?” Yes, it was a blatant change of subject, but she’s done with talking about her sperm donor. She can’t deal with this anymore.

"Okay, you know things are bad when Sam is the safe subject of conversation.” Jim sighed and she knew he was right.

“Mr. Caraway agrees with Arlene’s proposition of using Sam’s attempt to sell his parental rights as a means to legally terminate them. He will be filing charges in San Francisco Family Court tomorrow." Nyota smiled. Good news finally.
“Sean’s looking forward to eviscerating him in a court of law.” Jim said a little too cheerily.

“How do you feel about this course of action?” Spock asked.

“That Sean is worth every penny.” Spock frowned in a very Spock way.

“You jumped on me earlier for not talking about my feelings, now you’re avoiding. I overheard your discussion with Ivy before everything fell apart. Actually, you’re mostly angry that Sam can get anyone pregnant and you can’t.”

“Which I’m really happy about since you don’t want kids with me.” Of course Jim took what was said the wrong way.

“That’s not it. It’s more like I don’t want to consider having children until I’m at least 30 with anybody.” She clarified.

“Well at least accidents can’t happen, especially when you stay on at least six types of birth control even though neither one of us can get you pregnant.”

She was going to make a snide comment about that, but Jim does have a point. Why is she on all of that stuff when it’s not necessary due to her current partners. She is not planning to leave and she trusts both of them not to pull the same stupid thing her father did. Maybe it’s time for a change.

“Can we pick up a pizza. I don’t want to cook today.” Jim suggested breaking her out of her thoughts. That’s blatant subject change number two of this ride and they’re barely out of her mother’s garage.

"I’m not even sure if anything is still open.” Nyota said, looking at her watch.

“I’m sure one of your favorite pizza serving bars would be.” Jim suggested and all three agreed. It really had been a long 48 hours.
When they arrived home an hour later, they promptly fell asleep all in the same bed with her mother’s words still on her mind which is probably why she had this strange dream about adopting triplets with her boyfriends. However, her dream did give her an idea of how to deal with things with Jim regarding his ticking biological clock. All she had to do was find an online bookstore and talk to Spock before she put her foot in her mouth again.

Really Jim thought he would be done with spending way too much time in the private reading rooms in the library when he graduated the Academy last year. But having a three-year-old in the house means that if he actually wants to finish his essay for his sort of mother-in-law’s class, the library it is. Besides, he has a better chance of accessing the super secret classified reports about a certain Starfleet catastrophe that he is writing about, if he was on Starfleet property. It’s not really hacking if you have a top secret security clearance. He even has a need to know. He’s sure that the Admiral will appreciate his extra effort.

However, he was not expecting Nyota to show up at 3 o’clock with food. Even though he is grateful because he’s pretty sure he ended up giving his emergency granola bar to Nhi this morning because the baby comes first. Yet he was still hesitant to eat.

“Did you make this?” He said, looking at the sandwich dubiously.

“I can make a sandwich. Sarah made sure I could at least do that much. However, that is from the deli down the street because I know you hate cafeteria food.” She said taking the seat next to him.

“Because they make it purposely bad to get us comfortable with replicator food.” Jim lamented as he unwrapped the prosciutto and mozzarella sandwich. He almost took a bite before noticing the pesto aioli.

“Probably. I even made sure that the pesto aioli had no pine nuts. I know you have issues with pine.”

“I like pine nuts. They don’t like me.” He said. “This is good.”

“Glad you are enjoying my I’m sorry sandwich.” Nyota quipped.

“I think I owe you ‘I’m sorry’ cookies for not telling you about your dad or Sam.”
“I realize that you really didn’t have time to tell me about the latest death threats considering they arrived about an hour before you went to the lawyer.” Jim wondered how she found that out, but decided not to ask. “Look, maybe I overreacted about you keeping that Sam thing quiet while you came up with a plan.” Nyota stole a piece of prosciutto from his sandwich.

“I really was going to tell both you and Spock. I just needed a little time to get my head around what was going on.”

“I get that now.”

“Not that I don’t enjoy having lunch with you, but don’t you have classes right now.”

“Remember, Mondays are mandatory Starfleet therapy day. I just survived a session with my Starfleet appointed psychologist and now I’m back on campus to grade some papers because if I go home, Peter is just going to want to play with my PADD.”

“Probably.” Peter had a bit of a preoccupation with PADDs.

“However, I just had this feeling that you were going to starve yourself to make a good impression on my mom. You really are a workaholic.”

“I did bring a granola bar.” That I gave away to the pregnant lady this morning. “Excellent timing for a mandatory therapy session. You definitely had a lot of stuff to talk to Dr. Margarita about.” Jim said, taking a bite of his sandwich.

“Why do you know my therapist’s first name? Did you sleep with her too?” Jim was not entirely sure she was joking about that.

“I got an email this morning that my therapist will be on a top-secret assignment somewhere in the galaxy for the next month and I’ll be meeting with your therapist in the interim. I have an appointment this afternoon where I will be forced to talk about your father framing me for kidnapping and my brother being a dick in general.” Actually, his session was originally Wednesday until he sort of accidentally told Dr. Caraballo about the kidnapping accusations.

“At least the police believe Ivy’s side of the story and are not pressing charges,” So far.
“Against me you mean. They’re considering filing charges against your father for making a false report, but your dad is currently in the psych ward at the UF Pretoria University Medical Center so they can’t do anything right now.” Jim grabbed one of the carrot sticks he brought along. “He’s still there, right? You didn’t bring me a sandwich to prepare me for the news that they’re letting your father out early.”

"De’bor’ah sent a text message. The 72 hour hold is now a two week hold." Nyota smiled sadly at him as she picked up her own sandwich. Something extremely healthy which is why she stole some of his prosciutto.

"That’s not good. Sanity in a hypo usually kicks in by this point." For someone who has yet to be on antidepressants, he sure knows a lot about them. His family is just that screwed up.

“Not if you refuse to take it.”

“Winona has had a few episodes like that. Actually she gets like that a lot. The good days are the ones where she’s taking her medicine and just thinks I’m 15. I’m just happy that there’s been more good days than bad ones lately.” He really didn’t want Nyota to have to deal with this. Winona’s mental problems have taken a lot out of him over the years.

"We should go back there to see her again during the week I have off between summer session and the beginning of the fall semester. Do you think that she can handle Peter?" That’s a good question. Jim is 99% positive that not only has Winona never met Peter, but she may not even know of his existence. Although considering she still thinks he’s 15 on the good days, it’s not that surprising that she would be unaware of her first grandchild.

"I would have to talk to her doctor." To see if she’s still in a good place by Winona standards. “I’m not sure. Maybe the better question is can Peter deal with his Nana. Maybe I should ask Dr. Caraballo if she knows a good child psychologist. Though, I’m not sure she’s in a place that she can actually read emails.”

“Or you could talk to my doctor about it before your session. Maybe she will knows somebody who can deal with teenagers. Ivy needs somebody." Your father using you as part of his scheme to screw with your older sister is definitely grounds for quality time with a therapist.

“I agree with you on that point, but Ivy is now about three weeks from being a Starfleet cadet. That means she gets to use the fabulous therapists from student services. Unlike your father. We need to
treat her as an adult."

"I thought you told me you made one cry."

"That was one time. I apologized." He joked.

"In addition to lunch. I also brought you this. Consider it a ‘I’m sorry I made you feel like I don’t want to be here when I really do gift’."

"A data chip. You shouldn’t have. I hope this is a video game I can play with Peter." Jim joked.

"It’s a book and I’m not sure Peter would be comfortable reading The Idiot’s Guide to Infertility."

"Okay, they really do make an idiot’s book for everything. Why did you get me the infertility one? I thought you were all excited about the fact I can’t get you pregnant."

"Now I am excited about the prospect of maybe getting off of my six types of birth control eventually. I’m not happy that you’re in pain and I know you’re angry about Sam not caring about the kids that he’s had because he couldn’t bother with actually taking his contraceptive shot when you can’t have any because you sacrificed yourself to save all of us. I think that’s causing some problems. I just would like for you to talk to me about it instead of with my 17-year-old sister."

"What about my therapist. I did talk to Dr. Caraballo about it.” He admitted reluctantly.

"What did she say?"

"That it’s okay for me to hate Sam and be jealous. It’s also okay for me to mourn the fact that I’m not to have that dream family that I wanted. You and I would have made some really cute kids. With my eyes and your nose, they would’ve been adorable. But now I’m just going to resign myself to helping you and Spock raise cute kids with his ears and your nose. Still adorable." He was starting to become more comfortable with that possibility.

“But not biologically yours.” Nyota gave him a sad smile.
“Which doesn’t mean a damn thing. From just talking to her for a few minutes, I can tell that De’bor’ah was a much better parent to Ivy than your father ever was.”

“De’bor’ah is the best. You know we could still have cute little kids someday with your eyes and my nose. Leonard is not a fertility specialist. I mean, he’s an excellent doctor, but he’s not a specialist. Maybe he’s missing something.” Nyota mentioned gently as she squeezed his hand. He knew that she was right. Dr. Caraballo even emailed him a referral to a friend of hers that specializes in this sort of thing.

“I don’t know. What is the point of going to a fertility specialist when we are not going to have kids anytime soon? You completely freaked out when Arlene mentioned the possibility last week.”

“That was not about not wanting to have kids with you someday. I’m not opposed to having children eventually. I’m just opposed to having children that you’re not ready to take care of. There’s a difference.”

“I’m well aware of that. I did survive Frank. You did a good job with Ivy.”

"Because we had no choice. My brothers and I had to take care of Ivy. Dad was too wrapped up in his career and evil stepmom number one was too wrapped up in her own narcissism to even care about a kid, unless she was using her as a..." There were tears running down Nyota’s cheeks.

"Punching bag?" He passed Nyota a tissue that he kept in his backpack. During his time as a captain, Jim had to console enough employees that he sort of got in the habit of keeping disposable tissues on him even though they were now ridiculously expensive. All paper products were.

"Yes."

“I understand and I’m not going to love you any less because you’re afraid of ending up like your dad or stepmom number one. Maybe I love you more because you’re actively trying to avoid becoming like them." After quickly looking to make sure the blinds were down, he leans over and kisses Nyota on the lips.

“Yeah, but I’m starting to realize I was so afraid of ending up like my dad that I’m letting that fear keep me from doing things I want to do and maybe that needs to stop.”
“I don’t think you can end up like your dad if you ever have children. We’re doing okay with Peter.” Jim shrugged.

“That’s because it is four against one. Soon it will be two against one and then three against five once baby Pike arrives. I’m well aware that you’re taking a very active parental role there.” Nyota smiled. “Which I am perfectly okay with because that’s who you are.”

“Not at all. And he’s going to have to work with her soon to plan Nhi’s baby shower. That’s going to be a disaster.

Nancy will be all by herself and we will be in the land of no children allowed for the next five years.” Valid points.

“Chan says that’s one of the first things she wants to work on, along with making the female uniform practical. Starfleet is losing too many good people due to their family unfriendly policies.” Okay, actually she referred to the policies as misogynistic.

“If anybody can change the policies, she could. Kevin Chan told me that she raised him on ship.” He’s not surprised Kevin told her that. Kevin was gushing about Nyota, the last time they talked.

“They were absolutely terrified of her revealing the Tarsus truth.” That they sat on their asses and her breaking orders was the only reason why anybody survived the massacre.

“It’s obvious that this is something that you want eventually. There could be more options if we start looking at it now. If there really is a .003% chance of you and Spock getting me pregnant despite our rigorous bedroom activities, then there’s no point of me staying on the happy hormone shot.” That’s what this is about.

“If it really is that unlikely, there definitely is no point. Did you mention this to Spock?”

“Yes he emailed me several articles about birth control side effects and told me to get you that particular book on infertility. I think he’s on board, if we have another method in place.” That method being statistically sterile.
“That’s our boyfriend. It’s your body. Although, aren’t you worried about accidentally getting something due to my illustrious sexual history.”

“You haven’t been with anybody else since the Kitty cat twins way back in February.” And he barely did anything before getting the call, mostly because he had trouble getting it up for the Kitty cat twins. They just weren’t his Spock and Nyota. “According to your last check up, you are clean. This is my way of showing that I trust you not to go off and sleep with someone else behind my back that will give you and subsequently me, OPV. I might never be ready for wedding rings and bonding for me is off the table, but this is me saying I’m here and I want to be here and I’m not planning on leaving anytime soon.”

“You’re not?” Jim looked at her kind of shocked.

“Both you and Spock do things that absolutely drive me crazy, but I’m not leaving. I love you. And nothing’s going to change that, not my father and not your occasional tendency to do things that you think are for my own good without consulting me.” He really should’ve told her about Sam being an asshole earlier. Definitely fucked up there.

“I will learn to consult more.” Or at all. Really, he should learn this lesson from everything that happened in February. That was a truly disastrous month. “So it’s your opinion that I should see a specialist?”

“It’s not like our insurance doesn’t cover it. I think you will be more at ease if you know what your options actually are. It’s the 23rd century. There’s more than one way to have a biological child. This way we will know what to expect when we are ready for kids post five year mission.” He smiles at the fact she gave him a specific time. Actually, he smiled at the fact that she expects that they will still be together in five years’ time.

“Dr. Caraballo gave me the name of a couple of specialists. She believes the same thing you do, that if I know I have options that I will be less depressed about the present situation.” Okay she said that he would be less jealous of Sam, but he’s not jealous of that unappreciative prick. Seriously, how could anybody not want to love Peter? He’s perfect.

“Logical conclusion.” Nyota smirked.

“That Spock’s line.”
“Well, he’s on a conference call with some of the higher-ups about Enterprise reconstruction. Otherwise, he would be here with me for this conversation.”

“I’m so going to have to give him a hand massage for dealing with all of that bureaucratic bullshit while I’m off taking all my captain classes.” Now that he’s halfway through, Jim is definitely seeing the benefits of these classes. He just kind of wishes he was able to do this before the Vengeance incident.

“You mean hand job.” Nyota smirked at him

“Of course.” Jim leaned over to kiss her. “But if I do this, you have to talk to our resident bond specialist, Dr. Kim, about how you’re convinced that you won’t be able to bond with Spock due to the fact your other self couldn’t. I saw that sad look you gave me a couple of minutes ago when you mentioned not being able to bond. I know you’re upset about that.” And maybe a little jealous and that’s why sometimes you’re really hesitant about this relationship thing.

“I’m not allowed to see Doctor Kim in a therapeutic capacity due to…”

“Due to the fact that I used to sleep with him. And therefore, you being his patient would violate most of the carnal roles of psychologists. But Kim is also the only one we know in Starfleet who is familiar with Vulcan bonds because he has one. We need him as a friendly advisor, if nothing else.”

“We could just call other Spock for a referral.”

“But this is not his dimension and don’t you think it’s kind of cruel to rub in the fact that we’re all happy together and things kind of fell apart for him and his Nyota.” And possibly with him and his Jim, but the old Vulcan is vague when he’s not being a meddling asshole.

“Point, but if we already know what happened in the other dimension then why would we seek a specialist here.” Jim rubbed his temple feeling a headache coming on.

“So Vulcan blew up last time around as well?”

“Point.” Nyota rolled her eyes.
“At best our counterparts are like identical twins. Genetically the same, but still a different person because we’ve experienced different things. That plays a part in things that affect the mind. That’s why it’s possible for one identical twin to develop something like schizophrenia where the other identical twin is completely unaffected.”

“Fine, I will talk to Kim, but not today. Actually, it’s not happening until you have your own doctor’s appointment.” Great, she’s playing hardball. At least she did not threaten him with withholding sex. That would just be awful, especially because her fingers are strategically stroking his pelvic area underneath the desk.

“I will make an appointment after my session with your therapist which isn’t for like an hour and a half. Do you think Admiral Rodriguez would be really pissed off if we got caught having sex in here?”

“I locked the door when I came in.” Nyota said as she started to work the zipper of his pants.

No, they didn’t get caught, but they lost track of time and Jim spent his entire first session with Dr. Margarita explaining what happened (because the left side of his neck is just one purple bite mark after another). Not a good first session. Things went much better that evening when he recounted the entire experience to Spock, much better. Like shower sex better.

To be continued.
Chapter 15

Chapter Summary

Occasionally, you may be lost on how to be supportive, especially in times of great stress, loss, or catastrophe. Sometimes being there to hold their hand as they cry is enough.

Chapter 8 of The Idiots Guide to Family Bonding. Revised Third Edition

Chapter Notes

Thank you to everybody who read or reviewed the last chapter. I was going to make a snarkier remark about how I’m returning to a normal schedule, but real life hates me.

I got this chapter back yesterday from the fabulous Grayson Steele, and was planning to get it up yesterday. Then I called my mom and found out that my uncle finally lost his battle with cancer yesterday. He’s been fighting for nearly 5 years and made it a lot longer than the doctors ever thought he would. So to let you know I’m probably going to be quiet for a little while. Maybe I’ll get some writing done. Maybe I won’t. I’m in the processing stage right now. Because even if you know something’s going to happen, you’re never quite prepared for it.

I think my fake quote for this chapter was a little prophetic. I swear that was written weeks ago, but it’s good advice right now.

Warning: sexual content/nudity. Yes, there’s sexual content in this chapter or at least nudity. Okay, it’s sensual content and it’s related to the plot. That’s the only way I’ll write any. Also, there is brief homophobic language because Sam Kirk is not a very nice person in the story.

xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
"I’m surprised that you called and actually scheduled an appointment to see me." Dr. Kim said the moment he sat in front of his desk. Nyota was as well.

However, Jim (along with her and Spock) spent the morning being poked and prodded at the UF Berkeley Center for Fertility and she had no choice but to keep up her end of the bargain. Also, Spock made her come and he was currently sitting in the lobby to make sure she didn’t run away. Stupid, evil boyfriend.

“Well, Jim did mention something about arranging a play date for our Vulcans and yes, he did use the word play date.”

“He would. It’s actually a good idea. I’m sure my husband would like to spend some time with other Vulcans, especially one that is not overly conceited.”

“According to Spock, that’s a very rare type of Vulcan.”
“True, but you don’t actually need to make an appointment to schedule a social visit. You can just send an email.”

“I also need your professional opinion on something. Dr. Caraballo is doing psych evaluations somewhere in the galaxy where she can’t get Jim’s messages and my therapist doesn’t know the names of any good pediatric therapists, so I thought I would ask you.”

Yes, Nyota was stalling, but she really did need recommendation. Two days ago Peter had a severe panic attack at the grocery store when he saw someone who looked like Sam. That’s not good at all.

"And you think I do. Why do you even need the name of a pediatric therapist?" Kim asked.

"Jim’s brother is an asshole who hits his son and now his former fiancé and son are living with us. I have to deal with my boyfriends waking up in the middle the night screaming on occasion. I don’t think a three-year-old deserves to suffer panic attacks whenever he hears his father’s name." She chose not to specifically mention the grocery store incident, despite the fact that it was her main source of concern.

“I spoke to Sam once on the communicator. He called because he needed money. Jim said no because he was sure he was going to use it for drugs and then Sam proceeded to cuss him out, including saying that he was ashamed to have a ‘cock sucker’ for a brother.” That doesn’t surprise Nyota at all.

“Well recently, he tried to sell his parental rights to Jim in exchange for Jim share of the Kelvin blood money.”

“Did Jim give in?” Kim asked as he grabbed the PADD from his desk.

“We are currently in litigation to terminate Sam’s parental rights.” He threatened to put baby Peter through the custody trial from hell unless he got his money. That just pissed Jim off, which meant there’s no way in hell Jim and Arlene are backing down now.

“That doesn’t sound good.”

“No, which is why we need to find somebody for Peter.”

“I’m surprised that you are open to this option, considering how resistant you were to your Starfleet order for treatment.” The doctor said thoughtfully.

She’s warmed up to the concept of therapy due to the fact that her own therapist is the only reason why she is surviving the current ordeal with her father. Did you know that certain untreated STIs could cause brain damage, the type that results in someone threatening to kill his daughter’s boyfriends? She didn’t. Thankfully, De’bo’rah was vaccinated against the damn thing. Otherwise, she would’ve been equally screwed.

“I was mostly resistant to the physician of choice.” Dr. Kim just stares at her for a moment.

“In your email is the contact information for Dr. Alayna Suarez. She’s the best child psychologists in the country. She used to be Starfleet before almost dying in a car crash a couple years ago. She is not cheap and I’m not sure Starfleet will cover it. If you want the best, she’s the one.”

"You are aware that my husb—boyfriend is essentially Vulcan royalty. We can afford it." She was slightly offended that he thought they would not get Peter the best.

It can’t be more expensive than all the toys that Jim has bought in the last two weeks to alleviate his
own guilt. Oddly enough, half of those toys were for Ivy. Seriously, how screwed up was Ivy’s childhood with step mom number one for her to go crazy in the Barbie section?

"Are you aware you almost said husband?” Dammit.

"I did not.” Liar. Apparently, Dr. Kim realizes this.

“I’m just starting to warm up to the idea of my mom getting remarried. My idea of commitment is going off my birth-control and trusting that my sterile boyfriends will not give me an STI because they’re sleeping around.” Like her father did to De’bo’rah.

"You are aware that Vulcans need commitment for survival.” She swears that Dr. Kim raised an eyebrow at her.

"We have already had the Pon Farr and you talk.” Kim smirks at her comment. “Jim gets that duty and I’ll be providing the snacks from the sidelines." And possibly hand jobs. They’re not entirely sure how much she will be able to participate without being mentally linked.

"Technically, you both could participate. Actually, it would be better. Pon Farr is very difficult for human partners. It might be better for you and Jim to treat it as a tagteam event.” She frowned at the mere suggestion.

"If I could bond with Spock, I would because I don’t want Jim to go through that alone, but I can’t so that’s not an option." Dr. Kim looks very annoyed with her even though he’s trying not to.

"Because of your staunch opposition to marriage and bonding?” The doctor asked.

"Because it’s physically not possible.” At that point, Nyota decided that she did not want Jim’s ex-boyfriend mad at her and decided to explain everything since that was the real reason she was here anyway. It wasn’t like he didn’t already know about other Spock. He sees other Spock as a colleague due to the elder Vulcan’s mind healer credentials.

“The situation is not hopeless. Bonding dysfunction is treatable and more common than one would think.” Dr. Kim said when she was done.

“There are treatment options?”

“Yes, as well as people who specialize in this area. This is one of my areas of expertise, but due to circumstances, I can only give a referral. However, due to convoluted regulations regarding referrals and because there’s no one else here qualified to deal with psychic issues of this nature, I would need to look in your mind even though the entire reason I’m referring you out of network is due to the questionable ethics of the situation.”

“Because you used to sleep with my boyfriend?”

“Yes, and we’re still technically friends which is why he should have asked me about finding a therapist for Peter directly.” He was planning to during the Vulcan play date, but again she was stalling.

"And because I know so much classified information, Starfleet won’t let me go out of network, even if I’m willing to pay for it out-of-pocket.” She should’ve known that was a possibility.

“Yes. They won’t even consider the possibility unless someone in-house provides proof and because
the former management was so xenophobic. The situation is even more complicated because you’re worried about your mental compatibility with your partner primarily due to information obtained from his alternate universe counterpart."

"That could be a problem."

"Chan is in charge now and she’s a lot more reasonable. If I can provide her with proof, she will authorize it. I’m uncertain if I can do that without going into your mind."

"The questionable ethics of it and the need to provide me with access to adequate medical care won’t be enough to bring somebody else in?" She asked annoyed.

"At the risk of repeating myself, you are aware of your possible compatibility issues due to information obtained by your boyfriend’s alternate self. Do you really think Starfleet is willing to provide that information to anybody outside the organization unless absolutely necessary? Chan is a nice person, but security comes first."

"Valid point."

"The unfortunate side effect of being military. We’re dealing with a whole different set of medical 'ethics' here. When it comes to security, ethics be damned." Dr. Kim said bitterly.

"So I have to let you into my mind to poke around?"

"You don’t have to do anything. I going to do some research and talk to some colleagues and see if there is a qualified mind healer at another agency with adequate security clearance. The Department of Intergalactic Diplomatic Affairs is a possibility, since we work so closely with them."

"I’m not sure I would want any physician in there. I haven’t even let my boyfriend in yet." Nyota wasn’t sure if she wanted a total stranger in her mind at all.

"So you tried and it didn’t work?"

"Actually, we haven’t tried yet.” She admitted reluctantly.

"If you haven’t been able to with someone who you completely love and trust, then I don’t have a shot in hell of being able to get inside your mind without doing serious damage. It might even be worse if we brought somebody from another agency, provided we could."

"So what do you suggest?"

"If it were me, I would start by trying to meld with my boyfriend. Maybe it won’t be necessary to see a bonding specialist in the first place because there’s no problem.” She looks at him dubiously.

"I already told you it’s not possible."

"Everything is impossible, if you don’t try. You are not your counterpart. Your experiences are completely different and those experiences can affect your brain chemistry. According to various studies, 80% of the time bonding dysfunction is triggered by a lack of trust or other emotional issues. In the majority of those cases, once the trust issues or underlining emotional difficulties were addressed, a mental bond could be achieved. It is entirely possible that whatever prevented your counterpart from bonding with her Spock, may not pertain to you."

Of course the doctor would support Jim's perspective on the matter.
"She couldn’t do it and she never had to deal with her parents’ completely messy divorce due to cheating and surprise siblings or overcome the belief that marriage is irrelevant and love is fleeting. I doubt that would help things very much."

"Do you still believe that? I’m not sure, because I don’t think you would have come to me asking for help if that were the case. I assume this is the reason why you came to see me in the first place?"

"Peter really does need professional help. He had a panic attack at the grocery store two days ago because there was a guy in the checkout line that looked a lot like Sam.”

“And you now have a name. But this is about you right now. What do you want?”

"I don’t need a piece of paper to tell me that my relationship means something." Nyota told him defensively.

"But other legal entities do and it is helpful." Kim said a little too cheekily.

"I have a team of lawyers to help with that stuff and it’s not like I want to run off and get bonded right away. I just want to know that it’s on the table, especially with the incidents of premature Pon Farr going on."

“Valid point. If bonding is not an option, what’s going to happen with your relationship? What if you’re part of the percentage of individuals who are unable to repair their mental incompatibility issues?” The doctor asked in all seriousness.

"Unlike my counterpart, I have a third option which is Jim. Spock can get what he needs mentally from Jim, but I’m not leaving."

"Look, I’m going to work on getting at least another certified mind healer into Starfleet or at least see if we can borrow someone from another agency. With the influx of Vulcan cadets due to a mixture of patriotism and free science education, we need all the help we can get. In the interim, I can give you a lot of reading material about bonds. I know you read Vulcan, but how is your Betazoid?"

"About the equivalent of eighth grade level.”

“That should be good enough. You should also talk to Margarita about this.”

“But I thought you were the only mind healer in Starfleet?”

"That’s true, but Margarita has worked with couples with various sexual dysfunctions before. She can give you a lot of activities to help build trust in the bedroom." Seriously?

"We don’t have that issue." She told him slightly annoyed.

"I’m going to ask you to add mind play to any activity she gives you."

“What does that mean exactly, mind meld during sex?” Nyota is not opposed to the idea. She used to be, but she’s seen Jim and Spock try it a couple of times and the results have been intriguing.

“Eventually, but not in the beginning. It takes time to work up to that.” ‘Tell Jim that’ she thought with a hint of amusement. “You can start with seeing if your partner can pick up on what you want to do in the bedroom via feeling your emotions instead of verba…” Dr. Kim never finished that thought because he was interrupted by his assistant. He looked extremely annoyed by being buzzed by the intercom.
“I’m in a meeting with a colleague, Aaron. You know better than to interrupt unless it’s an emergency.”

“I thought you would like to know there is a Vulcan currently pacing in our lobby. I don’t think it’s your husband, but I’ve only met him once. He could be a relative.”

“You do realize that not all Vulcans are related?” The doctor asked slightly annoyed. “Do you also realize that there are Vulcan Starfleet members and that individual could be a patient? This does not qualify as an emergency.”

“What about the fact he occasionally stands in front of your door?”

“Patients are not supposed to go beyond the waiting room. You’re supposed to keep that from happening.” Dr. Kim sighed.

“That’s probably Spock. He is supposed to be waiting patiently to make sure I didn’t run away before talking to you.” That caused Dr. Kim smile.

“Which you almost did by bringing up the situation with your nephew first.”

“Peter’s cute and adorable and I would like for him to have significantly less trust issues than I have. Why are you smirking at me?” She asked slightly annoyed.

“You did not correct me when I referred to Peter as your nephew.” Nyota just looked at him open mouth for a moment. “It looks like even making a lot of progress with your new doctor. I’m happy about that.”

“Enough that I am no longer complaining about my Starfleet mandated therapy sessions.”

“That’s progress. Can we bring Spock in here? I usually like to talk to both parts of a couple when dealing with bonding issues. Maybe Spock can help us come up with another solution to the dilemma at hand?”

“He does have the Starfleet handbook memorized. Although, I am part of a triad not couple.”

“Yes, but I’m really not supposed to meet with Jim. This is kind of pushing the ethical boundaries, even if I’m seeing this as a friend helping other friends.”

“Okay.” She said just as Dr. Kim allowed Spock in and repeated this embarrassing conversation all over again.

Now they have plans to have dinner with Jim’s ex-boyfriend and his Vulcan husband next week which will probably never happened and she has sex homework because her doctor just had way too much fun coming up with possible assignments. Evil doctor. She hasn’t had to do this much reading since graduation.

“...”

“You are annoyed.” Spock said as he placed a hand over Nyota’s breast.

They were currently performing Exercise 3 from the Guide to Improving Your Telepathic Connection. Nyota found the reading tedious, but Spock found it fascinating. Discussing the sexual component of telepathic bonds was somewhat taboo in Vulcan culture, so he found it enlightening to read a scholarly publication on the subject.

“I don’t think you need touch telepathy to know that.” Jim snickered from the sidelines. “I can tell
from the glaring alone, which is strange because Spock is essentially massaging your breasts.” Nyota responds with a pillow to James head.

“You’re supposed to be supportive. I had a pelvic exam three days ago for you and I hate pelvic exams. It’s just weird when you’re doing something you normally like as a homework assignment.”

Spock could sense that Nyota resented being told what to do, but was willing to participate in this activity because she would like to bond with him at some point. However, she plans to never tell Spock this. He finds it amusing that she assumes that he does not already know this.

“You have no trouble with my fingers being there.” Jim actually wiggles his hand at her.

“Because they’re not cold and there’s no metal speculum involved. It is 2259, you really think they could come up with a less invasive way to examine a woman. I swear Dr. Victoria put her fingers in ice before the examination.” For some odd reason, their physician only went by her first name. Spock is certain this is to put her patients at ease, but Spock still found it strange.

“You know they have self-scanning devices, but the Berkeley fertility clinic likes to do things the old-fashioned way for better results. At least that’s what the doctor who gave me a prostate exam said. And I agree with you about the putting their fingers in ice water first.”

“It’s a conspiracy.”

“I do appreciate that both you and Spock were there with me and both of you went through all the tests even though you didn’t have to. This is mostly my issue.” Apparently, Nyota strongly disagrees with that statement. Spock can feel that emotion clearly.

“But your problems are our problems and apparently Nyota believes similarly even if she is annoyed with you.”

“You’re able to tell who I’m annoyed with?” Nyota adjusted her position underneath him to look at Spock directly before speaking.

“I am able to read your emotions more clearly than most.” James snickered again and receives another glare from Nyota.

“I think we’ve been together long enough for you to realize that sometimes I am 12. You should know watching a naked Spock straddling your equally naked form as he runs his hands all over you as some sort of sexual homework assignment is going to make me giggle. I can’t help it.”

“You will if you want to participate anytime soon.” Nyota said with half a smirk. Spock can now fill that she’s more amused than annoyed, but only marginally so.

“Dr. Margarita says I’m only supposed to be an observer tonight, but what a lovely view it is.” James blows both of them a kiss.

“I can tell.” Nyota points to Jim’s erect member. Spock can tell that she’s currently visualizing licking said member in a manner similar to a lollipop.

However, Spock decides not to voice this. He is surprised that he’s picking up exact mental images with only physical contact and a slight increase in concentration. He’s done this before with James, but they do have a bond. The fact that he can pick up on these thoughts makes him feel more confident that his Nyota will have a different fate than the Nyota of the prime dimension.
“Hey, it’s the one thing that the fertility specialists are not worried about.” For some reason James places the pillow in front of his groin and Spock can feel a wave of disappointment.

“I’m not complaining about your quicker than normal refractory period.” Spock felt a wave of arousal followed by images of how Nyota liked to utilize this to her advantage.

“When is our next appointment at the fertility center?” Spock asked in an effort to not focus on the erotic images that he’s receiving from Nyota.

“Friday after we move little sister into the dorms. Hey, what are you feeling now?” ‘I am worried that you are terrified of the results of your fertility assessment and will most likely try not to attend and it will be our duty to make you do so.’

“Nyota is feeling vast quantities of fear.” Spock said out loud. It was easier to discuss Nyota’s apprehensions than his own. Nyota gave him an annoyed look and apparently feels like Spock is hiding something.

“Since you are so good at this exercise, what am I afraid of?” Nyota challenge.

“You are afraid for your sister and worried she may not be able to acclimate to Starfleet.” Nyota tensed as he began to speak.

“You’re concerned about the possible permanent damage that your father has caused Ivy. Despite that, you are worried about him, even though you are certain that his cheating on Deborah most likely led to his current predicament. You’re also worried about James and his appointment Friday.”

“You can pick up on all of that from just touch. I didn’t think that was possible.” Neither did Spock. He will need to consult someone, preferably neither his counterpart or Dr. Kim.

“I wouldn’t worry. Spock is a special Vulcan snowflake, who is in touch with his human side, so of course he’s better at picking up on emotions than whoever wrote the literature you’re being forced to read.” James’ hypothesis is plausible, but Spock is uncertain.

“Why are you worried about me?”

"The results of our fertility assessment."

"I was going to answer that.” Nyota pulled away slightly. “Although, that is true."

“Are you afraid that Spock’s Vulcan sperm is more compatible than we thought and you’re going to have to stay on the happy hormone shots until at least the end of the five-year mission?” Nyota frowned.

"No, I’m worried that they’re going to tell us that the situation is as hopeless as Leonard told you six months ago. I don’t want you to be miserable and I know you want your own son or daughter someday. The fact that we have our own nursery here is testament to that.”

"We are going to be babysitting the Pike twins a lot.” Spock did not believe Jim’s excuse for a moment.

"The baby shower is not for another three weeks. You’re doing the same with Peter. I think the toys have started to spill over in here.” As evidenced by Spock tripping over a yellow toy truck earlier.

"Did you have to remind me about that when I’m not wearing any clothes?” James sounded annoyed.
“I may not even need the pillow anymore because you made Little Jim sad. Anything remotely connected to Christine makes Little Jim sad because he never wants to think about going near her again.” Neither does Spock.

“It’s that bad?”

“She wants to decorate in pink even though everyone knows purple is the preferred color to represent female progeny in the 23rd century.” Nyota started giggling at James completely serious comment.

“It’s not that funny.” James tosses the pillow that was covering his crotch at Nyota.

“Yes, it is, because it shows how into this you really are. At some point in the future, I want you to be arguing over color schemes with Ivy for our baby shower. I really want you to have that and I’m scared that you won’t.”

“Look, I’m not going to be completely miserable, if it turns out Bones was right the first time.” ‘Yes, you will be.’ Spock thought to himself.

“I can have Spock go over there and start touching you.”

“Yes, please.” James smirks salaciously.

“Not like that. I mean, in a Vulcan touch telepathy lie detector sort of way.” Spock raised an eyebrow at her.

“I’m not sure if that will work if Spock is only touching my penis.”

“Yes, it will, but usually the only emotions I pick up during that time are arousal and wonderment at the fact that you have not done anything to ‘screw up’ our relationship yet.” Spock responded without inflection.

“That makes total sense.” Jim smirks as he speaks.

“Start touching me again so we can finish this assignment and do something other than just touching.”

“I think you would prefer if was touching James. Apparently, you would like me to demonstrate what I described earlier.”

“Okay, you’re really good at this.” At that moment, Nyota sits up and grabs Jim’s hand to pull him over.

“We are totally doing this assignment wrong.” James said before leaning over to kiss Nyota on the mouth.

“You’re awful at following directions, so why start now?” Nyota said just breaking the kiss long enough for James to catch his breath.

Through his contact with Nyota, Spock can feel Nyota’s overwhelming love and admiration for James. It’s a very warm feeling, like hot chocolate in winter. At the same time Spock can pick up on her affection for him. It’s crisp and refreshing like a summer breeze mixed with the summer sunshine. Spock was almost tempted to smile, instead, he was pulled down into the kiss by both of his lovers.

“Will you please stop pacing?” Nyota said with an annoyed look from her chair in front of Dr. Victoria’s desk at the fabulous UF Berkeley Fertility Center. They’ve been in her office waiting for
over 15 minutes and now Jim is restless. He’s been pacing the office for the last five and now even Spock is starting to do the same.

“You’re making me just a little nauseous.”

"I would make a joke about you not needing me, but that would be crass." Dr. Victoria said as she walked into the room.

"Because my test results were just that bad." Jim tried to joke, but it fell flat. Nyota and Spock each grabbed one hand as they pulled him down to sit between them.

"We don’t believe any case is hopeless." The doctor said smiling just a little too much.

“I’m great at being hopeless. Just tell me if Bones was right and I’m no longer able to produce biological children due to my accident and we can be on our way.” Spock was concerned with James self-deprecating language. Apparently so was the doctor.

"I’m not certain willingly going into a warp core without adequate radiation protection to keep your crew from dying counts as an accident.” The doctor said skeptically. “However, the results were all the same."

"My sperm is fried to a crisp."

"That is not a scientific value.” Spock felt annoyance creeping into his words despite his best efforts.

“I am going to agree with your bondmate on that, especially because your statement wasn’t entirely accurate.”

"But Bones said...” Nyota placed a finger to James mouth.

“Let the doctor speak, Jim.” Nyota admonished.

"Dr. McCoy’s assessment was correct at the time. That was February, this is August. Despite the fact that radiation damage to reproductive organs is usually irreversible, your body seems to be healing itself." Possibly, a consequence of the blood used to revive James. However, Dr. Victoria could not be informed of what that entailed, despite the fact it may influence her assessment.

"What? Are you saying that I could get Nyota pregnant if she wasn’t on the happy hormone meds?" James asked almost hopefully.

"Statistically, no. As it stands, you have a one and 9.2 million chance of natural conception."

"That’s reassuring." James sighed.

"But at the present rate in vitro fertilization is a possibility. Furthermore, if you keep healing at your current rate, according to projections in six years, the rate improves to a one in 98,000 chance of spontaneous conception."

“Impossible, but better."

"The rate improves even more if you go off of your current chemical form of birth control now instead of waiting until you plan to conceive in six years." She said turning to Nyota.

"Which I want to do.” Nyota affirmed.

"Good.” The doctor smiled. “I am going to provide you three with some reading material covering
the various options, so the three of you can come up with a six year plan. This way when you’re ready to have kids in six years, you will have a better chance of that happening."

“You want us to create a six year plan. You and Spock really want to do a six year plan?” He said turning to Nyota.

"I’m planning to be here in six years. Are you?"

"Yes, and Spock?"

"I do not plan on leaving either of you within the next six years."


To be continued
How to Juggle Your Work and Home Life for Beginners

Chapter Summary

Working with your life partner(s) can create unique challenges, but they must be dealt with for both your interpersonal and work relationships to thrive.

Chapter 9 of the Idiot’s Guide to Family Bonding, revised third edition

Chapter Notes

Thank you to everybody who read or reviewed the last chapter. Also, thank you to everyone who offered condolences for my uncle. It was very appreciated. I did warn you it would take a while before I would get another chapter of this done and unfortunately I was right. In addition to losing my uncle on November 25, on December 1, I lost my brother-in-law to his fight with lung cancer (never smoked). It's been a rough couple of months.

I spent the first half of December helping my sister take care of things which included trying to get my nieces through finals week. Let’s be honest, taking finals the week after your father died is good for no one. Needless to say, I’m ridiculously behind on everything and the only writing I really got to do during this time was proofreading my niece’s paper comparing Jazzercise and Zumba. The joys of being a fitness major.

Anyway, after a month, I have finally circled back to this story in my rotation. Blizzard 2016 helped by keeping me snowed in and only having my stories and cleaning my front steps to work on.

My goal is to finish this before Star Trek Beyond comes out. Then after watching the movie, I will decide if the next story in the series will be cannon divergent or will incorporate the events of the third movie with the tiniest alterations to reflect the triad’s existence. The fact that they apparently put Carol on a bus and what they're doing with Sulu makes me hopeful. Also I was planning for the next story in this series to take place a few years in the future. So the film already lines up with what I’m planning.

By now you know it’s a tradition for me to rewrite the movie to give it a K/S slant which isn’t that hard because the source material is already halfway there. I think it would be even easier to do K/S/U, especially if by some miracle they don’t give Jim a love interest. Please Simon Pegg let Jim be single and include female characters for something other than a love interest.

After several weeks of intense classes and spending quality time with his girlfriend’s mother, the admiral, Jim found himself finally able to relax with nothing to do but babysit his nephew. Which was a good thing since Peter caught the Vulcan flu at the Vulcan Embassy daycare.
Jim’s not sure how in the galaxy it happened, but Arlene managed to get herself a position as an assistant at the Embassy. Okay, Jim knows how it happened because nepotism is helpful sometimes, but he didn’t think Vulcans did that sort of thing. However, his pseudo father-in-law rarely conforms to the traditional standards of most Vulcans, no matter what Spock thinks.

Sarek called the house looking for his son to let him know that he had reached a settlement with the Vulcan Council i.e. he won’t embarrass them publicly in exchange for the marriage law becoming null and void and ended up spending two hours conversing with Arlene instead. Jim didn’t even think it was possible to have a pleasant two hour conversation with the Vulcan.

Okay, his father-in-law had no choice, but to hire a new assistant because his old one was part of the conspiracy to get the ambassador to vacate his seat. Really it was a win-win situation for everyone involved because Arlene probably won't stab him in the back and the Vulcan government has really good maternity policies right now due to the repopulation efforts. In the end, his nephew’s mom had a new job and free daycare.

The only problem is Vulcan kids have different immune systems than human kids. Of course Peter manages to contract the Vulcan flu during his second week in the program. It was their own fault for forgetting that Peter had different vaccinations because he grew up on a colony. The Vulcan flu isn’t exactly something they prepared for where he used to live, but the vaccine is standard for San Francisco residents and Starfleet personnel.

Of course, despite that, even though he was no longer displaying any obvious symptoms, Peter would not be allowed back into Vulcan daycare until Friday. Thankfully, Jim finished Captain school the week before and would be free until Friday when he had to meet with his Admiral to discuss his grades and next assignment. He’s never been happier in his life to email in a final paper. Because Starfleet computers hate him in general after the Kobayashi Maru incident, he was randomly selected to analyze Starfleet’s response to the Tarsus incident and explain how he would’ve done things differently.

However, since the Admiral knew the truth, Jim was offered a chance to change to something else, but declined. He has been thinking about this for over a decade. He might as well get course credit and compose a 30 page paper on the subject. Of course, considering his scathing views of what happened, there is a 50% chance he will get kicked out for half the stuff he wrote, but he did say wonderful things about Chan so that probably will save him.

Although it’s also entirely possible that she would make him miserable for the rest of his time on earth just because she can. He still had no idea what his assignment would be the rest of his time on earth, but he hopes that it’s just getting Enterprise ready for the five year mission. Because of the complicated legal situation regarding custody of his nephew, Jim won’t be assigned off planet for at least the next few months, but Starfleet does have a research facility in Greenland.
Spock would hate that and Nyota would be really pissed off about being on opposite sides of the planet from each other, especially because he doubts they would be able to beam back and forth. Also he wouldn’t be around for the birth of his niece or for the birth of the Pike twins.

Jim wasn’t going to worry about that now. It was Wednesday and Peter has gone 18 hours without throwing anything up, which makes Jim believe that the end of the Vulcan flu is near. So to celebrate they were coloring while Peter drank his meal replacement shake. Peter was drawing a house and Jim was sketching designs for his dream quarters where all three can live together instead of the separate rooms they were going to have so as to downplay the fact that they were all dating each other. Worst of all due to protocol, the rooms are going to be on separate sides of the ship. He seriously wanted a king-size bed so all three of them can sleep together, but he was trying to work out the size constraints of the space. That was when his communicator went off.

It was the Starfleet ring tone, which meant he had no choice but to pick up, thus ending his mini vacation. What does it say about his job when taking care of a 2 ½-year-old with the flu is still vacation time? Admiral Rodriguez’s assistant quickly informed him that he now had an 11 AM meeting with the Admiral to discuss his Starfleet future. That was definitely not enough time to call the babysitting service and get someone there.

Normally he would just pop by Spock’s office and drop off Peter because his morning computer classes were over and he would be doing Enterprise stuff for the rest of the day, but somebody managed to get Spock to speak to her 11 AM intro to Vulcan-based languages class today. His other backups were also not options. Admiral Nhi Pike was in meetings elsewhere and future stepmom Sarah was indisposed. His option of last resort was actually at the meeting.

"Hi Admiral Nana." Peter said running to Nyota’s mother to hug her.

So Jim did the thing that parents have been doing for a millennium, bring Peter with him to the meeting and hope that the almost 3-year-old will stay quiet with his bag full of coloring books. The fact that Nyota’s mom really likes Peter will come in handy right now.

“Peter, be careful you might still be contagious.” Jim warned already pulling out disinfectant wipes from his bag. He personally didn’t think he was, but there’s probably some weird rule about hugging admirals.

“I was not aware you had a kid.” Admiral Rodriguez said slightly bewildered. “Although it’s possible neither did you. That would explain your daycare inquiries recently.”
Of course she would think Peter was his kid. Peter already looked like his clone. The fact that he was wearing his adorable replica captain’s uniform just made it even worse. It was too cute. They may have been stopped at least three times in the elevator on the way to the Admiral’s office, one of which handed Jim her communicator number which he promptly lost.

A year ago, he would’ve enjoyed that, but he was definitely not interested right now. It would be a lot easier to convey that disinterest if he could mention he had a boyfriend and/or girlfriend. Maybe he could just wear an engagement ring. Technically he and Spock were somewhere between engaged and married by Vulcan cultural standards. Also, he’s pretty sure that wearing the interplanetary symbol ‘of get the Fuck away from me, I’m taken’ does not violate their agreement.

"It's not like they put that sort of thing in the ‘get to know your subordinates’ package. I recently learned about one of my team member’s impending fatherhood by running into him at Lamaze class with Nhi." You spent almost a year with somebody on the bridge you think that they would have bothered to tell you the good news in person.

“Peter is Jim’s nephew. He has temporary joint custody due to some family issues.”

Such as Sam being a Bastard. Federation Family Court agreed with that so he and Arlene now have joint custody of Peter. The only reason why Jim is part of this was because Arlene didn’t have a job at the time the decision was made. The situation will be re-assessed in three months, but between her new job at the Vulcan Embassy and Sam’s extortion attempts, Shawn is 100% certain Arlene will get full custody of Peter and the new baby. Although, wasn't it a scary thought that the court system considered him to be the responsible one.

“The Peter situation is not public knowledge." By some miracle Sean and associates managed to keep that from the press. "However, I think the justification for why I can't leave the planet until December contains details regarding the Peter situation.” Jim told his Admiral calmly.

“I thought that was because you were helping Admiral Pike." Admiral Rodriguez remarked.

“That’s part of the reason, but not everything. As you see.” Jim pointed to Peter.

“Why did you bring Peter?” Nyota’s mother asked as he sat Peter down in front of the Admiral’s coffee table.

“So it turns out that if you send a three-year-old to Vulcan daycare, you should probably make sure
he’s vaccinated for all common Vulcan diseases including H1VN2 a.k.a. the Vulcan flu. He’s not contagious to us because we are vaccinated and he hasn’t regurgitated anything in about a day, but he can’t go to daycare for at least two more days and I was under the impression that I wouldn’t receive my final grades until Friday and therefore had a few days free for babysitting.” Jim explained as he pulled out a coloring book for Peter. He went with the Starfleet coloring book just to get a few extra brownie points.

“Since I wasn’t informed of this meeting until an hour ago, I didn’t have time to arrange for a babysitter.”

“You could’ve called Sarah.” His girlfriend’s mother suggested.

"I got her voicemail." Jim shrugged. “Also, Spock is a guest speaker at Nyota’s class right now. And even if she wasn’t busy, I don’t know if Peter should be around an Admiral who is nearly eight months pregnant.”

"You have a point.” The Admiral said as she grabbed her communicator from her waist. “Lieutenant Davis, could you please come to Admiral Rodriguez’s office to pick up my daughter’s nephew. We need to discuss some things without little ears being present.” Jim was panicking too much about whatever they could be discussing to really notice the glare that Rodriguez was giving his girlfriend's mom.

“Oh come off it. There’s no use in pretending that Jim is not in a long-term relationship with my daughter. If my first marriage wasn’t such a disaster, I would be planning a double wedding right now. Unfortunately, I think I threw her off the institution altogether.” Why did Jim have a feeling that she knew about their six-year fertility plan. Although Jim should be happy that she knew about it because that meant Nyota was really speaking to her mother again. That was a good thing.

"I hope we are just here to discuss how upset you are about my Tarsus dissertation." Jim joked out of nervousness. You know the situation is bad when you make a joke using the T word.

"It was the first time I ever had to reclassify a term paper as top-secret no non-Federation, but it was one of the better papers I’ve read." His girlfriend's mother told him sounding almost amused.

"Actually, I would like to know how you had access to information that wasn’t public knowledge.” Rodriguez obviously was not.
'I was there,’ Jim thought to himself, but didn't say it out loud. That fact was need to know classified as far as Jim was concerned and Rodriguez didn't need to know. Jim purposely did not mention his mother by name in the paper for that very reason. Her involvement in the assassination of Kudos was a long held secret of the organization.

“But I think we’ll keep that conversation until your future mother-in-law’s assistant arrives.” Jim just rolls his eyes at that. Yes, Admiral Rodriguez was a step up from the last Admiral, but actual murder would be required to be any worse. It is at moments like this that he truly missed Chris.

“Daddy said Tarsus was where grandma went crazy.” However, three-year-olds have no sense of what’s classified and maybe Jim should be really glad the Admiral is having her assistant babysit for the duration of this conversation that will probably deteriorate into Jim being yelled at for at least half an hour.

“Not exactly.” Jim told the child. "A lot of bad things happen to Grandma Winona there.” That even Jim feels like he’s too young to know about. “It was a lot to process and her mind just couldn’t handle it. So she likes to pretend none of it ever happened. When we go to visit her, she’s probably going to think I’m still 15, but that’s okay because she loves us anyway.”

“Okay.” Peter said just as the assistant entered the room. Jim was sure that the officer was probably Jim’s age and gave Jim a look that told him he was really pissed off that Jim was a captain and he himself was an Admiral’s assistant. Which is actually a pretty good job to have in Starfleet by age 25. Jim was just an overachiever. But that doesn’t mean that Jim needs to deal with jealousy, which is difficult to deal with when half the time you don't even think you deserve the job that you have.

Of course Peter did not want to go with angry assistant. Probably because he could tell angry assistant was angry and after surviving Sam, Peter was skittish around strangers. Except for Spock, because Spock is special.

"Peter, I promise that the lieutenant won’t hurt you." Because I will knock him out if he does and I'm pretty sure Admiral Nana will help.

"I will be out in a couple of minutes and then you can come to my office.” Nyota’s mom said leaning down to his level.

"Can we play the wedding decorating game again?” The toddler asked and by wedding decorating game, Peter was referring to the virtual wedding planning program that they were using to plan the December nuptials.
The small family wedding has been undone by Starfleet politics. Admiral Chan wanted a diplomat/media friendly event most likely to get everybody’s mind off of a secret starship crash landing into San Francisco. Now, the diplomatic event for the winter season is set to take place in mid-December with vast amounts of pomp and circumstance and half the ambassadors in the San Francisco area. No one was really happy except for Peter. He loves playing wedding planner.

"We’ve moved on to menu planning, but you can help." She offered.

"Okay Admiral Nana." Peter said as he finally left with his temporary babysitter.

"That's the second time he called you Admiral Nana, why does he call you that?" Rodriguez asked, raising an eyebrow.

"Well, his only living grandmother is at a Starfleet sponsored psychiatric hospital for the foreseeable future thanks to an incident of reprisal. The child needs a grandmother figure and apparently grandmotherhood is easier than actual motherhood. Did you read the classified parts of Captain Kirk’s file?" She asked incredulously.

"I’m not even sure I received the classified parts of the file." Rodriguez glared in annoyance. “But I think I have a good idea why Captain Kirk’s paper on Tarsus contained details that never made it into the history books.” She said thoughtfully.

"Have a seat. I’m sure at least one of us would like to get out of here so she can plan her wedding with her grandson." Rodriguez looks unhappy, which seems strange because Jim thought the two women were friends. Obviously there was something going on here.

"Since you’re not only dating my daughter, but technically you’re also her commanding officer, I’m only here to let you know that you passed the intensive command refresher course with flying colors.” At that moment she passed a data pad to him. His worst grade he received was an A- in advance diplomacy, probably because on the exam Jim point-blank stated he would break the Prime Directive (again) to keep most of his crew from dying. Actually there were multiple instances like that during the exam, so he’s surprised that he still managed to get an A- in the class.

"I’m slightly surprised considering I accidentally wrote a classified essay." Nyota's mom was giving him a look that just says 'I know you were planning to put that information in there regardless'.
"To avoid any appearance of nepotism and because of the classified subject matter discussed, Chan decided to review it herself." Jim was trying to decide if that was a good or bad thing.

"I personally am glad for that considering you acknowledge that Chan went against Starfleet orders and described the true depravity of the atrocities that occurred there with details that were left out of most official accounts." That would be because Jim was one of the few still living that actually witnessed the killings. You don’t forget a mass execution, no matter how hard you try.

"The assignment was to explain what I would’ve done differently and to do that I needed to paint things as they really were." And unfortunately the Federation likes to whitewash history.

"Chan felt the same way which is why she asked me to extend a special invitation for you to work on the committee that will be redesigning the command track curriculum. It’s been obvious to everyone for a while that changes need to be made and she wants your input." Jim was not expecting that, mostly because he wasn’t expecting Starfleet to extend such an invitation to him of all people. Apparently Rodriguez was equally shocked. Isn’t it a shame when your bosses don’t tell you things?

"Seriously? You do remember I’m the one who reprogrammed the Kobayashi Maru? I also broke the Prime Directive. Do you really want someone like me to dictate the curriculum for future generations?" Somebody must be taking the good drugs.

"Yes. Also, since you practically went into the captain’s position after graduation, you may be more aware of various gaps in the curriculum; therefore making you the best person to point those out." Nyota’s mom made a very valid point.

"You mean like half the stuff in the intensive class should actually be in the regular command track curriculum?" Like how not to fall for a trap set up by your commanding officer for the sole purpose of starting a war with the Klingons. Or the fact that he mostly got in trouble for lying about breaking the Prime Directive than actually breaking it.

"Exactly. The details of what the assignment will involve are on your PADD. Take your time and read through it. Don’t give me an answer now because I’m sure whatever Admiral Rodriguez will tell you about your other assignment will influence your decision. Talk it over with your partners and get back to me by Monday." Nyota’s mom said getting up from her seat.

"Of course, Admiral."
"Now excuse me I have a diplomatic reception/wedding to plan in between doing my other job." With that she was gone and Jim was left alone with Rodriguez, who may have consumed half a chocolate bar as soon as she was out of the room. If Jim knew Rodriguez as well as he knew Chris, he would have asked why she was acting the way that she was, but he didn't know her very well. It was hard getting used to a new admiral especially one that did not want him dead.

"You should be quite pleased that they asked you to be on the curriculum redesign committee." She actually sounded genuinely happy for him. "Even if you’re most likely being invited because they want the student perspective and the rules state that no one below the rank of a captain can be invited." Then she took away that happiness by pointing out the obvious.

"Which is ridiculous because students should be shaping the curriculum." Jim told her.

"You won't hear any arguments from me. The organization is a lot different than it was when I was at the Academy decades ago. Just because something is politically motivated doesn't mean it's not an honor and you really should take this opportunity.” Maybe Rodrigue is a bit of a realist.

"I'm looking forward to having an opportunity to point out that having an exam that no one can pass is not necessarily constructive, but I may not be able to participate. It all depends on what you have to tell me. Please tell me you're not sending me to Greenland?"

"Thanks to global climate change, only half that country’s covered in ice now." Rodriguez joked.

"No, you are to begin preparing Enterprise for the five year mission.” That’s when they began talking about the more nitty-gritty stuff. Enterprise would be leaving San Francisco in February on Valentine’s Day/President’s Remembrance Day just shy of the one-year anniversary of the London terrorist attacks/the Vengeance plowing into San Francisco.

His days for the next few months are going to be filled with hiring decisions and ship inspections. The first officer normally does a lot of that stuff, but Spock would be spending half his days at the Academy teaching.

The fact that he’s going to have to spend quality time in Iowa is not something Jim will be looking forward to, even though it means spending quality time with his baby. That’s because he is being forced to go to his old high school and give a speech to the current student body that will be covered by the press as part of operation ‘Improve our image’. He really didn’t think Starfleet could ask him to do anything worse than being forced to put on a song and dance for the media at an institution that made him cry sometimes, but he was proven wrong just a few minutes later when he was informed that Dr. Carol Wallace-Marcus would be his new chief science officer. This would not be good. This
"That’s not necessary. I already have a chief science officer. Actually I have the best chief science officer in Starfleet." Please don’t do this. I really don’t like our couch. I cannot deal with an emotionally compromised Vulcan right now. I really can’t.

"No, you have a first officer who was covering as chief science officer because the person assigned to that position was killed during the battle of Vulcan and the position was never filled." Technically that was true, but only because Spock wanted to do both so no one ever bother trying to find a new science officer.

"I know that normally the first officer would not perform both jobs that Spock is good at what he does and it hasn’t been a problem." Jim argued.

"Because I have worked with your boyfriend, I know you're not saying that just because you’re sleeping with him. I'm aware that in the past you and Mister Spock have made a good team, but you weren’t dating at the time. I’m telling you from personal experience, that can change things and therefore, it might be a good idea to have an objective third-party watching over you." Jim wondered what that personal experience was.

“You are aware he turned me in for violating the Prime Directive?” Jim asked incredulously.

"Again you weren’t dating at the time."

"But he was in love with me already, we were just..."

"Unable to acknowledge it." Rodriguez supplied for him.

"Yes."

"This is not the first time that this is happened. However, safeguards must be put in place. We need to bring someone else on board to assist.”

Translation: You are fucking your first officer and your chief communications officer and we want to
at least have somebody on your staff to make sure you’re not abusing your power. Jim shouldn’t be surprised. Alexis mention the possibility.

"And having the daughter of a guy who diverted vast quantities of money to make his own warship and special army of one made from brainwashed 20th century genetically modified person is the ideal candidate to babysit me? I get that having somebody watch us is for our own protection, but why can’t a member of my current senior staff be the designated babysitter?"

Jim was smart enough to know he couldn’t get out of this requirement and it was really to protect Spock and Nyota. He had to deal with enough people thinking Nyota got her job on her back when she was just dating Spock. It would be much worse now.

“Mr. Spock recommended her when asked to put together a list of qualified science officers.” Dammit, Spock. “We had no choice, but to bring in someone from outside. Due to the fact Dr. McCoy used the blood of said genetically modified super person to bring you back from the dead and Mr. Scott engaged in animal testing with the pet of a high ranking senior Starfleet official.” In other words, ‘there are other people on your staff that need more severe supervision than you do’.

"Sulu?" Yes, Jim knew he was grasping at straws right now.

“Actually, he was my first choice, but he said no and that he will soon have other children that he’d rather look after.” Jim just rolled his eyes at that.

“I understand your decision.” Because it could be worse. At least, Bones will be happy. Maybe it was better just to go along with this instead of calling in the lawyers even if it means couch time.

“However, I prefer to inform Spock myself, so please don’t forward him the personnel paperwork to sign off on just yet. It will just be ugly if he finds out he’s losing his lab via paperwork.”

Spock is really going to be pissed off about that. His lab is his own little sanctuary so maybe if he does this just right, he can mitigate hurt feelings and it wasn’t just Spock because the new person would also be watching over Nyota’s department to just to prevent the perception of nepotism. Which made no sense because he’s not even supposed to publicly acknowledge that he’s sleeping with her in the first place. Note to self, pick up two giant boxes of chocolate before arriving home because they won’t share with each other.

“We are not kicking Spock out of his lab. Technically he will be Dr. Wallace-Marcus’ supervisor.”
That is going to be a HR nightmare. Jim can already hear the arguments in his head.

“If this ends in disaster. I will tell you now that Carol will be on the first shuttle back to Earth and Spock gets his lab back.”

“Or I find a good replacement that can work with your boyfriend.” Good luck.

“If there’s nothing else Admiral Rodriguez, I would like to go. I have a sick kid who probably only feels good because the drugs are starting to kick in.”

“Yes, of course, although before you leave, you should know that Dr. Kim has successfully lobbied for another telepathic species specialist be added to Starfleet Medical.” Thank God. Well at least there was some good news at this forced meeting.

“We are in the process of hiring Dr. Weston formally of UF Berkeley, but you know how long the security clearance process takes for outside contractors. Since she already splits her time between Earth and the Vulcan colonies due to family commitments, she seems perfect for the position.” At that, the Admiral dismissed him with a lollipop from her secret stash for Peter. Apparently everybody adored Peter.

xxxxxxx

Jim spent the entire walk to the Admiral’s office trying to figure out how he was going to break the news to Spock (in addition to wondering why things were so tense between Rodriguez and the Admiral). Spock was getting better with his Carol related jealousy. Maybe he was starting to realize it was ridiculous to hold something against Jim that he didn’t even do. Really, Jim is not responsible for the stupidity of his other self and maybe Spock realizes that. Spock would have had to realize that if he actually recommended her for a position. Bones really likes Carol and would like for her to be on their ship.

When he walked in on Nyota’s mom asking a three-year-old what his favorite foods are for the wedding, Jim just decides to tell Spock in an email with a cute picture of Peter attached. Really, you can’t be mad if you’re staring at a cute picture. It’s a rule of the universe. If this doesn’t work, there is always blow jobs. Actually, maybe that would have been a better strategy, but he’d already hit the send button. He can follow up with a more explicit email detailing certain forms of sexual bribery from the personal account later. He can’t write something like that with both Peter and Nyota’s mom in the room. It’s just too weird.

“Peter, are you ready to go or do you need a few more minutes?” Jim asked putting his communicator away.
“I think it’s time for you to go back home and rest with your uncle. We can do this another time when you’re not going through half a box of Kleenex. Maybe Saturday.” Nyota’s mom said in a very sweet voice.

“Okay, Admiral Nana,”

“Is this your way of inviting yourself to dinner?”

“We will bring carry out and maybe by then you can tell me if you’re taking the position if you have time.” Jim would mention something about the fact that he can cook, but there are just some fights that are not worth fighting. This is one of those things.

“My only assignment is to get Enterprise ready to leave for the five year mission in February.” Jim explained.

“Okay, Ming really wants you to be on the committee then because otherwise you would be doing at least a couple of computer programming classes.”

Jim was surprised about that as well due to the extreme need. Most of Starfleet’s computer science faculty had the misfortune to be celebrating the birthday of one of their colleagues at a bar downtown the day the Vengeance fell to earth. Said bar happened to be Ground Zero and Starfleet lost 95% of the computer science faculty and 50% of the xeno-linguistics faculty. Really, it was a small miracle that Starfleet Academy held out until this semester to give Spock computer science classes to teach. The faculty was only at 70% of its pre-catastrophe levels and that was with the help of lots of outside contractors.

“That’s good to know because Rodriguez made it sound like I was only offered an invitation because they needed somebody on the committee that has gone through the Academy program in the last five years.”

“I’m going to be the first to admit that you’re on the green side of things and that it was stupid to make a 25-year-old Captain straight out of the Academy for the sake of political expediency.”

“It’s nice to know how you really feel.” Jim thought to himself.
“But that’s mostly because I think they should’ve made you a first officer and Spock captain instead.” Which, would have made more sense. “Because you have all the raw material needed to become a good captain eventually. You just needed more time to develop those qualities. Instead, you were tossed into the deep end to sink or swim. I’m sure several of my now former colleagues were expecting you to sink and just put you in the position to fall flat on your ass.” Jim also believes that assumption. “But you didn’t. You made mistakes, but everyone does.”

“Mistakes made in blood.” Jim mumbled under breath.

“Saturday once we get Peter to sleep, I’ll tell you about my first day as a Captain. That day was so bad, I think it is single-handedly responsible for creating the belief that there is such a thing as the redshirt curse.” Okay that has to be one hell of a story with a high body count.

“As for Admiral Rodriguez, she’s probably pissed at me and taking it out on you.”

“She did send me back with candy for Peter.” The two-year-old ran to him at that. “That you can have later.”

“Candy now.”

“After lunch.” That’s when Peter brought out the puppy dog eyes, “it’s either after lunch or not at all.”

“Okay.” The toddler sulked.

“Get your bag together.” Jim ordered the almost 3-year-old.

“She’s not happy about the wedding.” Nyota’s mother confessed after a moment.

“The fact that they’re using this as a political distraction?” Jim was annoyed at that as well. If he can ever convince Nyota that wedding rings are not toxic, they are eloping on Risa and Starfleet will be none the wiser until they submit their marriage license.

“The fact that I’m marrying someone that isn’t her.”
“Oh.” He wasn’t expecting that confession.

“She was my first officer right after the divorce and we had a very close relationship that wasn’t always as professional as it should’ve been.” Jim had a good idea of what ‘close relationship’ really meant and wondered if there may have been some truth to Nyota’s father’s accusations. He was just aiming his accusations at the wrong person.

“That type of relationship was frowned upon at the time, especially between a female Captain and female first officer.” Because Starfleet has a long history of assholes being in charge of policy. “There was some asshole just looking for a reason to prevent women from becoming captains at the time and we decided that we would be better off with a platonic relationship as I was still in a very messed up place from the divorce anyway. It was for the best.”

“And then you crossed the line with Sarah?”

“Yes, and nobody’s happy when their ex gets married, even when you like your former significant other. Especially when it happens, the year after you bury your wife because cancer is still evil.” So it turns out, Admiral Rodriguez is as human as the rest of us.

“So I’m the acceptable target?” Jim asked, rolling his eyes.

“Unfortunately, yes. But she’s a good person, which is why you’re only having to deal with snarky comments and not assassination attempts.” She defended.

“That’s an improvement over the last guy.”

“Anything’s an improvement over last time.”

“Although you will be bringing me the good bourbon Saturday night.” Jim said as he collected his nephew to go home. Yes, they did stop for chocolate and brownie mix. Nyota and Spock deserved brownies right now and possibly a quiche.

To be continued.
Fun with the future in-laws

Chapter Notes

Thank you to everyone who read or reviewed the last chapter. Many of you are wondering how Spock will react to spending quality time with Carol. It might not be the reaction that you’re expecting.

Warning: There’s a little bit of sexual content at the end of this chapter. Very little. I really don’t like writing sex scenes.

Spock had a tiring day. After teaching his own morning class and guest lecturing in one of Nyota’s courses, he had a 2 PM meeting with their legal team. He had no choice but to go alone because Nyota had an afternoon class and James was taking care of Peter now that Arlene was his father’s Earth-based assistant/embassy liaison.

Spock agreed to go alone because he thought that he was merely there for an update on the settlement between his father and the Vulcan government regarding forced arranged marriages for the sake of procreation. This mostly pertained to him, therefore, it was logical for him to be the only one there of the triad. Instead, he was informed that Alexis would be removing herself from working on any litigation brought forth by Spock or his partners, now that the situation with the Vulcan government has resolved itself.

By resolve, Spock means that they will not publicly reveal the plot to force Sarek out of the Council in exchange for repealing the compulsive and unconstitutional marriage requirement. Thankfully, Vulcans are highly logical by nature and willing to come to an agreement swiftly, at least in this case, because public shame is a great weapon and the rebuilding effort requires that they keep the goodwill of the greater Federation. While many Vulcans may find Spock’s father a traitor to his people due to his interspecies marriage, he is looked upon with great reverence by the Federation as a whole. Alexis was competent enough to utilize this, which is why Spock does not wish to lose her counsel in a professional capacity.

“I do not understand why you are recusing yourself now. You have been well aware of the conflict of interest for months now and continued to assist with legal matters unrelated to Nyota’s father.” Who is still undergoing court ordered psychiatric treatment, according to De’bor’ah.

“Because now that the situation with the Vulcan government has been resolved, the other cases can be handled by my associates exclusively.” Alexis explained. “Shawn is the family law expert of the firm anyway. That seems to be the most pressing legal issue momentarily. Even the situation with Starfleet is less contentious now that Nyota’s father is unable to continue interfering.”
What was left unsaid was that Admiral Chan is a smart woman and is well aware that the agency cannot use the bad publicity from such a lawsuit. Spock is also certain that Nyota’s mother volunteering to have her wedding turned into a political distraction contributed to the fact that Starfleet was now openly embracing their relationship, even if they were asked to keep its existence as private as possible. Spock was fine with that concession because it was automatically his preference and it would prevent them from being followed around by the paparazzi.

“Even if I could help with that situation, Cassandra is the one best at anything related to mental health law. At this point, the most important thing is keeping Nyota’s father somewhere he can receive treatment. I promise Cassandra is assisting De’bor’ah with that. But as for me, you don’t need me and it’s best to keep all of the impressions of impropriety down to a minimum.”

“I accept your reasoning.” Spock said aloud, but he still wondered if there was some piece of information that he was missing.

Spock was then left to be briefed by Shawn and Cassandra regarding the settlement with the Vulcan government and was therefore too busy to examine Alexis’ argument closely. Spock was satisfied with the fact the government would be completely unable to force him or any other Vulcan into a marriage not of his choosing. Of course, the point would be moot in his case due to his pre-existing bond with James, but it was the principle that mattered.

It was only when Spock arrived at his vehicle that he began to question why Alexis would be having dinner with them if she was no longer working with Sarek or Spock in a legal capacity. If this was anyone else but his father, Spock would begin to wonder if maybe their relationship had grown beyond the boundaries of attorney-client. However, considering his father’s recent state of mind, the likelihood of that being the case is one in 739 million.

Arlene did not agree with him and said as much when he picked her up from the Embassy.

"I think your father has a crush on his lawyer and the feeling is mutual." Arlene argued before forcing Spock into the passenger seat.

Arlene enjoyed driving the vintage convertible that once belonged to Spock’s mother a little too much. Normally, Jim took this car, but it was more practical for him to have the SUV when taking care of young Peter.

"What evidence do you base your hypothesis on?" He won’t automatically dismiss Arlene’s theory.
She has been working with his father closely in recent weeks now that she’s part of the embassy team.

"I’ve had to schedule four dinners between the lawyer and your father for when he will visit in a couple of weeks. Only one of those you’re invited to."

"I’m aware, but that doesn’t necessarily mean there is a nonprofessional element to their relationship." Spock argued

"He sent her flowers." Arlene deadpanned.

"That may just be a simple thank you for preventing him from being forced to enter into a marriage of political convenience to a completely distasteful person, as well as uncovering that his own assistant was part of the conspiracy." Spock tried to justify.

"Which I am entirely thankful for, considering I now have a good paying job that won’t fire me for having to go on maternity leave in a couple of months. Actually, your father will even let me work from home for the first six months after the baby is born.” Such arrangements are standard on Vulcan, or rather customary in Vulcan culture, but apparently this is an unusual practice by Earth standards.

"I may name the baby Amanda because I’m so grateful to your father, if you’re sure he won’t find that offensive.”

"I doubt that he would."

"However, I’m not grateful enough to send three dozen orange roses and two dozen truffles from Red Light Confections of Risa, even if I could afford that and my own apartment thanks to him.” Spock frowned at her words, because even in Vulcan culture, such items were used in courtship rituals by those who were not engaging in a prearranged relationship.

"There is no need for you to find an apartment.” However, Spock does not wish to discuss such things. Which is why he is changing the subject. “I received word today that we will be leaving on our five-year mission in February. I would prefer for the house not to sit idle.” He has discussed the issue with both Jim and Nyota and all three of them agreed that Arlene and Peter would be the preferred occupants for the apartment during their long absence from Earth.
"But what about your father needing somewhere to stay when he’s Earthbound? I think he’s going to be planet side more often due to a certain lawyer and will need a place to stay." Why did she find it necessary to continue bringing this possibility up?

"Then he can stay at the Embassy."

"Or Alexis’ bedroom." Spock scowls or as close to an approximation of a scowl that he would ever allow himself.

"Don’t raise your eyebrows at me. He’s an adult and adults do that sort of thing. Otherwise I wouldn’t be a giant beach ball and you wouldn’t be here."

"Genetic engineering was required for my conception."

"But I’m sure there was a lot of practice involved before they realized they had to go that route.” Arlene smirked at him.

"Are you really that bothered by the mere thought of your father moving on?"

"No." Spock answered emphatically. Arlene just glares at him again.

"And they say Vulcans don’t lie. It’s not like he’s trying to replace your mom. That’s probably not even possible for him. However, as I found out during orientation, a level X biological emergency will force the issue. No matter what.” Spock raised another eyebrow at her comment. Pon Farr was a very taboo subject and he was surprised that it was part of the orientation for locally employed staff.

"I’m surprised this was discussed with you."

“I don’t know what it’s called in Vulcan or what it exactly entails, but apparently there’s been a rash of level X biological emergencies and all employees need to be aware of the protocols to deal with Vulcan citizens going through the level X biological emergency. Of course the protocols have changed since there is no longer a home planet to evacuate Vulcans too. But he still will need someone to help him through it. Which means at least some casual sex in the future, if not a new stepmom."
"I prefer not to think of my father in such terms."

"No one wants to think of their parents in such terms. But on the bright side, if he is dating your former lawyer, she is a vast improvement over the Vulcan Princess reject.” Which wouldn’t be that difficult in Spock’s opinion. Even Chapel would be an improvement.

"I assume that you had the displeasure of meeting T'Van?" Spock asked.

“Yes, earlier today, unfortunately. She was absolutely awful. She was quite incensed by the fact that there were humans working at her precious Embassy.” That does not surprise Spock at all. “She was there with her latest victim. Sorry new trophy husband. That was quick.”

"Not if it was prearranged." Spock is certain that it was. Despite her distasteful personality, she does have a working uterus, which is necessary right now to those Vulcans who refuse to look outside their species.

"Probably. I hope she doesn’t darken the door of the Embassy again anytime soon. I just want to go home, eat dinner, and hopefully read a bedtime story to my baby who I hope is no longer contagious. Do you know if Jim is cooking or do we need to pick up something?" Arlene asked.

"He said he would email me with dinner plans. If Peter was doing well, James was planning to cook himself."

"If not, we are fending for ourselves and doing takeout." Arlene sighed as Spock started to look through his emails. He chose only to pay attention to the ones from Jim or Nyota.

"Actually it would be my responsibility to pick up takeout since it’s my turn. However, Jim enjoys cooking during his time off.” Which explains why their kitchen is so well-stocked.

"His rosemary chicken is wonderful. Although you wouldn’t know that since you don’t eat chicken.” Spock does not respond. Instead he begins reading a message that Nyota sent 30 minutes ago.

"Apparently takeout is not necessary because, according to Nyota, James is now stress baking.”
"That doesn’t sound good."

"Apparently he’s on his second batch of brownies. He also prepared zucchini quiche, sweet potatoes au gratin, and the rosemary chicken you apparently like so much."

"At least he made something that will not make me throw up, I hope. It’s never a good thing when Jim does that much baking.” The last time, Jim did this much baking was the day before their hearing with family court regarding custody of Peter. James baked 12 batches of cookies that day.

With this in mind, Spock found Nyota’s account worrisome, which is why he started reading Jim’s email immediately. There he found the reason for James’ stress baking. Carol Marcus would not only be joining Enterprise, but would be taking Spock’s position as chief science officer with Spock being bumped up to her immediate supervisor. The fact that James was stress baking made Spock sure that Jim was worried about his or Nyota’s reaction. It also confirmed that Jim was not the main decision-maker in this instance. James’ correspondence confirmed this.

Xxxxx

From: KirkJT
To: SpockX
Subject: I still hate the Admiralty

So I mentioned earlier that Dr. Carol Wallace Marcus is Enterprise’s new chief science officer. However, now I know it was your fault. You named her as a possible successor because you were being nice to Bones. due to the fact that if it wasn’t for him, I wouldn’t be here right now. That is such a Spock thing for you to do.

Because Sulu will become a daddy very soon, he doesn’t want to deal with extra stress so we get Dr. Wallace Marcus as our Starfleet appointed babysitter. That’s essentially what she is which is an insult to her and to us. Apparently a first officer and a captain dating causes all sorts of logistical problems that the powers that be don’t know how to deal with. Add Nyota in there and it’s worse because there’s definitely nothing in the Starfleet handbook about the majority of command being in a relationship with each other.

If you read this while you are still at the lawyers, could you ask if it’s possible to fight this or should we just let it go and save the lawyers for the really intolerable stuff. I am not sure if I want to fight this unless it makes both you and Nyota really uncomfortable. I’m not even sure if it is possible to fight it or even if it’s in our best interest. Of course, that might be a question best left to the lawyers.
Me personally, I think our only options are let it happen or try to convince Sulu to actually take the job. Do you think a gigantic baby stuff gift bag will make him change his mind? I know all the best baby boutiques.

PS: Seriously, do you have any idea why he didn’t mention becoming a dad. I have seen him several times in the last couple of months and yet, I find out by running into him and the mom-to-be at Lamaze. Actually, that’s how I found out about most of the ‘we survived the Vengeance incident’ babies.

PPS: Please don’t hate me for this. The only reason why I’m not making a big deal about it is because at least they didn’t nominate one of my asshole ex-boyfriends to do the honors. That would be so much worse.

PPPS: I’m making apology brownies, but only because that’s more tangible than apology blow jobs. However, you’ll be getting those as well, if you promise not to blame me for our Starfleet appointed babysitter. Seriously, we have to get Sulu to agree to this.

XXXXXXX

After reading that message, Spock scrolled down to find Jim’s original message that included a picture of Peter as well as speculation about which members of Starfleet still wanted him dead. Spock is now surprised that there are not more baked goods waiting for him at the house.

However, Spock is not surprised by this personnel development. First of all, it was rare for first officers to also function as a department head, considering that they were responsible for many administrative functions. Second, he was asked by Admiral Rodriguez to put together a portfolio of top science officers throughout Starfleet who may do well on Enterprise two weeks prior. It is only in hindsight that he realizes he was asked to recommend his own replacement.

Just as James speculated, he included Dr. Carol Marcus Wallace among the possible candidates out of respect for her boyfriend, despite his personal uneasiness with the woman. There really shouldn’t be any uneasiness between them. It was her father’s actions that led to James’ death in the first place not her. Spock always despised people who judged him by his parents and did not want to do the same himself. Dr. Marcus-Wallace was not her father and Spock could not hold his actions against her. Neither could he hold the actions of her other dimension counterpart against her because people are all products of their experiences and she has not experienced those things.

As a child of an ambassador, Spock is all too familiar with politics controlling everything. He has become more familiar with the way it influences Starfleet decisions in the last seven months since the Vengeance incident. Spock is certain that there are political motives behind this, but he feels it best to confirm his suspicions before saying anything.
Spock would like to ask Admiral Rodriguez directly, but he knew that was not an option. That was why he ended up calling Nyota’s mom when Arlene ran upstairs due to baby related nausea as soon as they arrived home.

“I assumed you would call once Captain Kirk informed you of the necessary personnel change.” The Admiral said before Spock could even inform her that he was the one calling.

“He sent me an email, but we have yet to discuss the situation in person.” Which was true.

“Good. He listened to my lecture on always having a paper trail.” She praised.

“He included an image of you and Peter interacting earlier. He was wearing a replica uniform. I am uncertain if such a communication counts as a paper trail.” He decides not to mention the second email which promised sexual favors and bribery. Spock was going to have to delete that message from the server. Why couldn’t he send that to Spock’s personal email account?

“It does when you’re being investigated.” Spock was almost tempted to sigh. Apparently his earlier hypothesis was correct.

“I was informed by our legal staff that we were no longer under such scrutiny, thanks to the medical incarceration of Nyota’s father.” It is very hard to take the threats of the man who is currently on an indefinite psychiatric hold seriously.

“The fact that you have to have Alexis’ firm on retainer proves that you’re still under such scrutiny.” The Admiral said pointedly.

“Your point is logical.”

“You’re being scrutinized. James’ position has always been political. Otherwise you would’ve been made Captain and we both know it. Thankfully, he’s capable. However, he’s also dating two subordinates and unfortunately, Starfleet captains have a very unscrupulous history of taking advantage of their subordinates.” Spock is well aware of this and really does not need it pointed out to him.

“I’m cognizant of what was done to Winona Kirk when she refused the sexual advances of a superior. However, James would never take advantage of his position in such an egregious way.”
Spock defended his boyfriend.

“I know that, you know that, and I’m sure Chan knows that, considering Jim used to babysit her son Kevin. The others may not. Remember the Christine Chapel incident.”

“Unfortunately James still has contact with her due to her being Admiral Pike’s niece.” Spock actually sighed this time.

“I’m aware. I’m also aware that she is taking her medication now, which is good for all of us.”

“Very much so.”

“If Dr. Marcus being there prevents unjust allegations against the three of you, it’s for your benefit to go along with it. Especially when she will also be supervising the xeno-linguistics department.” James neglected to mention that fact. Although, that does explain why Jim was also worried about Nyota’s reaction.

Again Spock should not be surprised. Previously, Nyota reported directly to James because Spock could not be her immediate supervisor. Now that was no longer an option. Of course they would bring someone else on to fulfill that role. Although he does question why they were putting Marcus in this position. Unlike himself and James, she was not a double track.

“I assume you gave James similar advice?” Spock stated instead.

"Yes. Although, I may have led him to believe that the current situation was caused by your Admiral being mad at me for getting engaged and taking it out on him."

"I assume there’s some truth to that?" Spock asked.

“We used to date and nobody likes to see their ex-girlfriend get married, but Rodriguez is too professional for that, even if she is angry at me. Regardless, she will not let that influence her job. She’s just trying to make the best of a not good situation. This is just one of those situations where Jim may need to be the grown-up and just let it go. At least they’re not actively sabotaging Jim’s command."
'This time.' Spock thought bitterly, but he did not voice his concerns.

"I do not plan to make the situation more difficult for James."

"Your Captain. If you’re going to be dating, you need to compartmentalize. He had to make a Captain Kirk decision. Sometimes the best decision for your relationship and the best decision for the sake of the ship are not the same thing and this is just one of those times where the two goals don’t match up quite so well.” Or maybe they match up more than the Admiral realizes. James’ first goal is protecting his people, no matter what.

"I’m aware that James’ major purpose is protecting his people. Although I see no point in referring to him as Captain Kirk in casual conversation.

"Professional boundaries. Speaking of which, your Captain has been chosen to be on the 2059 curriculum realignment committee. As his first officer, it’s in your best interest to convince him of the advantages of taking the position. The details have been sent to your account.”

"Of course, Admiral. Is there anything else?"

"Be good to my daughter and I will be over for dinner Saturday."

“Of course.” Spock answered the admiral. “Also you may be asked to be a guest speaker along with your boyfriend at Riverside High School next month. I advise you to say yes. He’ll be less likely to say something inappropriate if you’re on stage with him.”

“I’m not certain that I could preve…” However, she disconnected the call before he could say anything more.

"So why are you still hiding in the car and were you just talking to my mom?” Nyota asked as she knocked on the window of the car.

"I was hiding in the car as you put it, because I was conversing with your mother about Starfleet related things.” He answered as he opened the door to get out of the vehicle.

“It’s never a good sign when you or Jim hide when you make those types of calls.” However, instead Nyota crawled in beside him. “I assume that you now know that Carol Marcus will be
looking over my shoulder, starting in February unless we can convince Hikaru that it’s perfectly okay for him to spend the first five years of his new daughter’s life in space."

"I’m not sure if we would be completely successful in that."

"Maybe if we dropped off the contents of the baby room and agreed to deal with Carol for the first six months without protests, we can convince him.” Nyota suggested as she placed a hand on his thigh.

"It is worth an attempt.” Nyota kissed him gently. “But if we are not successful, I assume you will not make things difficult for James?"

“Of course not, but I’m not the problem.” He felt fingers making their way towards the zipper of his regulation pants. “Thankfully, you’re cute when you’re jealous.”

“We both know that you were ridiculously jealous of Carol the first time she met Jim. I’m surprised you didn’t hump him on the shuttle to mark your territory.”

“I would do no such thing.”

“Yes, you would, but you don’t need to. Peter’s said that Jim got lots of communicator numbers when parading him around today. Do you know how many he still has?”

“I assume none at all, otherwise you would be out here complaining.” Nyota responded by kissing him again.

“Exactly. Jim’s not interested in anybody, but us. I mean, he’s spent all afternoon making our favorite baked goods.”

“You have a logical point.”

“You know there’s going to be just as much pressure on us to behave as Jim and we have to do our best.” He felt Nyota lower his zipper.
“I agree.”

“Good. I think all of us deserve a treat for that.” It was moments later that he felt a mouth envelop him completely.

It wouldn’t be until much later, when Spock was breaking into his building security system to acquire the footage from that afternoon, that Spock would realize how Nyota performing fellatio on him would be a treat for James. However, James enjoyed the footage immensely. He referred to it as his happy moment and watched it several times while he was trying to come up with what to say to a group of teenagers.

To be continued.
Home Is Where You Are, part one

Chapter Summary

You may think that you need to find your way home, but the truth of the matter is, you may already be there. Chapter 2 of the Idiots Guide to Family Bonding revised third edition.

Chapter Notes

Thank you to everybody who read or reviewed the last chapter. So it’s looking more and more likely that I will not finish this story before July. We have at least four more chapters to go and of the two Star Trek stories I’m working on, I’d rather get Dear James done before Star Trek Beyond comes out and gives me all sorts of new ideas.

"Are you sure you’re going to be okay here watching over everything this weekend?" Nyota asked her sister for the seventh time as she threw various things for her weekend trip to Iowa in her giant Starfleet duffel bag. She was supposed to pack yesterday, but she got distracted by Jim and she ended up destroying her suitcase in the process. It turns out there are just some fabrics you can't get cum out of.

The reason why she was packing is that Admiral Rodriguez, in her infinite wisdom (maliciousness) decided that Jim would take part in the Starfleet hometown speaker project. The speaker project usually involved a Starfleet officer going back to talk to his alma mater about the virtues of Starfleet.

In the case of her boyfriend, it meant being forced to speak at his old high school on Monday with an early preview at UF Iowa today along with some banquet Saturday celebrating the christening of James Tiberius Kirk Avenue. (She personally thinks that Jim asked them to go with his full name in an effort to get them to reconsider.)

Due to her crazy class schedule and the fact that the academy was becoming even more short-staffed due to another round of investigations bearing fruit, she had to teach her Friday classes, but she would be there by nightfall. This meant she would be there for tomorrow’s banquet and renaming ceremony along with being there for Jim’s return trip to George J. Kirk Memorial High School. The only reason why she was going to the Monday presentation is Admiral Rodriguez canceled her classes so she could play chaperone. (Being forced to spend time at the place named after your dead father necessitates her presence alone, but the Admiralty didn’t see it that way.)

Rodriguez firmly believes that Spock could keep Jim from putting his foot in his mouth in front of a group of college students, but for teenagers they wanted both of them there. (Or maybe Admiral Pike realized how bad of an ideal it was to send Jim to George Kirk High without as much emotional support as possible and was the one really pulling the strings.) Do they not realize that there is no such thing as controlling Jim Kirk outside of bedroom play time? It’s the entire reason that Sulu said no to becoming their Starfleet appointed babysitter, despite dropping off a vintage rocking chair. (Although he did say that he would reconsider in a year if they could keep Dr. Wallace-Marcus from...
bursting into frustrated tears.)

Regardless, with the three in another state and Arlene not only ready to pop, but busy working on various projects for the ambassador’s return next week, a babysitter was needed and her sister Ivy was chosen for the job.

“Just finished packing so we can get you to the space port in time for your flight. There's no point in you worrying because I have this. I’ve babysat before. You know this because it's the only reason why I had any resources after crazy daddy kicked me out.” Crazy daddy who is still in a psychiatric hospital and will probably be there for the rest of his life if her attorneys and De’bor’ah have anything to say about it. She feels bad for De’bor’ah enough that she's planning to spoil her when she comes up for a conference in December.

"Although this is the first time where one of the parents was still there. But I like Arlene. So it’s okay.” Her sister said trying to reassure her. Nothing could reassure Nyota. She was running through lots of worst-case scenarios in her head. She blames it on being with Spock for too many years.

That's because in addition to watching Peter when Arlene is working on things for the ambassador you need to keep an eye on Arlene. She's 36 weeks pregnant and honestly I tied her shoes this morning."

"And the giant elephant appreciated it. Sam never did anything like that when I was pregnant with Peter." Arlene said as she walked into the room carrying a teddy bear and subsequently placed it her bag. "Peter wants you to take Mr. Bear so you won't be homesick."

“That is so adorable.” Her sister said with a smile. It really was a sweet gesture.

"I'll tell Peter thank you before I leave. I will also tell him to convince his mom that she is not an elephant. Nhi is only at 32 weeks and she is significantly bigger than you, you know.”

"Because of twins. Also I never got this far with Peter so that’s probably why I feel so huge." Arlene subconsciously ran a hand over her growing stomach.

“That is because Peter was born much like his uncle at 29 weeks.” Nyota pointed out as she threw the last of her underwear into the bag. All she needed to do was grab a few dresses for the banquet tomorrow and she will be ready to go.

"Which is why I’m surprised I've made it this far. With all the shit that Sam has been putting me through for the last couple of months I was positive I was going to go into premature labor again.” Arlene said this while rubbing her back. Nyota almost wondered if she was starting to have contractions. Jim wasn't the only one reading the baby books. If she's planning on getting pregnant in six years, she should know what she’s getting into.

"Is that a contraction?” Nyota asked and Arlene just glares a little.

"That is regular baby back pain. I haven't even started dilating yet.” Arlene reassured. But it wasn’t reassuring at all.

"You know, maybe I should stay here. I'm not sure if you would know what to do if Arlene's water breaks.”

"Grab the ready bag from the closet and then systematically go through Spock’s checklist which includes calling the hospital to get the room ready and calling your mom and the Admiral to come get Peter since I will be taking over Jim’s job as coach.” Okay maybe she could do this, but Nyota would not say that out loud.
“Really it’s just back pain and again I'm not dilating yet. I seriously doubt the baby will arrive before you and your boyfriends arrive back Tuesday morning.” Just in time for her to do her intro to Vulcang-based languages class and for Jim to have a rather uncomfortable meeting with the Starfleet curriculum committee.

Yes, he agreed to be on the committee and he’s starting to regret it because half the time he wishes Spock was there to ‘knock everybody unconscious so they will stop acting like two-year-olds’

“Things will be okay here. Peter loves Ivy and you can’t let Jim talk to the class of 2260 of George Kirk High School, without adequate adult supervision.” Because they both know Jim well enough to know that there is a 50-50 chance that he will go off on a tangent about Starfleet leadership that no member of Starfleet leadership would want made public. Although in his defense, a few of them have actively tried to kill him.

“Your Admiral mommy made him take over our intro combat class yesterday due to our regular instructor being pulled out because of the investigation.” Yes, the corrupt official witch-hunt keeps going and apparently, Admiral X and Marcus had more cronies than anyone thought. “It kind of went badly with two students ending up in Sickbay and the whole class now knows that our original instructor did not resign to deal with a family emergency, but is being dishonorably discharged for participating in Marcus's conspiracy.” Nyota started to massage your temples.

"The injuries happened because they didn’t listen to his instructions." At least that’s what Jim told her. He conveniently left out telling the baby students the truth about their previous instructor’s indiscretions.

"Why do you have to be so logical?" Ivy pouted which told her that at least Jim was telling the truth about that part.

"Jim may not agree with the party line, but he's good at selling the good parts of the organization while acknowledging the screwed up parts in the best way possible."

"You do have a point there." Nyota told Arlene as she grabbed two dresses out of her closet. "Which one for the re-naming ceremony and banquet tomorrow?"

"You should probably do your dress uniform for the actual ceremony, but go with the purple dress for the banquet afterwards.” Arlene suggested.

“Honestly, I would be more worried about Jim behaving badly at the banquet. Alcohol and being around people who treated him like crap during high school is not a good combination. Although, on Monday you have to worry about Jim running into his old teachers. Most of them had Jim convinced he would end up a drunk fuck up that would never become anything.”

The stupid assumption was caused by the fact Jim stayed drunk or high a lot the first few months after Tarsus. And considering what happened on Tarsus, she could understand the self-medicating.

"Jim is going to need you to run interference because high school was an awful awful place for him.” Because in addition to the place being named after his dead daddy, he just survived the hell that was Tarsus to be put into the foster care system and then he was abandoned by his so-called friend who used him as a sex toy to satisfy her curiosity, quite literally.

So of course she needed to be there for emotional support (and to have bail money ready when it all went horribly wrong). She was just a little bit worried that Arlene would pop while they were in another state.
"If I happen to go into labor, you guys can be here in an hour if need be. Actually you could be here instantly if Jim sucks up to the right person at the Riverside facility." Arlene told her. She had a point, but Nyota was not quite ready to back down yet.

"OK but what will you do if Sam shows up?" That was another thing she was worried about. Two days ago the judge once again shot down Sam's request for full custody and even his request for visitation. The situation will be revisited in February, but for now Sam was out of their lives and after her unfortunate experience with her father, both were a little worried about Sam retaliating.

“Call 911. Then use the phaser that Jim coded me into.” Thanks to having an almost 3-year-old in the house, they had to activate the DNA sensors on the phasers to make sure that little hands do not use them as a toy. Thanks to Sam being a bastard, Jim decided that even Ivy needed to be able to shoot if necessary.

"On what setting?"

"On the stun setting because I don’t even think Shawn could get me off of that murder charge.” Ivy replied flippantly. "Although your ex-husband is in the same league as my dad so I really think I should be able to get away with it, but Shawn doesn't want me to chance it.”

“Actually, he is worse because Sam is perfectly sane. Thankfully, we never made it down the aisle.” Arlene actually sighed in relief.

“I thought that you did because Jim refers to you as his sister.”

“And he refers to Sam as the Bastard. Love and DNA are two different things.”

“Very true. De’bo’rah is my only real parent.” Ivy added.

“Fine, you win. If there’s problems, call Sarah and my mom. They will be on standby." And she will suck up to most of Riverside Starfleet to get an immediate ride to the hospital if necessary.

“I promise things will be fine. No loud parties. Lots of Disney movies and maybe some ice cream.” Her sister said trying to reassure her. "Besides, I have two exams to study for and I’m going to have to work through our exercises if Jim is going to be taking over the class for another week.”

Jim was actually taking over the beginners’ combat class for professionals for the rest of the semester. He had mixed feelings about it because on the one hand, he thought that by volunteering to be part of the curriculum committee, he wouldn’t end up substituting at the Academy. On the other hand, he gets to teach people how to hit things. After spending his mornings banging his head against the metaphorical wall that is the curriculum realignment committee, he needs serious time with a punching bag or three.

“I heard Jimmy complaining that he’s taking the class for the rest of the semester because as you said earlier your original instructor’s not coming back.” Because the guy barely escaped getting arrested. Situations like this are the entire reason why they have Jim, of all people, being forced to participate in the hometown speaker series for the sake of getting some good publicity today.

As Nyota zips up her bag with teddy bear inside, she tries to convince herself that everything will be OK. Except minutes later she got a text message from Jim that made her sure things will not be OK. Now she was wondering what happened to result in Jim asking her to bring his other dress uniform. Whatever happened cannot be good. Especially because nobody text messaged her back with an explanation about why she needed to bring the backup dress uniform. She just decided to do it.

Of course the moment that she manages to squeeze the uniform into her luggage, she gets a call from
her least favorite member of Starfleet medical. She actually likes Kim as a person. She just doesn't like therapists in general, especially one that can read her a little too well and he's not even her doctor right now.

"You’re not calling to set up another Vulcan play date? Because I'm a little busy right now." They need to leave in the next 10 minutes, but thankfully her sister and Arlene were already trying to get shoes on Peter.

"I think you’re spending way too much time with Jim. You’re starting to sound a little too much like your boyfriend."

"Probably." Nyota shrugged.

"Besides we’ll see you next week at the ambassador’s reception."

Ambassador Sarek will be back Wednesday just in time for some large ceremony, which will involve the entire family, rubbing shoulders with the majority of the San Francisco diplomatic community. Because she is Spock’s public girlfriend, she has no choice, but to be there. Jim will be there as Arlene’s escort. It’s going to be miserable. She's not surprised at all that Dr. Kim and his husband were invited. Most of the upper echelon of the local Vulcan community will be there.

"I hope they at least serve alcohol," especially if Arlene's suspicions are correct and Spock's dad has a girlfriend, especially if that girlfriend is her father's ex-girlfriend. Did she mention that her mom was invited to this event? The disaster potential was very high.

"Me too. Although that’s not why I’m calling. Dr. Weston has successfully made her way through the Starfleet clearance process and is ready to start seeing patients and you are at the top of her list."

Nyota wasn’t entirely sure how she felt about that. On the one hand, she was starting to warm up to the idea of having Spock in her head, but she didn’t want to get her hopes up because what if it couldn’t be fixed. Maybe this is one of those things that is static between all the dimensions. The fact that she was sad about the possibility of not having that type of intimacy made her realize that maybe she’s not as against permanent symbols of a relationship as she initially thought.

“She wants to see you Monday.” Why didn't she call herself?

"That’s not going to happen."

"Considering the situation at hand, I think you and your partners need to see her sooner rather than later."

“I’m not stalling. I am literally walking out of here in five minutes to catch the shuttle to Iowa where I'm going to be until Tuesday morning. Jim and Spock have been ordered to go to Jim’s alma mater to speak about the virtues of Starfleet in front of various camera crews as a publicity stunt. I’m going there for emotional support and to make sure neither of my boyfriends causes an interplanetary incident.” The Admiral thinks that Spock can hold Jim back, but those two together have a tendency to do dumb things.

“Or provide bail money when it does happen.” Dr. Kim joked. "I’m well aware that you are actually the superego of this Freudian trio."

"And Jim is going to be spending quality time with people who treated him like dirt for years so the potential of a fist fight breaking out is really high," especially if anybody was stupid enough to install a Vulcan's boyfriend. The idiot would be on the floor before anyone would even realize what was happening.
"Jim never talked a lot about his childhood. The fact that you do know what went down in Iowa makes me think that the three of you will actually make it." Dr. Kim told her.

"I hope so."

"I’ll check back with the doctor and see if I can work something around your class schedule."

"I’m probably not going to be available till next Monday." The Vulcan Embassy event and various doctor’s appointments for various people (because Peter only like for her to take him to see Dr. Suarez) whatever was already on her schedule was going to take most of her time next week. She wasn’t sure she could squeeze anything else in.

"We will work something out." With that he ended the call and Ivy came in to push her out to the car.

Despite the call from Dr. Kim to schedule an appointment to be told that ‘no you're never going to be able to bond with your boyfriend’ she did make it to the shuttle port on time. Just barely, because of traffic. Actually, it took less time to fly to Iowa City. Because her flight arrived just as Jim was supposed to be getting off the stage at UF Iowa she decided to take a cab to the hotel.

She is personally glad that the person in Starfleet travel that made the reservations ask no questions about the three being in one room together with a giant king size bed at the UF Iowa inn. Although maybe Jim just hacked into the records and change the room. That would be such a Jim thing to do.

Just as she was pulling out an outfit to wear to dinner she heard the door open. She knew it was her boyfriend because no one else would have access.

“How did the presentations go?” Nyota asked just as a Jim currently covered in red paint walked into the room. “Okay, more importantly, why are you covered in paint? Seriously, what happened?”

"Did you bring my backup uniform? Because I don’t think the dry cleaners can fix this." Jim looked annoyed and she was worried about paint dripping on the pristine white carpet.

Seriously who puts white carpet at a hotel especially a hotel within Starfleet per diem. Then again maybe Spock is paying for this himself which is probably why no one from Starfleet travel was asking questions about the sleeping arrangements.

"Yes." Nyota said, pointing to the garment bag hanging up in the closet. "Now I see why you asked for a new uniform."

"Actually, this only happened half an hour ago. Spock was a little too enthusiastic and ripped the zipper out this morning, which resulted in me wearing his pants this afternoon. Which is sexy, but a little snug in the good areas." Jim punctuates this by shaking his paint covered ass in front of her.

"That will now have to be replaced." Spock replied dryly.

"At least you both look good in red." She snickered from her position on the very large king-size bed.

"It’s supposed to represent the blood of the innocent." Jim sounded very annoyed. "I’m going to go shower before I become a permanent redhead. I would ask for one of you to come scrub my back, but I don’t trust either of you to actually just do that and this paint is icky.”

“At least it didn’t send you into anaphylaxis.” Nyota said, tossing him his toiletry bag that he left beside the bed this morning.
"I guess I should be thankful for small miracles. I seriously wish you brought the magic eraser. That may be the only thing that will get this out of my hair."

"Try my shampoo." She called out just as Jim walked into the bathroom without bothering to shut the door.

“So what happened? Things had to be absolutely awful for Jim to come back to the hotel covered in red paint.” Remarkably Spock only had paint on his hands and the sleeves of his uniform.

"The presentation went well. James is an excellence orator." Spock began to explain.

"That was the only part that went well." Jim called out from the bathroom. "Before I actually went onstage, I ran into Natalie's dad, retired captain Jonathan Alexander." Nyota knew exactly which Natalie he was talking about before he even gave the full name of the woman's father. She doubted Jim would be happy about running into his former foster dad.

"He's in charge of the ROTC program at UF Iowa now and the faculty member in charge of me while on campus. He actually asked specifically for me to visit which I don't get." She hoped it was to apologize, but she doubted it.

"We supposed to have dinner with that person?"

"I think we can get out of it now, thanks to the paint."

"Good, because I prefer not to have dinner with two people who kicked a needy child out of their house."

"They didn't kick me out I ran away more or less." Jim confessed. “I just couldn't deal with somebody acting like I didn't matter anymore the morning after."

"Why did you run away?" Spock asked before she could.

"Because they would have took her side when everything came out and I would've been out on the street anyway so I might as well do it on my own terms. It worked out. I am here." Jim explained.

"And completely covered with paint. And I would still like to know how that happened."

"I was trying to explain about the run-in with various protesters after the presentation, but I was interrupted." Spock told her with his annoyed eyebrows.

"You might as well come in here so you can scrub your hands clean because I think the anti-federation people use the really good paint. The shit is never going to come off."

Spock agreed with Jim’s words, which is why he started making his way to bathroom with Nyota falling behind. Jim was already undressed. Unfortunately a lot of the paint made it through the material of the dress uniform. The everyday Starfleet uniform actually protected you from stuff like that because every mission was an adventure. The dress uniform not so much.

"How did you ride in the car like that?" Nyota asked as she sat down on the toilet.

"We walked. We are only 2.1 km away from George Kirk Hall where the presentation took place." Spock responded as he made a face at Jim’s paint covered uniform that was now not only on the floor, but also on top of one of the pristine white towels that they were probably going to have to replace. It's not like they can’t afford it, but it's the principle of the thing.
"Since your hands are already red, just throw it in the trash." Jim said from the shower.

"I sincerely wish that you would learn to dispose of your attire properly despite the fact that wishing is illogical." She would mention something about almost tripping over Spock shoes last night because of his hasty packing, but she decided to get back to figuring out why there's paint covered attire in the first place.

"So was it a group of Humanist supremacists responsible for us having to pay for damages caused by paint?" She asked.

She would not be surprised if a run-in with a human supremacist group resulted in Jim being covered in paint. Having a Vulcan boyfriend meant she had to deal with the group a lot because they saw her as a betrayer to her species due to her fucking the enemy. The fact that she was dark skin just made it worse for many of them because xenophobia and racism still go hand-in-hand even if people don't want to acknowledge it in this supposed utopia of a society.

"That was lunch. I don't think our server enjoyed serving an interspecies couple." Despite the edict that they must keep their relationship somewhat private, Jim and Spock give off a couple vibe without actually trying. They did so even before the three of them were dating.

"The group outside of James' speech were protesting Starfleet's militarization and colonial-like policies." Spock explained.

"They threw paint on me to protest Starfleet moving away from its original purpose as a peacekeeping exploration organization to essentially being war hawks waiting for the bomb to drop. Now if they had tossed paint on me to protest the organization’s corrupt former leadership who misappropriated billions of credits to build secret warships, I would be cool with it, but they haven't sat for two weeks of curriculum oversight committee meetings where I have tried to get us back to our roots."

"You really don't like the curriculum committee."

"I like my job. I hate everyone there." She can relate considering she only has two friends in her department.

"I'm glad that they're having me do that in the introductory combat class for Starfleet professionals just so I can beat up stuff after spending hours with morons. So really not that different from today except today's stress relief activity may involve getting tied to the bed." OK things are really bad when Jim asked to be tied up. Not good.

"After you get the paint out of your hair." Because she may have packed some scarves just in case. "Is there anything else I need to know about?"

"My ex's daughter is now old enough to be at a Starfleet lecture at UF Iowa. I feel so old." Jim complained.

"I believe Nivea was 12 years old when you engaged in a sexual relationship with her mother, who was 12 years your senior to begin with." Spock pointed out with an eyebrow raise. "Also, I believed you were happy to reconnect with Nivea."

"Why are you always so logical? Jim asked from the shower."

"Who is Nivea?" Nyota asked.

"Do you remember my story about why I was hesitant to get involved with two people dating each
"The abused housewife with the Bastard husband? I don't remember her name." Which was weird because she remembered all the other details of the story vividly.

"I don't think I told you her name. Anyway, Nivea was her daughter. Actually still is because she had the good sense to get away from the bastard permanently. She is a freshman at UF Iowa. Which again makes me feel old."

"Only because you have a thing for older men and women." Nyota joked. Jim was the baby of their trio.

"In human years, Spock is three years older than us, but in Vulcan years he is a baby." Jim said as he started to scrub his hair under the spray of the shower.

"I guess it was nice to know that her sperm donor is serving 15 years for domestic violence with no hope of a shorter sentence. Also, her mom is in med school to become a psychiatrist."

"See, something not horrible happened." Nyota told him.

"Even if I’m stuck in the shower cleaning off the metaphorical blood of the innocent. I just hope I don’t get a rash."

"I have an allergy hypo ready if necessary." Of course Spock did.

"This is why you're my favorite boyfriend ever."

"They were being dumb college students. Don’t pay attention to what they say." She told Jim because she just knows he’s taking everything a little too seriously because that's what Jim does sometimes.

"They were kind of right. Thousands died in San Francisco because of the Vengeance fuck up. Vulcan was worse. It was a catastrophic genocide because we were too stupid to split the charges among the three of us." At this point she sees Jim practically scrubbing his hands raw. She doesn’t see paint there anymore, but apparently Jim does. At this point she decides it’s in her best interests to join him and starts removing clothes.

"No, they weren’t." She said as she stepped into the shower (with a shower cap on because she was not redoing her hair). “You are not responsible for the stupidity of others.”

"I am responsible for my own stupidity. Hey, what are you doing?"

"Getting in the shower with you because obviously somebody needs to wash your back and hair." Nyota said flippantly.

"Will Mr. Logic be joining us?"

"I prefer to watch."

"Of course you do." Jim rolled his eyes.

"I also do not believe that three people can fit inside without causing property damage."

"Probably not. I love our triple shower at home." So did Nyota.

"I'm just here to wash your hair and to get you to unwind little bit." Nyota said as she starts to
massage shampoo into Jim’s scalp.

"Using your talented tongue to appease me and make me forget about how much I hate being here may do the trick, maybe.” Jim sighed. “I knew this assignment would bring nothing but tears and apparently lots of scrubbing.”

"It is apparent that you are uneasy and highly stressed due to you being forced to confront your past because of the increased likelihood of running into former acquaintances that you associate with unpleasant memories." Spock said from the sidelines as he started to actually wash his hands.

"Some skeletons should stay buried and you know it's just going to get worse when we relocate to Riverside tomorrow. What did I do to deserve this?"

“You did nothing. Most likely the current situation is the result of Nyota’s mother past sexual liaison with our current Admiral and Rodriguez is upset about her former lover’s upcoming nuptials. In addition to still processing grief from her wife's passing. Therefore she is deriving masochistic pleasure from your misery.”

“How did you even know... Spock do you realize that your hands are swollen?” Jim said as he jumped out of the shower. Nyota followed behind him, because she knew where the good allergy hypos were.

Xxxxxx

So it turns out nobody was allergic to the paint. However, Spock was allergic to the complementary hand soap and unlike Jim, had yet to learn the importance of always bringing your own body wash. Thankfully Dr. McCoy is really paranoid and gave her an allergy hypo that would work on Spock.

This also gave Jim another reason to respectfully decline dinner with his former foster parents. They understood that taking care of Spock came first. Yes, they both also figured out that the three of them were dating and only responded with a smile. They recommended a place that made an excellent zucchini burger that delivered.

Spock was eating his zucchini burger now that the allergy meds had completely kicked in and he felt like eating. After doing a remote medical scan, Dr. McCoy said that they didn’t need to visit the emergency room, just for a while to avoid all the soap in the room and pick up the allergy medication prescription from the pharmacy next-door.

Now that Spock was taken care of, she and Jim were eating the chicken and waffles from the restaurant. It was pretty good.

Halfway through dinner, Arlene called, not because anything was going wrong, but because Peter could not fall asleep without his Uncle Jim reading him a bedtime story. As Jim did all the funny voices, she started going through her emails.

Of course the first one she runs into was from Dr. Kim. As she predicted the first time she was available was a week from Monday. She really wished she could’ve put that off a couple more weeks, but that wasn’t going to happen. As she sat perched between her boyfriends (with Mr. Bear lying beside her), she decided that she really did want to figure out a way around the bonding predicament. Because seeing your boyfriend swell up like a balloon made you wish you could really know what was going on in his head. Maybe it didn't work out in the other dimension because the other Nyota didn't want it that much. But she did because Jim and Spock were her home.

Now she just had to prepare herself to help Jim continue dealing with the ghosts of his past. If today was awful, tomorrow will be worse, but at least this time she would be here. (And all the soap was safely in the recycling bin. Seriously, why did he not get the body wash from her bag? If Spock ends up killing himself with an allergic reaction to soap of all things, she is going to hurt him.)
To be continued.
When Jim Kirk left Riverside nearly 5 years ago, he was planning not to come back (it was the main reason he gave his motorcycle away to a complete stranger). Technically the Starfleet facility, bearing his father’s name was actually outside of Riverside city limits so it didn’t really count when he was there for work reasons. There was no reason ever to venture in the town of Riverside itself.
He had no friends left in the city. His bridges were burnt years ago with almost all of his childhood acquaintances. Only Cassandra emails on a regular basis and he’s not even sure what planet she is on at the moment. And technically he didn’t become friends with Cassandra until he was a legal adult, despite meeting each other when they were children. So does she really count as a childhood friend? Probably not.

Not that he ever made that many friends when he was a child. It was really hard to make friends when you were trying to keep the fact that your stepfather beat the hell out of you a secret. Friends ask questions and Frank didn’t exactly want witnesses to his abuse. Only Cassandra’s mother, Angie of Angie’s Café, ever called Child Services on Frank and then Riverside PD looked the other way until it was much too late.

Jim never wanted to see his childhood house again. He would once the George Kirk Museum was completed, but if construction stayed on schedule, the restoration won’t be completed until 11 months after he begins the five-year mission (just in time for the 28th anniversary of his death and Jim’s birth). Meaning he can get away with a pre-taped video statement. Maybe in five years, he’ll be able to detach himself from it to see it as just another monument to his father.

Actually, the only part of Riverside that he actually missed was Angie’s Café. Their Apple stuffed french toast was one of those things that he could eat without risking anaphylaxis. But they delivered to the Riverside shipyard so every time he had to check on the repairs of his baby, he arranged for delivery.

Unfortunately, with Starfleet politics being what they were, he was now back at a place that he really didn’t want to be. If he was being forced to come back to hell for the sake of naming a street after him and a pep talk to the future generations of Riverside, Jim was going to begin his day at Angie’s. More importantly, he was going to get to try the Berry Haven stuffed french toast for the first time. Hooray for the augmented antibodies now coursing through his body that completely rebooted his immune system.

Or at least that’s what he hoped for when he ordered the mythical Berry Haven after they arrived at Angie’s Café a little before 11 (just enough time for brunch and to check into the hotel before being forced to show up to the ceremony). Except their server brought him back his usual apple stuffed french toast.

"That’s not what I ordered." He told the waitress very politely.

“Miss Angie still has your allergies on file. Giving you the Berry Haven french toast is under the ‘if you serve this to Jim Kirk, you will be fired’ category.” Did he mention that his strawberry allergy
was discovered here via a strawberry milkshake when he was four? He probably would’ve been a goner if Miss Angie didn’t keep an allergy hypo behind the counter.

"But I’m not allergic to strawberries anymore.” Jim almost whined because he’s really starting to love strawberries. Jim may have almost came when he had his first bite of Arlene’s strawberry rhubarb pie a couple of weeks ago.

"I’m not going to have my servers responsible for accidentally killing the hero of Starfleet.” Angie herself said as she walked out to the table. There were a few more wrinkles than what he remembered, but she was still the same booming Angie. Jim is positive she is the only woman that Frank was ever afraid of. Probably because she punched him out twice. Angie was awesome. She also quickly enveloped him in a hug.

"It’s okay. I got exposed to some alien pathogen in February and all my allergies changed.” That was the excuse they were using to explain why all his food allergies were different (along with every other strange side effect).

“I have the list available, if you would like to update your records on file.” Spock said, already pulling out a PADD. “We will be back in a couple of weeks to oversee the reconstruction of Enterprise and it would be advantageous to be able to order takeout without being concerned.”

“Good idea.” Angie said grabbing the PADD so she could forward the information to herself as well as look over the list now. “What the hell could you have been exposed to that completely changed all your allergies this much?” Nothing that I can legally tell you about.

“You can’t have almonds anymore? You loved almonds.”

“I know, but I can have strawberries.” It was a good trade, even if he’s never going to be able to eat an Almond Joy again.

“But not pineapples and we use pineapple juice in the Berry haven. It’s what we used to cook the berries in.” Angie retorted.

“That’s so unfair.” Jim said with a pout.

“You’ll just have to come over to the house for brunch tomorrow so I can make you a version
without any pineapples.” He’s not even surprised. When he told Cassandra about this a couple weeks ago, she told him her mom would drag him off to brunch.

“You spoil me. But I’m not sure that we…” Considering the glare he was receiving, Jim decided that they would be making time for breakfast tomorrow.

“We will arrange our schedules accordingly. We can move the appointment to meet with the curator of the George Kirk Museum to later in the day,” or they can completely move it off the schedule because Jim is pretty sure he did not agree to meeting with any curator. Actually, he thought he was just meeting with the team overseeing Enterprise reconstruction since they were here. He should’ve known better. Most Starfleet people despised working on Sunday so that was probably a fake meeting on his schedule.

“Good. Also, if your boyfriend ordered the vegan version, do not touch his plate. There’s soy in that.”

“I remembered. I did work here for two years.” Immediately following his emancipation. “Thankfully Spock is a vegetarian because he likes cheese too much. He was raised on a diet of grilled cheese and tomato soup, so he’s a little partial.”

“Also, Spock is dating Nyota.” Jim added. Moments later, remembering that he was supposed to at least act like he’s not screwing his first officer and chief communications officer when he's thinking a blow job would really take the edge off right now.

“And so are you.” Angie just gave him a look that told him point-blank that it was futile to lie to her. “I don’t judge. Just because you grew up with a homophobic bigoted ass of a stepfather doesn’t mean you should hide who you really are.”

“I miss you.” Jim said fighting the urge for another hug.

“I would tell you to visit more often, but I know you don’t like it here. You could write more though.”

“I’ll try.” And he really would because he doesn’t like that glare. “There were some good moments, mostly related to your food,” Jim said as he took the first bite of the apple cinnamon to die for french toast. So it wasn’t what he wanted, but it was so good.
Unfortunately, his happiness would be diminished an hour later when he was forced to spend quality time with Erin West, a.k.a. the guy who bullied Jim until the fourth grade when Jim Kirk was able to kick his ass once and for all. Did he mention Angie was the one who taught him how to hit back after she realized Child Services in Riverside was worthless?

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“What’s the probability of Jim getting through this banquet without hitting someone and therefore getting arrested for disturbing the peace?” Nyota asked Spock in perfect Vulcan from the sidelines of the banquet as she sipped on her champagne. They had learned long ago that if they wanted to have a private conversation in public, switching to his native tongue was the best option.

“18.3%.” Spock remarked in Vulcan as his gaze focused on James. The actual ceremony went well despite the presenter and son of the mayor claiming to be a childhood friend of Jim’s. On the way to the venue, they were informed of the true antagonistic nature of the relationship. Spock could still feel James’s agitation at the situation. It was also apparent that his boyfriend was putting on his best “pacify the Admiralty” smile.

“There is also an 81.3% probability that I will incapacitate Mr. West before the entrée is served.” Which would be ill-advised because he is the son of the mayor.

“I’m at 97% after his little story about saving Jim from the various bullies at school when he was the one attacking Jim through most of elementary school. Asshole.” Only the last word was in standard but only because there wasn’t an exact Vulcan equivalent. “Let’s just be happy that I’m never going to run into the Vulcans that did stuff like this to you in school.”

“Actually, one of my tormentors was my father’s former assistant.” Spock remarked once again in Vulcan.

“Which completely explains why he sold your dad out to the Vulcan harlot. Alayna is a much better assistant.” Spock agreed with that assessment entirely.

“Even if she is convinced my father is engaging in a sexual relationship with his former attorney.”

“At least he’s a better person than my father.” Nyota remarked dryly using the Vulcan form of father that means genetic contributor without involvement in the life of said child. In many ways, Vulcan can be a much more precise language than Standard.
“You find the idea of your father dating Alexis acceptable despite her inauspicious history with your father?” Spock asked her, using the same version of father as before.

“It wasn’t her fault that daddy was a genital.” Why doesn’t Vulcan have a direct equivalent for prick?” She asked, switching to Standard momentarily.

“I am uncertain if we needed the vulgarity.” He said returning to Standard himself.

“Yet there’s eight different ways to say prostitute?” Nyota asked with one eyebrow raised.

“I will not comment on the logical nature of my linguistic forefathers.” Because I cannot explain in public that due to Pon Farr, engaging in sexual intercourse for monetary compensation is not always seen as a negative thing because of biological necessity. Therefore, there are versions of the term that convey this.

“Okay, I think it’s time for us to sweep in and extract are Captain.” Nyota (now speaking Vulcan again) pointed her glass to James and a young lady who kept touching his bicep. James looked quite perturbed at the physical contact. Spock was equally perturbed, but not visibly so.

“It’s moments like these I’m really not happy that I can’t go out there and mark my territory.” Spock wonders if Nyota knows that she accidentally used the version of mark that refers to bonding?

“I agree. It would be much more efficient to get James away from her if we could openly acknowledge that he is our lover and friend.” Spock told her in Vulcan as they approached a very wary James.

“Jim, there you are.” Nyota put a hand on James first and gently pulled his arm away from the accosting female.

“You were supposed to stay with us and introduce us to your friends. Who is this?” Thankfully, Nyota was able to keep her voice neutral.

“Gina, I want you to meet my best friend and first officer, Commander Spock and his girlfriend and my chief linguistics officer, Lieutenant Uhura.” Nyota shook the woman’s hand grudgingly, before
she turned her attentions to Spock.

Gina actually had the audacity to try to shake his hand. Spock wondered if this action was due to brashness or ignorance? Spock is leaning towards ignorance.

“Due to being of Vulcan ancestry, I do not participate in the Earth tradition of shaking hands.” Spock explained as calmly as possible.

“Spock would be able to sense everything you’re thinking and that would not be fun for you.” Nyota added with a vicious smile. It almost felt like Spock could feel her frustration and annoyance, but that should be impossible due to their lack of bond.

“I think I saw Angie’s daughter, Cassandra.” An obvious excuse because James told them that Cassandra was most likely off planet due to her job. “We have to say hi.” Jim said as he grabbed both by the wrist. He didn’t need to be physically touching James to pick up on his relief at not being around this person.

“Who did we just rescue you from?” Nyota asked in Vulcan.

“Gina Erickson now West.” James replied in standard.

“Is she married to Eric?” Nyota asked.

“She’s the wife of our illustrious mayor.” This time he replied in Vulcan. “I’m not even surprised she ended up a trophy wife step mom to a boy who used to take her cookies in class.”

“And she still looked like she was about to pounce on you.”

“Her husband is probably already looking for next year’s model and it’s not like Gina has the best morals. She slept with me in 10th grade to win a bet. I didn’t find out about it until after the fact. I’m not sure she’s become a better person in the last 10 years.” Nyota responded by using variant six of the term prostitute which in standard means ‘woman who engages in sex for money for the sake of pride and ego without respect for her clan’.

“Did you go to high school with anybody who wasn’t a horrible human being?”
“High school no, mostly because Cassandra graduated before I got there.” James joked. “From college, there were a few, but most of those individuals are now in Starfleet or got the hell out of Iowa.”

“You’re making me fondly remember high school in Australia.” Nyota said, switching to Standard once more.

“Which is logical because of the three of us, you had the most pleasant academic experience. Were you not elected homecoming queen?” Spock remembered seeing a picture of Nyota wearing a tiara.

“Prom Queen and how did you know about that?” Nyota asked slightly bewildered.

“Sarah has pictures. She likes to email us sometimes. My personal favorite is the one of you massacring a chocolate pudding cup at an academic conference when you were three.” Nyota responded with various Klingon curse words that even Spock could not decipher. Although the words chop and penis were involved.

“How much longer do we have to stay here before we can make a polite exit?” James asked.

“We must survive until 30 minutes after the dessert course.” Spock informs his lover.

“And we haven’t even sat down for the entrée yet. That means there’s at least another hour of this. Lovely.” James pouted.

“Actually, we should take are seats now according to the schedule.” Nyota suggested.

“Or we can sneak off to the nearest restroom for a little stress relief. I’m pretty sure I saw Nyota pack a bottle of lube in her purse.” Spock was thankful James said this in perfect Vulcan.

“After dessert. Chocolate sin cheesecake is on the menu.” Nyota responded.

“Drunk chocolate sex. I’m going to need that to look forward to. Just to get through the rest of this
“Evening.” Jim said before switching to Standard.

“Here’s hoping the organizers of this catastrophe managed to seat us next to somebody I don’t hate otherwise I’m going to go find a canopy I’m allergic to so we can leave.” At this point in the evening, Spock is certain that James is entirely serious.

“Mommy catered. Not happening.” That’s when a woman who looked like a younger version of Angie hugged James.

“Look, it’s one of the five people in Riverside that I don’t hate. Cassandra, I thought you were supposed to be off planet?” So this was the legendary Cassandra.

“I was when you wrote me a couple of weeks ago, but I’m starting at a new hospital in San Francisco, of all places next week. You know that UF San Francisco Medical Center can always use somebody with my skill set, given that San Francisco has one of the most diverse populations in the world.”

“And you didn’t tell me?” James asked slightly annoyed.

“I wanted it to be a surprise until tomorrow, but then I found out who was speaking and I thought you could use emotional support.”

“Yes, mostly because you’re the most sincere person I’ve spoken to at this thing.”

“That’s not true. I’m pretty sure my boyfriend actually apologized to you for making fun of your dead dad in second grade. Since we’re going to be living in the same city for a couple months. I want us to be able to have dinner every once in a while.” Cassandra explained.

“He was the only one and he’s also Starfleet. Everyone else here has pretended they’ve always been my friend.” Somebody nearby, obviously listening to their conversation, actually put their head down in shame.

“I’m not surprised. I think half of my friends in high school only spoke to me for the pie.” She joked.
“It was really good pie. Let me tell you how much I’m looking forward to actually being able to try any of the berry pies. That was almost worth… accidentally getting exposed to some weird alien virus.” James caught himself before mentioning his actual death.

“That let you eat strawberries, but pretty much made you allergic to most legumes and some tree nuts. I never heard of any chemical like that before and I’ve studied all over the Federation.

“I already miss Almond Joys immensely.” James pouted slightly.

“Jim, you should probably introduce us to your friend.” Nyota said after a moment.

“This is Cassandra a.k.a. my only non-Starfleet acquaintance that spends more time off planet than we do. The only downside is due to her also being a genius. Cassandra graduated from George Kirk High before I got back from Tarsus hell. It was so sad.” Jim said with an actual frown

“Mom tried to get custody, but the distinguished Starfleet couple won out against the single mom entrepreneur already pushing 50. Especially because they were friends of Winona’s.” This was a new fact that Spock was unaware of.

“I should probably introduce you to my friends.” Jim said, most likely trying to get the subject away from his first few months back when Jim had no choice, but to put his mom in a facility. “Cassandra, this is my friend and the best First Officer anyone could ask for, Spock.” Unlike Gina, Cassandra gave the appropriate greeting. “Beside him is the best linguistics officer in Starfleet who happens to have the patience of a saint.”

“Probably because she’s dating you.” Cassandra remarked in a near whisper, but all three could still hear her.

“We’re just friends.” James remarked, a little too quickly.

“By the Vulcan definition of the term.” Cassandra remarked “Jim, did you forget I did a year rotation at the University of ShiKahr Medical Center. That means I understood everything you guys said to each other. Mrs. West really is a horrible human being.” Her last sentence was set in perfect Vulcan.

“For the sake of propriety, we choose to keep our private life just that.” Spock chose to respond, again in Vulcan.”
“Understandable.”

“When was your rotation?” Spock asked curiously.

“I came back home about two months before everything imploded. I lost a lot of good friends.” Cassandra frowned slightly and Spock felt like there was more to what she was saying.

“We’ll talk more tomorrow.” She gave James a slight hug.

“I will even introduce you to my daughter T’Pay.” Spock wondered why her daughter had a Vulcan name, but maybe she was named after a friend who Cassandra lost during the genocide.

“You’re not sitting with us?” James asked sadly.

“No, that distinction goes to your Starfleet appointed handler, the Alexanders and their daughter, Princess Natalie.” That’s when Cassandra gestured to the head table. He had only seen one image of Natalie from James digital yearbook, but he instantly recognized the woman.

“I’m going to go get another drink before we sit down.” James said, running towards the bar. Cassandra followed behind saying something about making sure he doesn’t eat anything that could send him into anaphylaxis.

“I’m starting to think that somebody in PA really hates Jim.” Nyota mumbles under her breath in Vulcan.

“Although Jane Barnett adores James, I do wonder if the person who planned this seating chart is a sadist.” Spock replied.

“Probably.”

“Plan E protocol?” Spock asked, referring to the various plans they created if James became extremely distressed during the festivities. The E protocol was a very desperate measure. The plan E
protocol involved taking the contents of the bag Nyota brought and utilizing the contents in the nearest private location to lower James’ stress level through orgasms.

“Yes and you’re going to have to be the one who does it because there is no family restroom here. Five minutes after the speeches, excuse yourselves and drag Jim with you. Take care of Jim and I will take care of Natalie and I assume, her husband.” Considering Nyota was glaring at the woman in question, Spock wondered if it was advantageous to leave her behind.

“You do realize there’s a 39% probability that we could be caught engaging in such activities.”

“I’m pretty sure Starfleet legal would rather deal with you and Jim getting arrested for public sex then Jim for strangling his ex-girlfriend.” Spock believes her assessment to be accurate.

“I doubt he would physically assault her.

“Okay, I may physically assault her if she says something stupid to Jim, but I can probably hold myself in if she’s nowhere around.

“Considering your history of anger management issues, I question if that’s even possible.”

“What do you suggest?” That’s when Spock told her his version of the plan.

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Five minutes after James gave a wonderful speech about his favorite parts of Riverside, which mostly focused on Angie’s Café and the Riverside shipyard, they put the revised plan E protocol into action. Spock promptly poured a Cabernet on both Jim and Nyota accidentally on purpose. They had no choice, but to return to their hotel room nearby to change. Spock would be staying behind to give the appearance that they were eventually coming back even if it was only for cheesecake.

Spock was forced to engage in small talk with the table. Professor Alexander was an enlightening individual. Spock enjoyed discussing his own time as a Starfleet professor with the man. They had a lively discussion on Spock’s work on the Kobayashi Maru simulation. This led to Spock telling the story of how he and James first became acquainted with one another, a somewhat censored version.

“I’m not surprise you ended up meeting James because he ended up cheating on a test. That sounds
“I’m not certain that you would be the best judge of James’ character. James did not cheat per se, but reconceptualize the parameters of the exam.” Spock said, defending his lover. Now that they knew James he understood.

“You are probably only saying that now because of your relationship with him.” Spock was now repressing the urge to nerve pinched this woman.

“James is my friend. He has been my friend for the majority of our acquaintance. However, I will not allow that relationship to color my perception.” Spock retorted.

“We both know that Jim has a history of being more interested in the carnal then the platonic.” That would be you. Spock thought to himself.

“A physical relationship does not preclude the existence of a friendship. The most stable relationships are built on a foundation of friendship. The Vulcan language actually has a term that means friend, brother/family, and lover simultaneously.” Spock started to explain.

“Just because you were unable to keep up with the façade of friendship after manipulating James into engaging in sexual congress with you does not mean that this is impossible. Although it does mean that genuine friendship must be there in the first place. Considering you abandoned James once you were physically satisfied, evidence suggests is that there was a 92.4 % probability that this was never the case.”

It was at that moment that Natalie’s husband, Jacob began to choke on his steak and her two fathers became engrossed in the tablecloth.

“I don’t know what you’re talking about.” She said defensively.

“So you did not convince James to have sex with you because you wanted to practice before engaging in the act with your boyfriend at the time?”

“Of course not. James’ reputation precedes him. Someone who sleeps with his First Officer is going to also put the moves on his foster sister despite the inappropriateness of it.”
“I don’t think this is a conversation that we should be having right now.” Professor Alexander said, but he was promptly ignored by Spock.

“Are you aware that Vulcans are able to detect duplicity? All I need to do is make physical contact with you and I would be able to find the truth.” Spock tells her.

“You can actually do that?”

“I can and have in the past. In addition to the fact that I trust James implicitly, he cannot lie to me because I see his memories.” Of course Spock never saw these particular memories because he did not want to invade James privacy, but he knew enough.

“I personally would like to know if you were ever James’s friend at any point in your acquaintance or if you were merely using him for your own narcissistic pleasure.”

“You don’t know me,” Natalie told him.

“And you do not know James despite actually living with him for an entire year. Most of the people are here to say that they know the hero of Earth, to rewrite their own narrative. But none of them were actual friends to him except for Cassandra and her mother. How many of you turned a blind eye to…” Spock stops speaking abruptly when James and Nyota returned to the table.

“I thought you would be gone longer.”

“It does not take long to change when you’re staying in the hotel next door.” He would find out when they were back at that hotel room that Cassandra sent them an emergency text message to come back to keep their boyfriend from causing a scene.

“And I really want the cheesecake.” Nyota said grabbing his hand and pulling it into a Vulcan kiss. Thankfully, the table shielded the gesture from view of prying eyes.

“I wonder if they’ll box a slice. I have an early day tomorrow.” Professor Alexander said getting up from the table. “Natalie you don’t mind if we leave early, do you? Since we rode together.” Spock realized this was the professor’s attempt to defuse the situation from earlier. He gave Natalie no
choice, but to leave. Spock was thankful for this.

“I hope you’re better behaved tomorrow.” James said, sitting beside Spock once the others were gone. The rest of the evening went well, especially once they received their cheesecake. (Yes, they did have what James referred to as ‘drunk chocolate sex’ afterwards.)

Brunch the next day was better mostly because they were surrounded by people who were not awful. Spock enjoyed hearing stories about James’ time as a waiter at Angie’s Café. He also discovered that Cassandra’s daughter has a Vulcan name because she is a human Vulcan hybrid like himself, but created the more natural way. Her father died during the genocide three months before she was even born.

Although it probably helped that the curator of the George Kirk Museum could not meet with them due to suddenly becoming sick. He knew James did not want to spend an evening talking about his dead father. Instead they ended up having a late picnic dinner as they watched James’ favorite constellations.

Overall, Sunday in Riverside was a much better day or so they thought. It would not be until after James’ speech Monday morning that they would find out what actually happened in San Francisco late Sunday early Monday morning. Although Spock blames himself for never removing the security code of his father’s former assistant.

To be continued…
Chapter 20: Bring Bail Money and I Hope the Coffee Has Scotch in It.

Chapter Summary

Remember that your real family are the ones who are there for you when it all comes undone.
Idiot’s Guide to Family Bonding, revised third edition

Chapter Notes

Thank you to everybody who read or reviewed the last chapter. I’m sorry it did take as long as I said it would. I did finish writing Dear James two weeks before Beyond came out, but I went on vacation (but I did come home with a build-a-bear Spock and the yellow uniform to make the cover of the sequel to Dear James, coming fall 2016). I’m awful and I left you with a cliffhanger. Bad writer.

In the two months since I’ve last updated, we’ve been through a lot. The world keeps getting more chaotic. The Star Trek family lost Anton Yelchin. I was literally working on the last real chapter of Dear James when I found out and I kept crying while proofreading. I’m still sad about it.

It hasn’t all been misery. Beyond came out and it was wonderful. I now have a canon LGTB character to play with and play around I will. I’ve always written Sulu as being about a Kinsey 4 in almost all my stories so this works well. Also Simon Pegg accidentally gave us ‘word of God’ that Jim is pansexual (although he was probably being cheeky about it) and suggested that maybe Spock and Nyota are not in an exclusive relationship. (Read here, but don’t look too closely at the comment section you may cry: http://simonpegg.net/2016/07/11/a-word-about-canon/)

I’m still in shock that my story was not totally thrown out of continuity this time. Okay, I’m more in shock that I left the theater and didn’t want to rewrite the movie to fix things. There are little things, I realize I’ll have to alter for my continuity, but I’d didn’t need to fix it because things were pretty good. I’m sure you’re all aware that you are currently reading another one of my efforts to explain away plot holes in STID.

This time, I don’t need to add more female characters as high ranking members of Starfleet. I don’t need to look for deeper meaning in Beyond because I’m 95% sure this movie is really an allegory about the need for adequate support services for returning veterans and the consequences of not providing help with reintegration. I don’t even have to break up Spock and Nyota if I want to write a post movie Jim and Spock get together story, because I’m not 100% sure they’re back together (Yes, I’m thinking about something, but I think I’m going to hold off until the movie comes out for home viewing). However, it’s ambiguous enough that still works great for this universe. (Raise your hands if, at least once or twice, you wondered if Nyota and/or Spock were also dating Jim.) I’m really happy about that.

This story will be mostly cannon compliant for Star Trek Beyond. The next story will line up with the events of the movie and there will be a bit of divergence regarding the interpersonal stuff mostly because the triad actually talk to each other in this universe.
There’s one more thing that will happen in this story that would preclude certain things from happening in Beyond, but I don’t want to spoil it for you.

Spoiler alert: I did include references to two new characters from Star Trek Beyond in this chapter. It’s vague right now and I’m mostly doing this to make sure this story links up to the next story that’s going to go into the movie. Also I really want to flush out the character of Sulu’s husband, Ben. However, since we never even heard him speak in the movie, all the details about him in the story are pure head cannon except for who he is in a romantic relationship with.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Hi, my name is James Kirk and I am a Captain in Starfleet. I’m supposed to stand up here and tell you all the great things that Starfleet does and convince you that it’s the place for you. Except thanks to the George Kirk Memorial shipyard, I’m positive at least 50% of your parents/guardians are part of Starfleet and several of you are Starfleet brats. Therefore, you probably have your own opinions about Starfleet and I’m not 100% sure they’re all positive, nor should they be. Nothing I say up here is going to change that opinion right now.

See, I was one of you. My mom was an engineer and I ended up in some strange places because, as many of you know, Starfleet does have some accompanied assignments. I also went to this high school that just happens to be named after my father. He died when I was a baby just minutes old trying to save 800 people. His death inspired the Kelvin pods on the newest starships so he’s probably saved even more.

Maybe your parents didn’t die like that, but at least a few of you lost parents, maybe even during the battle of Vulcan. Of course some of you may have lost a loved one in something as random as a car accident. Bad things happen sometimes; that’s no one’s fault. Just bad luck and coincidence.

As for my fellow members of the Starfleet orphan’s club, maybe you feel like your loss was completely unnecessary and you blame Starfleet for that. I know I did as a child. As an adult I know better, but it’s really hard to be rational when you’re five years old and you have nobody to give your Father’s Day card to.

Maybe you see it as a sacrifice for the greater good. It’s the way I see what my father did now that I’ve been on the other side. They didn’t die because they didn’t love you. They loved you so much that they were willing to give their life to keep you safe. That’s a very big thing.

My mother joined Starfleet because she grew up in a not so nice home with a not so nice stepfather who drank too much and Starfleet was her only way out of an endless cycle of bad things. My father
was different. He joined Starfleet because he wanted to make a difference. He joined because he believed in the mission. He died because he believed in that mission. I don’t think he regretted that.

I think my reasons were closer to my mother’s. I joined because I dealt with 22 years of people telling me that I could never be as good as George Kirk. I had 22 years of people telling me that I would be nothing that I could be nothing that I was worthless. That I couldn’t be anything more than an absolute fuck up. If you hear stuff like that enough, you begin to believe it.

Actually, some of those people are standing in the back rows, pretending that they actually supported me when I was a student here. The truth is they did the exact opposite and they’re probably saying the same bullshit to you. And trust me, what they’re saying really is complete bullshit. Don’t even think about listening to them.

Unfortunately, I believed them for a long time because I didn’t have someone like me telling me better until college. Then I met Christopher Pike and he dared me to be better. He dared me to be better than my father. He dared me to be better than what people assume me to be. He dared me to reach my full potential. He made me realize that I could prove everyone wrong.

I am a 26-year-old Captain, the youngest in Starfleet history. I’m pretty sure I was only given that position as a publicity stunt. I know people were expecting me to fall flat on my ass. The truth of the matter is so was I. Remember kids, you are your own worst enemy. Thankfully, I was wrong.

Also I have people who believed in me, that helped drown out that negative voice in my head. I have my best friend Leonard McCoy. The man is a great friend, although a bit of a downer. Usually he expects the worst, but he always brought the best out in me. Honestly, I would be dead right now if it wasn’t for that man.

I also have my first officer Spock who challenges me. I’m pretty sure I referred to him as a pointy eared bastard in my head the first time we met. Backstage Spock is probably mumbling under his breath that his parents were married at the time of his conception. Despite a rough start, I think that I would be lost without his guidance. Sometimes I wonder why they didn’t give him the ship. But he keeps me grounded and that’s a good thing.

I also have my other friend Nyota who never ever put up with my stupidity. I still have yet to figure out why. But she is the most awesome woman I know. 100% pure bad ass chief communications officer. You all want to grow up to be her.

So there you have it. The secret of my success is a good support system. With a good support system, you can be anything, do anything.
If someone says you can’t do something, prove them wrong. Be the best that you can be just for the sake of showing them that they’re wrong about you. They don’t know you. They don’t know what you can accomplish. You are better than they think you are. You are better than you think you are.

Don’t let those negative little voices in the back of your head make you think that you can’t do something without even trying. We all have the potential to do great things as long as we believe that we can do great things.

To all of the people who keep holding you down, tell them all to get fucked. You have better things to do than deal with their negativity. Prove them wrong by going out there and becoming the best you possible. I can tell you from personal experience that proving everyone wrong by exceeding all of their ridiculous expectations is the best revenge.

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“Did you actually tell a group of high school students to tell everyone to get fucked?” Arlene asked, looking up at him after reading her his entire speech. She insisted because she was bored due to the fact that Leonard and her OB/GYN has her on bed rest at UF SF Medical Center due to the actions of asshole Vulcans. Getting stunned by a phaser when eight months pregnant is not good, especially when the guy went straight for the stomach. Again, asshole Vulcan.

“No Spock was glaring at me from the side of the stage by that point. I changed it to some variation of ‘go screw yourself’. My old principal couldn’t stop sputtering; it was kind of great.” Jim smiled for a moment remembering what happened, but the smile fell quickly when he remembered exactly where he was now.

“Or it was great until Nyota pulled me aside to talk to Sulu where I found out that you almost got killed last night by the Vulcan that you replaced at the Embassy. Sulu also told me that he now had temporary Peter watching duty because apparently, he is our only friend who you trust with a small child.”

Whoever said that Vulcans don’t do jealousy was lying through their fucking teeth. Sarek’s former assistant was pissed off that he was replaced by a human. Even though he was replaced in his role for trying to oust Sarek. Somehow he got it in his twisted little Vulcan mind that if he killed off his replacement, then he could get his position back at the Embassy.

So he broke into their apartment, using the access he gained when the ambassador lived here and nerve pinched a sleeping Peter. He stunned Arlene most likely so he could move her someplace where he could kill her without the cops being called within the first five seconds. At least that’s
what Jim thinks.

Thankfully, Ivy is a really good shot and shooting someone on ambassador row is just going to get the cops called. Seriously, their next-door neighbor is a queen.

“Because my sister is really flaky and he needs the practice. You heard about the cannabis brownie incident. Also by some miracle, Ben was the one who examined him. So of course he called his husband in the aftermath.” And said husband just happened to be his helmsman.

Sulu was number three on Peter’s emergency contact list anyway after Nyota’s mom, because Arlene and Sulu bonded at Lamaze and Arlene’s sister really was that flaky. Yes, she did give a cannabis laced brownie to a two-year-old, by accident. Thankfully, the girlfriend realized the mix-up before Peter took a bite and the worst result was a small tantrum due to lack of brownie.

So Sulu’s reaction to almost dying during the Vengeance Fuck Up was to elope with his boyfriend of two years and arrange for his husband’s sister to be their gestational carrier. He was definitely having one hell of a quarter life crisis. But Jim’s not going to say anything because he’s dating his first officer and his chief communications officer simultaneously and a lot of people think he is having his own quarter life crisis because of that. Okay, the fact that he’s been spending a lot of time at fertility clinics and baby boutiques is probably pointing to that fact all on its own.

“Don’t be mad at Hikaru. I specifically told him not to call you until after the speech.” Probably because she didn’t want to get him in trouble with Starfleet if he ditched the speech because she knew full well that he would. That was just such an Arlene thing to do.

“He’s really good at keeping secrets.” Jim snarked.

“Because he was trying to be a friend and didn’t want to rub in the fact that he was having a kid and you can’t.” Jim is 99% sure that Christine or one of her friends arranged for most of the Enterprise to find out about his radiation-induced fertility issues. Sulu decided that it would be in poor taste to send out wedding or baby announcements because of that, not thinking he would run into his boss and friend at a childbirth class. Of course that lack of information led to Jim getting the wrong ideal about the gestational carrier, despite the fact that Jim knew about Ben. He did have a girlfriend and boyfriend himself so he made a few assumptions that were not corrected until the attempted bribery by rocking chair because he’s really good at putting his foot in his mouth at the worst possible time. Now he must suffer through Carol as their Starfleet appointed tattletale.

“Just like he was trying to be a friend now. I didn’t want to worry you. I’m fine. I’m only here for observation.” No, they wanted to monitor the baby to make sure there weren’t any long lasting
effects. Jim is just glad they didn’t have to do an emergency fetus extraction (yet). “Besides I wouldn’t want to keep the student body of George Kirk High School from hearing your words of wisdom. I wish I was there.”

“I think Nyota has a video file of it. I wish you were there too, because then you wouldn’t be in the hospital with several doctors monitoring you and baby K after almost getting killed by some lunatic.”

Jim really wanted to take Arlene with him to Iowa for moral support, if nothing else, but of course his pseudo-sister couldn’t be parted from her work on the banquet. A banquet that’s being postponed at least a month due to this little diplomatic incident.

“If he really wanted me dead, the phaser would not have been on stun. Really, I’m fine.” Jim is really starting to hate that word.

“According to the preliminary report, your attacker believed your baby is partially of Vulcan ancestry and wanted to wait until after you delivered to kill you.” Spock said from the hallway. His boyfriend was hovering with coffee. He hoped it was laced with liquor because it was needed after that revelation.

“Apparently he has convinced himself that you received his job because you were engaging in sexual relations with my father prior to the death of my mother.” Jim along with Nyota would be the only people in the galaxy who would realize that Spock was a little pissed off by people talking smack about his family. “Fortuitously, Ivy incapacitated him before he was able to administer a compound that would have induced labor.”

“Delusional asshole.” Jim mumbled under his breath.

“So I should thank the embassy rumor mill for being alive to deal with the boredom of bedrest?” Arlene asked flippantly.

“Possibly. I brought you a special blend of tea that is safe for the baby, yet will allow you to relax as a peace offering. Due to my negligence in removing my father’s former assistant’s access to the apartment, you were grievously injured.” Jim could feel Spock’s regret from here.

“You didn’t know that the guy became so unhinged. It wasn’t your fault.” Arlene shrugged as she took the offered tea. Jim’s not 100% sure she can have liquids, but he’s not fighting with her right now.
“I also brought food.” Knowing Spock as well as he did Jim was expecting salad. Which was good because he didn’t actually have lunch or dinner for that matter today and it was almost 9 PM. “I also brought cookies which, according to Nyota, are the official human way to apologize for breaches in decorum.” Half of which were already gone. He doesn’t blame Spock. If he could take a drink right now, Jim would.

“Thank you, but I’m never going to be able to relax in the hospital. It’s just not possible. They always make me itchy. I want my bed.” Arlene lamented.

“Our residence is currently a crime scene and we are unable to return. We are invited to stay with Nyota’s mother at their apartment. Apparently they have three guest rooms.” He loves Nyota’s moms, but he is not sure he can take living with them for any extended amount of time. He knows Nyota can’t.

“There’s no way we’re going to be able to say no?” Because they definitely don’t want to offend the moms.

“According to Shawn, our residence should be turned back over to us within the next 72 hours. I think we can make due until then.” That was Spock speak for suck it up, it could be worse.

“Three days living with the Admiral is going to be fun.” Jim said, complete with fake smile normally reserved for the Admiralty.

“I am very disturbed by your definition of fun.”

“You guys are so cute when you bicker.” Arlene smiled. “So how’s my baby?”

“According to Dr. Lang, the infant you are carrying is showing no signs of obvious distress due to the altercation 19.4 hours previously and therefore an emergency infant extraction is not necessary. But you are in the early stages of labor and therefore she wants to monitor you. You have already dilated 3 cm and the infant has dropped into position.”

“They’re being paranoid. I’m not even feeling contractions.” And you may not because getting shot the way you did may have screwed up your pain sensors for a little bit.
“Also, I met Peter. Once you have kids, you will realize they will always be your babies even when there are 35.”

“Amanda said something to me to that effect on 17 separate occasions.” Arlene smirks at that.

“Peter is with Nyota’s mother.” Spock responded.

“Sulu dropped him off there after Dr. Ben gave him a clean bill of health and a lollipop.”

“He does love his lollipops and the Admiral. Apparently her office has the good toys.” That she actually keeps just for Peter because he’s had to drop him off there once or twice due to his new work schedule.

He was promised that he wouldn’t have to teach a class if he was part of the curriculum committee. But then they found another corrupt member and he’s teaching self-defense. The qualified instructor shortage due to the conspiracy, was getting so bad that there’s whispers of delaying the beginning of the five-year mission until May, right after the graduation of the class of 2260.

That may not be such a bad idea actually, especially because it would give Nyota’s mom more time for the wedding. The only reason why she was trying to get it done before February was so that Nyota could be in the bridal party. An April wedding would be nice and it probably would make for a less cranky Admiral. Always a good thing.

“He’s just going to have to make do with just Sarah right now. The admiral’s busy.” Making sure they don’t make an example out of her ex-husband’s daughter from the woman he cheated on her with. Not that Jim is going to tell Arlene that because that would just make her worried and Jim doesn’t want to do that right now.

“With what?”

“There are consequences for Starfleet cadet who shoots a member of an endangered species, even if said individual broke into the cadet’s place of residence and attacked those occupying said residence. The Admiral is dealing with the situation.” Because Spock will tell Arlene for him. Jim is so cutting them off tonight because of that. Really?

“They arrested Ivy for almost murdering the guy who tried to kill me?” Arlene asked shocked.
“Of course not. She only stunned the guy.” Jim decided to go with Spock’s favorite technique of exact words and deliberately misunderstanding the question.

“But they arrested her?”

“More like they took her in for questioning. Someone did try to kill an ambassador’s assistant on his property. It’s a big thing.” This is not a lie. Shawn even sent him a text message before he started reading his speech to Arlene letting him know this is most likely going to be the case. However, the big problem was Starfleet judiciaries because Nyota’s dad still has friends at Starfleet that were stupid enough to take his side, but not dumb enough to get involved with whatever Marcus and the other idiots were doing.

“I feel like you’re not telling me something.”

‘Probably because you’re really, really pregnant and have been rubbing your back every 10 minutes. Even though you are convinced you’re not having contractions because your nerves are still wonky from getting stunned by phaser multiple times. Your doctor told me not to upset you because we’re trying to keep you from going into real labor for as long as we can.’ However, Jim knows better than to say this out loud.

“I detect a small amount moisture on the front of your hospital gown. Did your amniotic sac rupture or did you spill your tea?” Note to self: work with Spock on developing tact.

“You really think someone in this family could go to full term just once.” Arlene said as she pressed the call button for the nurse. “Jim, put on your scrubs because your niece is ready to come out now.”

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“Please don’t be pissed. Okay, I did get arrested but there were no loud parties.” Ivy said to Nyota as soon as she was led out the front door of the police station interrogation room.

“I think getting arrested trumps that.” When Hikaru called her to let her know that her nephew-- she means, Jim’s nephew -- ended up in his new husband’s ER, she wasn’t expecting to have to get her sister out of jail too. But here she was with a lawyer or two to deal with this.

And yes, she was still mad about not getting invited to Hikaru’s wedding, even if she was in new
boyfriend land at the time. Although nowhere near as mad as she was about him waiting six hours to tell her that her sister was arrested because she shot the guy who put her sister-in-law in the hospital. (It will be at least another hour before she realizes that she said sister-in-law in her head in reference to Arlene)

“Getting arrested really wasn’t my fault. I was sleeping when that idiot broke into the apartment. This guy knocked out a two-year-old. I did the right thing.” Ivy snarked back.

“You weren’t arrested. You were brought in for questioning and you didn’t even ask for your lawyer, which upsets me greatly.” Alexis said from beside Nyota. Did she mention that the lawyer she had to bring with her was Alexis? (Because Shawn was dealing with the other aspects of this fiasco.)

Did she also mentioned that, because Ivy is a Starfleet cadet, her mom was also needed to fix this? At least both women were too professional for this to end in petty arguing on the car ride over here. This was like the only positive for the last 10 hours. Actually, the fact that her mom opted to stay in the car was the real positive for the last 10 hours of chaos. She’s never going on vacation again. Bad things happen when she goes on leave.

“What are you doing here?” Ivy asked. “I thought you couldn’t be my attorney because you’re sleeping with my sister’s boyfriend’s father. I’m pretty sure there’s a conflict of interest there.”

“Well, the only other person in my firm that can deal with the Starfleet judiciaries aspect of this is at a wedding this week so you have me for the moment with Shawn dealing with the other stuff. Thankfully, it’s less complicated. In your case, I just knew your father a long time ago before you were even born.” Alexis said defending herself.

“So you’re not denying that you’re sleeping with the ambassador,” Ivy quipped.

“I don’t discuss my private life with clients. And until Gretchen gets back in four days, I’m going to try to make sure you don’t get brought up on an attempted murder charge.” Alexis said as she kept moving Ivy towards the front door of the precinct.

“The phaser was on stun.” Ivy said defending herself.

“Don’t talk about it until we are in the car.” Nyota told her sister.
“So how was your trip to Iowa?” Ivy asked instead.

“Awful,” except for all the good sex “and then I found out that Arlene was in the hospital and you were in jail. And considering the weekend began with Spock ending up in the hospital for an allergic reaction to hand soap, the standard for the weekend was already set really low.”

“How can you be allergic to hand soap? They almost all have the same ingredients.” Ivy asked, perplexed.

“The doctors aren’t even sure because none of the listed ingredients should have triggered an allergic reaction.” Nyota explained and Alexis got a strange look on her face.

“Did you happen to bring a bottle of that soap with you?”

“Of course not…” She said before remembering what Jim was planning. “Actually, Jim did because he wanted Leonard to figure out exactly what triggered the allergic reaction so we can avoid it in the future.”

“I might be a little paranoid, but I want to have my lab look at it. There’s no such thing as coincidence.”

“You probably are, but my house was broken into this weekend because somebody tried to murder my family. So analyze away.” Nyota told the attorney.

“I will have a courier pick it up later.” Alexis said as she approached the vehicle.

“I’ll have it ready.”

“I need to go back again and speak to a few people. I will call you once I have more.” She told them both.

“Okay.” Nyota and Ivy said simultaneously.
“Also, you should know that Ambassador Sarek is coming back early because of this,” that doesn’t surprise Nyota at all. Your current assistant almost getting killed by your former assistant probably requires your presence of some sort.

“Will he be staying at your house?” Ivy asked and Nyota just wanted to hide under something.

“Again, I don’t talk about my private life with clients.” Alexis smiled at both.

“Maybe you should have Shawn take over completely until Gretchen gets back from vacation.” Nyota said shaking her head.

“He doesn’t have any experience with Starfleet judiciaries for cadets which is the only part I’m handling. Gretchen should be back anyway before the real fun begins.” Alexis said before departing.

“I think she just didn’t want to ride in the car with us.” Of course not. Between you and mom, who would?

“Because you keep asking questions that you really shouldn’t ask.” Nyota said just as both of them got in the car. Her mom was already sitting in the driver seat because, of course, she wouldn’t let Nyota drive.

“Can I ask why I specifically need a lawyer with experience with Starfleet judiciaries?” Ivy asked both women.

“Because when a first-year Starfleet cadet shoots somebody with a Starfleet issued weapon, we have to investigate.” Her mom explained going into admiral mode.

“Actually it was a private phaser.” Nyota told her mom. Jim knew better than to give Ivy access to his service phaser.

“Well, we need to confirm that. Also, I have several Vulcan dignitaries who are really upset by Vulcan standards.” Probably the same Vulcan dignitaries that are pissed off that Spock is still with her when he should be off somewhere making little Vulcan babies. They probably would be less mad if they knew he was bonded to Jim, but that was none of their damn business.
“I’m suspended?” Ivy asked with a touch of worry in her voice.

“Yes, but just until the investigation is complete. Although I would consult with your legal team. You may have to face a trial depending on what the investigators find.”

“Jim didn’t use a lawyer when he went against the full tribunal when he was accused of cheating.”

“Because that was foreplay.” Nyota’s mom mumbled under her breath.

“Mom!” No one needs their mom talking about their sex life, especially doing so with her little sister in the car. This is so wrong.

“You’re sleeping with both of them. This should be obvious to you at this point.” It was, but there was no need for her mom to point out. Did everybody see what was going on?

“Can we please go back to talking about my legal problems?” Ivy asked, slightly annoyed, bless her. Okay she was mostly worried and Nyota didn’t blame her.

“I spoke to Alexis earlier and it’s highly unlikely that the DA is going to press charges.” Her mom said trying to reassure Ivy. “Apparently Ambassador Sarek was worried about Arlene’s abusive bastard of an ex-boyfriend showing up and activated the ambassador level security protocol for the residents. There are about two dozen motion sensor cameras in the residence. The whole thing was caught on tape showing that you did act in self-defense.” Sarek was always practical that way.

“The only reason why the guy got in in the first place was that his bio-metrics were not taken out of the system.” Spock was not going to let that go. Ever. “However, as soon as he nerve-pinched Peter, the AI monitoring the system notified police.”

“Which explains why they got there about 30 seconds after I shot the world’s worst assistant.”

“There are cameras inside the house?”

“Yes, but the Ambassador only activated them recently due to the fret caused by Sam Kirk.” Which is logical because the guy is a bastard, but the father being monitored like that is a major skin crawl.
“Did the cameras catch everything?” She asked starting to panic a little bit. She’s pretty sure they accidentally made another sex tape. Probably more than one.

“Stop panicking. Jim or Spock usually hack the system to remove those files.” Ivy said trying to reassure.

“How do you…” Nyota started to say as her communicator went off. She was really thankful Spock was calling because her mom was glaring at her.

“You have perfect timing. How is Arlene?” Nyota asked her boyfriend happily.

“She is optimal considering she is now in labor and has dilated 4 cm. Currently, the medical staff are taking bets on, if Arlene will crush James’ hand during labor. I find such behavior highly unprofessional.”

“Arlene’s in labor?”

“Technically she has been in labor for the last 19.2 hours, but her placenta did rupture 22.4 minutes ago. James is currently changing into appropriate attire for the delivery room.”

“You’re just calling now?” She could’ve avoided this entire conversation with her mom.

“I did try to call you 15.23 minutes ago, but I was redirected to your voicemail.”

“Because apparently county jail has communicator disruptors in the building. I’ll be there in 30 minutes after I drop off mom and Ivy at her apartment.” She said ending the call.

“You can just take me to the dorms.”

“Actually…” Nyota started, not knowing how to explain that she wasn’t allowed on Academy property right now.
“I’m not allowed on campus, right?”

“Not until the investigation is completed. Normally you wouldn’t be suspended until after the investigation took place, but there are people in very high places that hate your sister’s boyfriend that are screwing with you to screw with him. There are also friends of your father that are mad at you for taking your sister’s side and therefore they’re making things difficult.”

“Which means I’m suspended.” Ivy sighed.

“For the moment, but the lawyers are working on it. In the meantime, you’ll be staying at the apartment for a while which does not count as Academy property.”

“Besides, it is your job to keep Peter occupied while Arlene is in labor.” Nyota told her sister to keep her from sulking. Which she could understand because Nyota would be upset too if she just found out she was being suspended for political reasons.

“You still trust me with a two-year-old after my last charge ended up in the hospital?”

“Because the guy responsible is also in the hospital.”

“And I’m now being investigated.”

“Honestly, it’s pro forma. Paris will be the one reviewing your case. Chan is planning to put her in charge of Yorktown once it’s done in 2262. The fact that she is still getting that job after the recent unexpectedly high turnover means that she’s a good person who won’t be easily influenced.”

Nyota really hoped her mom was right about that.

To be continued
I need your help with baby names. Arlene is having a little girl whose last name is not Kirk. Since I have not given Arlene a last name you can help me decide that as well. All suggestions are appreciated.
Chapter 21

Chapter Summary

Whoever tells you that the sole requirement for being a parent is siring or giving birth to a child, is a moron. The sole requirement for being a parent is actually being there for your child. Genetics has little to do with it.


Chapter Notes

Thank you to everyone who read or reviewed the last chapter. You have all been lovely. Also thank you to everyone who provided name suggestions. I did use one. You will just have to read on to see what name I used.

On Wednesday morning, 44 hours after being notified of the assault on his place of residence, Spock met his father at the diplomatic/Starfleet spaceport. His father stated that he would make his own arrangements to get to the Embassy, but Spock had no where he absolutely had to be until his 1 PM class that he was planning to teach today after having to cancel the day before due to the circumstances that led to Arlene’s premature labor. Therefore, Spock chose to retrieve his father himself.

Besides, it would be best to get Peter out of the house (or rather the house of Nyota’s mother where they were staying as their actual home remains a crime scene) so James could sleep. He did not arrive back from the hospital until 4 AM and that was only because Arlene forced him to leave. As Nyota would be spending the day with her sister at their attorney’s office, Spock would be in charge of Peter’s care for the day. If they stayed at the house, Peter would be jumping on their bed by this point. The near three-year-old has yet to grasp the concept of sleeping in.

However, now Peter was content to wander around the various returning Starfleet members. It wasn’t all surrounded by the hundreds of people representing various species and cultures within the Federation. Maybe this was why Peter preferred Embassy daycare over the Academy daycare. It was of no consequence, just an extra 15 minutes to drop Peter off there.

Eventually, Spock spots his father in the crowd talking to the captain of the ship he was traveling on. Peter also noticed this and ran ahead of Spock like he often does. There’s a reason why the three-year-old now has a tracking chip embedded in a bracelet that the toddler wears. By the time Spock caught up to Peter. His father was already carrying the three-year-old in question.
“Hi, Mister Spock’s dad. I’m a big brother now.” Peter babbled excitedly. Spock expected Sarek to be put off by this, but instead he gave the toddler a look that some would described as soft.

“I assume that Arlene delivered safely despite the circumstances?” His father asked as they started walking towards the exit.

“Jamie Anya Yelchin-Kirk, weighing 2.71 kg and 47 cm long, was born at 12:34 AM this morning after nearly 26 hours of labor.” Spock told his father. “It was a difficult labor where she cursed Sam Kirk for getting her pregnant and managed to crack the bones in James hand. However, the damage has already been repaired.”

“Your mother said similar things when delivering you. Thankfully, due to the dense nature of Vulcan bones, I did not sustain such injuries.” Sarek explained. “I just assumed the events of yesterday are why he’s not with us?”

“James is currently at the home of Nyota’s mother sleeping. Peter is accompanying us to allow him sufficient time to recover.” From going 45 hours with only 3 1 hour naps during that time.

“You still have not returned to your house?” Sarek asked, concerned just as they approached Spock’s vehicle. Thanks to the valet feature, the vehicle was waiting for them at passenger pickup area.

“No. The investigation is still ongoing.” Spock explained as he opened the door to allow his father to place Peter in his child safety harness.

“However, Detective Benson believes that the investigation should be completed today and the residence will be turned over to us by midafternoon.”

“That is acceptable.” Sarek said before taking his own seat in the front of the vehicle. Spock is personally surprised that his father did not insist on driving.

“That should provide Damage Control time to make all necessary repairs before Arlene and Jamie are released from the hospital.”

Apparently, the company specialized in expedited post disaster recovery reconstruction. Their worker bots were responsible for nearly 50% of the San Francisco reconstruction. Thankfully, very
little was damaged, but Spock wanted a new security system installed. One that would be only accessible to his family and no one who had once worked for his father at the Embassy. It is unknown how many living individuals had access to the house before, such as the former aide who assaulted Arlene and Peter. Spock does not like unknowns. Therefore, all security features of the residence have been replaced, enhanced, or reprogrammed.

“I haven’t met my new baby sister yet.” Peter said with a frown before pulling out his children’s PADD to show Sarek pictures of Jamie. She has James’ eyes and Arlene’s hair and thankfully nothing that could be attributed to Sam. Spock is sure that all involved are thankful for that.

Spock knew that their attorney Shawn would be coming over this afternoon with paperwork to sign that would make it impossible for Sam to have any claim on young Jamie. Arlene did not even put the man’s name on the birth certificate. Instead, listing James as secondary guardian as agreed upon previously.

“But you will this morning after we drop my father off at the Embassy.” Of course doing that means going to the Embassy twice, but surprisingly enough, Peter prefers the Embassy daycare. It may be the Vulcan children are closer to being his intellectual equal. Or maybe it’s because the Vulcan children understand extreme trauma and what it’s like to leave your home planet and do not ask inappropriate questions. Peter has already made two friends there among the Embassy children.

“Oh you could go to the hospital first, I would like to visit my assistant and bring the appropriate present for such an occasion. What is the appropriate present to give a human assistant after more than 24 hours of labor?” Sarek asked. Spock was not surprised that his question. A diplomat always felt the need to bring the correct gift for any occasion. It was a key principle of diplomacy.

“I’m sure Nyota would say chocolate, but I believe a teddy bear bouquet would be appropriate. Although I must warn you that she is most likely asleep after being in labor for 26.1 hours.” Spock warned.

“So was your mother. She was very thankful that Vulcan children sleep more than human children.” Maybe Spock should be happy that Sarek could mention his mother in casual conversation. This is progress for them. The fact that it happened twice within a 15 minute period is somewhat miraculous.

“Where is Nyota this morning? Is she already at the hospital with Arlene?” His father inquired.

“That would be her preference, however, her sister Ivy has a 10 AM meeting with her legal team regarding her status at Starfleet Academy. Nyota is accompanying her.” As predicted, no charges will be filed against Ivy. However, the prosecutor was still building a case against her assailant.
Unfortunately, the situation in Starfleet Academy is still unresolved, which is the purpose of this afternoon’s meeting now that her actual attorney has returned from her vacation.

“Alexis is a remarkable individual. I have full faith in her team, even if she is unable to participate herself due to a conflict of interest. I am sure the situation will be resolved quickly.” Spock is uncertain that he has ever heard his father use such flowery language about anyone other than his mother before. Maybe Arlene’s hypothesis about his father’s regard for Alexis is somewhat possible.

“Are you that conflict of interest?” Spock asked the question in Vulcan. He did not necessarily intend to ask that question, but he felt it best to be forthright in this case. He decided to use Vulcan in this instance because Spock realized that this would not be a conversation appropriate for a child of Peter’s age if his father actually was engaging in a relationship with Alexis. Especially in light of the fact that Spock was not sure how he felt about his father moving on. It is highly probable that Spock may say something inappropriate.

“I understand that she was once romantically linked to Nyota’s biological father.” Sarek replied also in Vulcan. The deflection in itself was an admission. He would not deflect, if there was not some truth to the situation.

“Yet, she stayed on as her attorney until her journey to the New Vulcan colony to deal with your legal situation.” Spock responded. “Did the parameters of your relationship change while alone together on the colony?”

“We developed a friendship during that time.” Sarek replied. Of course he used the Vulcan term for friendship that also allows for a sexual component. Maybe his father assumed that because he has been on Earth for so long, he forgot some of the nuances of his mother tongue.

That is not possible when you teach Vulcan based language classes and have a girlfriend who enjoys speaking dirty to you in Vulcan when in public. James has since adopted this practice and now Spock believes there is a 73.2% probability that James will try this on the bridge at least once.

“You have affection for her?” Spock asked certain that he would not get a reply.

“I have no plans to replace your mother.” Spock wanted to point out that does not actually answer his question, but in a way it did. “Doing so would be as difficult as you finding a replacement for your James or Nyota. You may meet other people in the future, but they will not replace those that have been lost. Nor would it be logical to find replacements.”
What was left unspoken was the fact that Spock would most likely live significantly longer than both of his lovers. It was a situation that he did not want to contemplate and yet evidence exists that this will be what will happen to him. His counterpart was 160, the average human life expectancy was 105. How long has he been alone? Would Spock have a similar fate?

“Not replacement, but moving on. Your well-being is my chief concern.” Spock explains.

“And your opinion on Alexis?” Sarek asked.

“She is a capable human being.” Spock actually found her quite pleasant, but was not completely able to give a full endorsement at this time. Maybe he was not ready to contemplate his father moving on, despite the fact such would be inevitable. “I prefer her to your previous fiancé.” Because at least she won’t try to undermine my relationship with you or my current partners.

“If something occurs that changes the nature of our relationship, you will be notified at the appropriate time.” Which, knowing his father would probably be when a formal bonding takes place.

The conversation ended at that point because Peter decided to tell them both that Nyota was currently teaching him Vulcan. He then recited the Vulcan alphabet and counted to 20. Yes, the near three-year-old was much better off at Vulcan daycare.

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Jim has had a very long two days. The last time he’s gone with this little sleep involved Chris dying and traveling to the Klingon home world to apprehend the guy who did it. Considering that whole incident ended with his death, Jim prefers not to think about it at all. At least baby Jamie was here sleeping safe and sound in her crib alongside Arlene’s bed.

Jim was still shocked about the fact Arlene named her daughter after him. Actually, he’s surprised that she gave her the Kirk last name at all. Considering everything Sam put them through, he’s surprised she did not switch Peter to her last name. But then Arlene reminded him that the Kirk name also belonged to a grandfather who sacrificed himself to save 800 people and an uncle that nearly died to keep his crew alive. Arlene still doesn’t know that ‘nearly’ was in reality ‘actually’ and he never plans to enlighten her.

Sometime during her first attempt at breast-feeding Arlene sent him home. Okay, Jim almost fell out of the chair because he fell asleep. Again, it’s been a long sleep deprived two days.

Even though he crawled into bed between his boyfriend and girlfriend around 4 AM, he couldn’t
sleep past 8 AM. Once his two favorite body pillows were up for the day, he couldn’t stay in that empty bed. (Okay, he had some really weird nightmare about watching Arlene die in the Enterprise sickbay except it wasn’t his Enterprise sickbay because it was nowhere near as bright and white. More like kitschy 1960s aesthetic which means the whole thing might have been mind meld induced.)

So he got up, showered, drank half a pot of the good coffee and headed over to the hospital with breakfast for Arlene from the Happy Mommy Café. Yes, in contemporary San Francisco there is a restaurant designed especially for breast-feeding mothers of multiple species. They make a killing in delivery and were fortunately spared by the big starship that killed everything in its path. Arlene was happy for good food and Jim was just happy he wasn’t alone with his thoughts and memories.

Arlene was just starting to close her eyes to rest for a few minutes while baby Jamie was with the nurses for her happy baby checkup when Spock arrived at Arlene’s hospital room. He also brought cookies. Bless him.

“You’re supposed to be at home asleep.” Spock chided as he walked into the room carrying Peter along with the sugary treats. Spock looks extra hot carrying small children. Jim couldn’t explain it. He just did.

“I have trouble sleeping alone now.” Totally true despite the nightmares or maybe his significant others keep the nightmares away. Who knows? He definitely has less nightmares when he’s sharing a bed.

“Once Nyota left for fun with lawyers, I woke up. Also I could totally go for a nap right now. Want to help me?” Of course he leaned over and kissed Spock in a way that told his boyfriend that sleep is not what he wanted. He may be really really sleep deprived, but he was also really, really Spock deprived. It’s been 51 hours since Monday morning’s wake up tag team blowjob.

Of course, out of the corner of his eyes he saw Sarek glaring. The Vulcan’s glare was gleeful. It made Jim pull away very quickly. Jim knew that his sort of father-in-law did not hate him, but he probably didn’t want to watch his son make out with either of his significant others.

“I didn’t realize that you were going to bring your father here.” ‘You should’ve warned me.’ Jim told him mentally.

‘I would have if I had known you were here,’ Spock replied telepathically.
“I wanted to see how my assistant was doing.” Sarek stated as he walked into the room.

“Good, despite the fact that my predecessor tried to kill me,” A half groggy Arlene said from the bed. “I’m really sorry that I went into labor before I could train my replacement. I’m also really sorry that she’s going to have to deal with rescheduling the state dinner. That’s going to be a nightmare.”

“We have elected to cancel the event.” Jim almost felt like cheering. He absolutely hates diplomatic dinners. The last one ended with an emergency allergy hypo and his shirt being in tatters. Of course in some ways last Saturday night was worse, but if he makes a bad impression with people who hated him anyway, it won’t result in the Federation going to war.

“Now I really feel bad about that.” Arlene told her boss.

“I was purposely looking for a reason to cancel said event.” Jim is falling just a little bit in love with his father-in-law.

‘I find that highly plausible.’ Spock remarked mentally.

“I brought you a teddy bear bouquet.” Sarek said presenting the bouquet to Arlene. Jim is kind of shocked that the Vulcan knew such a thing existed, let alone bought one.

“And look they have the good sense to make the teddy bear baby proof.” He snarked

“Where’s my baby sister? Peter was practically bouncing as he asked. He didn’t think any kid could be that happy about getting a brand-new baby sister. According to Winona, Sam tried to give him back to the hospital multiple times. Of course in Sam’s case, he believed that if he gave Jim up, he would get his daddy back and thus began his really complicated relationship with his big brother.

“With the nurses. They have to make sure she is healthy…” Arlene was cut off abruptly by shouting outside of her room. Jim instantly recognized the voice.

“Think of him and he shall appear.” Jim mumbled to himself as he darted out to the hallway to check what was going on.
It really was Sam in the flesh fighting with one of the nurses. He hasn’t seen his brother in years. Not since he tried to convince Arlene to leave before Peter was even born. It’s possible that could have been even before Starfleet. He didn’t even have to see him during the court battle over Peter. Everything was done through video chat. Sam wasn’t even supposed to be on this planet. Yet there he was fighting with a nurse in the middle of the maternity ward.

It was at that moment that the nurse fighting with Sam was carrying an adorable little girl with auburn curls. Jim didn’t need to see the name bracelet that couldn’t fit her entire name to know that was Jamie.

“I think I should be allowed to see my damn daughter,” Sam shouted. Jim was positive he was drunk or high. Maybe both. Sam never learned the importance of not mixing your drugs. His words just pissed Jim off.

“She is not your daughter. You have no claim to her, legal or otherwise. You lost all rights to her when you beat the hell out of her mother and little brother.” Of course words were punctuated by his fist, connecting with Sam jaw. Bones was going to be pissed if Jim undid all of his good work from last night. Bones are more likely to re-break within the first 48 hours.

“Don’t you even think about laying one finger on that little girl. You’re violating your restraining order right now.” Jim said as he tried to restrain the guy. Instead, he got a knee in the stomach. Asshole.

“I don’t care. You’re supposed to be dead.” Sam said before pulling Jim down to the floor. Thankfully, by that point, the nurse carrying Jamie was half down the hall.

“Haven’t you heard? I don’t die very easily.” He had Sam on the ground as well at this point. His main goal was to subdue and to keep Sam away from his kids until security got there. Seriously, where the fuck were they?

“Rosemary can put you into a coma.” Sam explained.

The rosemary thing was true, once upon a time before the miracle blood. Now Jim doesn’t have to ask two dozen questions before getting Italian. Actually, he still does because Spock was allergic to that particular herb. Thankfully, it takes really large quantities or direct skin contact for his Vulcan to have a really bad reaction. “I was counting on that.” And that explains why Spock ended up like a balloon last Friday night.

Of course he didn’t say anything else because Sam was now unconscious due to a Vulcan nerve
pinch. Although Spock was not the one who administered it because Spock was standing in the back holding Peter and preparing to run if need be. It was Sarek who knocked the guy out.

“I felt it was most advantageous that I deal with the situation due to the fact I have diplomatic immunity.” Sarek explained just has security staff arrived. Finally.

“Good call.” Jim said before he lost consciousness. Of course the sleep deprivation would catch up with him this way.

“Good call. Because Peter is currently sleeping on Spock, who is sitting right next to me. I really don’t like bedside visuals for you.” Okay, Nyota sounded extremely annoyed. That was not good.

“Nor do I.” Spock replied, also annoyed by Spock standards anyway. Which again was not good.

“I have a response for that but I’m not sure if anybody underage is in the room.” Most of his spots involved handcuffs, chocolate body paint, and the Pleasure Seeker 9000.

“I don’t like it either. It wasn’t exactly like I was planning to pass out after fighting with my asshole brother.” Jim said, opening his eyes for the first time to see both Spock and Nyota sitting next to his bed. It’s also when he realizes that Spock’s father is also in the room. Okay, it’s very good that you did not make a sex toy joke. If he did something like that right now, he would be the latest victim of a Vulcan nerve pinch, if he was lucky. Sarek was scary as hell.

“Yet, you still managed to get me called out of Ivy’s very important meeting with the lawyers. Thankfully, the only thing wrong with you is exhaustion and you re-broke your hand.” Bones is going to be so pissed. “Leonard ordered that you stay here for at least 24 hours because he’s certain that may be the only way to get you to rest and not break your hand for a third time in less than two days.” Definitely pissed.

“You could have stayed behind.” Jim remarked.
“No, I couldn’t. Besides, De’bo’rah is here and will make sure that everything turns out well.” Nyota reassured.

“Your stepmom came?” Jim asked concerned.

“She wasn’t going to let Ivy have to deal with that on her own. Not that it’s that big of a thing anymore.” Nyota sighed.

“What happened?”

“Our crack legal team discovered that the crazy Vulcan in question was sleeping with the main member of Starfleet trying to push for Ivy’s expulsion. Most likely my sister will be reinstated at the Academy by the end of the day as they get a special counsel to investigate. Although, at this point it’s more likely that the idiot in charge will be the one ousted out. Paris is pissed and she wants blood.” Nyota explained.

“I’m really tired of Starfleet’s conspiracies.” He is not even surprised at this point. Marcus allowed a lot of corruption to fester. Now they are stuck with the cleanup. Now he’s positive that the five year mission will be delayed until May, mostly because he’s probably going to have to testify at a couple of hearings.

At least he’d get to spend more time with Jamie and Nhi’s babies this way. Also, if Sulu had a longer paternity leave, maybe he would be willing to be their Starfleet appointed babysitter so they would not have to deal with Carol Wallace Marcus.

“I believe we are all frustrated with this.” Spock responded as he grabbed Jim’s hand. Jim is a little shocked that Spock is initiating a Vulcan make out session in front of his father, but Jim needed the physical contact to make his next confession.

“And speaking of conspiracies, I’m pretty sure Sam confessed to trying to kill me by putting rosemary in my body lotion. Instead, he sent Spock to the hospital so please tell me he’s in lockup.” Seriously, how did things get so screwed up between them?

“Yes, he is in custody. Now I regret not punching him for nearly killing my child.” Sarek actually sounded angry. That is not good at all. When a Vulcan sounds angry, they are about five seconds from literally tearing your head off.
“This is why you’re my favorite possible father-in-law.” Jim said cheerily from the bed.

“That is due to the fact that Nyota’s father threatened to kill you and Nyota’s mother is re-marrying a woman.” Sarek answered matter-of-factly.

“You’re still the best.” Jim said as he started to close his eyes again.

“Just rest.” Nyota said with a kiss to his forehead.

“I need to talk to Shawn.” Jim tried to sit up, but Spock gently pushed him back down onto the bed.

“I will handle the situation.” Spock responded.

“What about Arlene and Jamie? Are they okay?” Jim was concerned.

“The nurse was able to get Jamie away from Sam without being harmed. She is currently back in her room with Arlene and as a precaution, there are two security guards stationed outside her room.” Nyota explained.

“Lieutenant Sulu is also inside there with her. They are currently discussing name choices for his own daughter.” Spock added.

“The top choices are Demora and Chloe.”

“Good to know.”

“Just go to sleep.” Nyota said as she gently kissed Jim on the lips. At that, he closed his eyes and went back to sleep, hoping he wouldn’t dream of that other world where Sam would never think about killing him.

To be continued.
Whoever said ‘you can’t pick your family’ was lying through his teeth.
Chapter 1 of The Idiot’s Guide to Family Bonding revised third edition.

Thank you to everybody who read or reviewed the last chapter. You are all lovely and keep me writing.

“Should we get the ‘congratulations, it’s a girl’ line of cupcakes or something from the ‘congratulations on your acquittal’ series?” Jim asked as they stood at a bakery near their Embassy row home.

Her boyfriend, who was himself just released from the hospital 18 hours earlier after passing out due to a fistfight with his psychopathic brother, decided that they would be throwing Arlene a welcome home party (or at least get her welcome home baked goods). Personally, Nyota felt this was Jim’s way, avoiding having to process what happened with Sam. Not that she blamed him because it was such a disaster. As in, ‘on the front screen of every news publication on the planet and several other parts of the Federation’ disaster.

They were back to having to wear sunglasses and baseball caps in public because the media was salivating over this. There were paparazzi camped in front of the apartment again. Thankfully, they had underground parking and around-the-clock security after the almost kidnapping and attempted murder incidents. (The fact that it was incidents plural is just painful in itself.)

It is not every day, a Starfleet Captain is the victim of a conspiracy to kill him. Although in the case of her boyfriend, she thinks this is the third or fourth attempt this year alone. She’s lost track. Sam was being brought up on so many charges that an entire army of lawyers would be necessary. The Bastard is currently facing multiple charges, including but not limited to violating his restraining order, assault of a healthcare professional, assault of a family member, assault of a law enforcement professional, attempted kidnapping, child endangerment, resisting arrest, conspiracy to kill a federation officer, attempted murder of an endangered species, and attempted murder of a family member.
These were just the charges so far. The investigation is continuing and there’s evidence that he was planning on kidnapping baby Jamie for the sole purpose of selling her on the black market. They were hoping it was to some desperate family wanting a baby and not the sex/sentient trafficking trade, but in a society where fertility treatments were paid for and embryo adoption was pretty normal, sentient trafficking was high on the list, especially in light up some of Sam’s contacts.

Unfortunately, her stepmom pointed out this possibility to Jim during breakfast this morning because she really was an expert when it came to all things related to sentient trafficking. Also, she had less tact than Spock sometimes and was unaware that this wasn’t the time to give statistics. Jim reacted badly. Okay he told her stepmom to go to hell. That really wasn’t how she wanted the first meeting between her boyfriend and her stepmom to go, especially when De’bor’ah was already halfway out the family.

There was this part of Nyota that felt like De’bor’ah was ready to run away as soon as her last connection was severed from the family. Her showing up for Ivy’s hearings gave her hope. But Ivy was different. Ivy was De’bor’ah’s daughter despite the lack of adoption papers (and that was only because the evil one would not sign over parental rights). But Nyota was different and friction between De’bor’ah and her significant others will just put Nyota in more of a satellite position as merely Ivy’s sister. Because Nyota actually likes De’bor’ah, she really did not want that to happen. Nyota was hoping they could at least try to talk civilly to each other this afternoon, but she wasn’t sure Jim would be successful. She may have Spock running damage control with De’bor’ah as she tries to get a couple of baked goods into Jim. He’s always happier when he has cheesecake in his system.

Although to be honest, Jim was not handling any part of the Sam incident very well. He won’t talk about it. It’s been two days and he hasn’t talked about it at all. The only reaction that they received so far was Jim throwing a PADD at his hospital monitor showing commentary on the incident. They were considering scheduling Jim an emergency appointment with Dr. Caraballo (especially because Jim shot down the suggestion of a site consult using the fact he has a therapist as the reason why).

Neither Spock nor she thought therapy would work right now because he was currently in his ‘everything is okay when it’s not stage’. The last time Jim got like this was when Chris died and that resulted in the Vengeance incident. (Also, she rescheduled her Monday meeting with Starfleet’s new Vulcan mind expert and if she forces Jim into therapy, she will be called out on that. Her family was in town. It was best to spend as much time with De’bor’ah as possible.)

“If you insist on party planning when you should be resting, be serious. Maybe we should have got you a cookie first.” Nyota shook her head while her sister, who came with them because she thankfully only had two morning classes on Fridays, was glaring from the sidelines. (She also got to avoid this morning’s dysfunctional family breakfast, lucky.)
“And even if such a thing existed, I really don’t want to have a part in this party. Honestly, I just want to pretend everything outside of cuddling with baby Jamie and finger painting with Peter did not happen this week.” Her sister told Jim. She sounded exhausted, which made sense.

Ivy was genuinely worrying about her Starfleet career being over before it even began before being informed by Paris late Wednesday that there were no grounds for her suspension whatsoever. In addition, the person calling for her head on a platter was now being investigated himself for her role in Arlene’s attempted kidnapping. Ivy was free to start classes back yesterday.

However, the damage was already done because Ivy was already condemned in the court of Starfleet cadet opinion which meant her first day back was miserable. Apparently the only reason why Ivy did not get kicked out of the Academy is because her sister is fucking the son of an ambassador, her mom is a Federation liaison, and her stepmom is an admiral. Yes, the rumor mill got all the familial relationships wrong, but they’ve got everything else wrong, so no one’s surprised. The latest version of what happened involves Ivy trying to kill a Vulcan diplomat at the Vulcan Embassy completely unprovoked.

“Do you think it’s too late to transfer to the London campus for spring semester?” For some reason Nyota thought her sister was really seriously contemplating a transfer.

"You’d think by now they’d know that I was doing nothing tawdrier than taking out a guy who broke into where I was staying and trying to kill the woman who took over his job. But no, they don’t care about the truth. Instead they’re calling me the Vulcan murderer. That’s not a good thing to be called in post Vulcan incident society.” Ivy lamented.

“The rumor mill never gets anything right. He is not even dead, but in lockup for kidnapping and conspiracy and who knows what else. Yes, it’s too late. I’m sure they’ll stop talking about you by Monday, Tuesday at the latest. Now that the San Francisco media is focusing on Captain Kirk a.k.a. the Kelvin baby getting almost murdered by his brother, a.k.a. the Kelvin orphan, they have other things to talk about.” Jim told her sister just as he handed Nyota a PADD with their cupcake ordering choices to her.

“Besides, if you transferred, that gives them what they want. Never give the people who treat you like shit what they want.” Jim smirked.

“Oh God, they really do have a selection of cakes and cupcakes related to legal proceedings.” Nyota said looking at the PADD in shock. “They have 13 not guilty cake options.”
“If you get cupcake option number six, I will shove it up your…” Thankfully Ivy was interrupted by their cake consultant.

“We are next door to several lawyers’ offices.” The person behind the counter told them. “Over the years, we received many requests from their clients and the best have made it on to the PADD of cake ideas. Also, after overhearing your earlier conversation may I please point out our section of designs for survivors of domestic violence.” That’s when she leaned over to pull up those designs on the PADD. There were several.

Nyota was trying to decide if that was empowering or in bad taste. Jim was cringing so he was definitely leaning towards bad taste. Maybe the bakery was just opportunistic.

And this was the place that her mom was getting her wedding cake at. She was so talking her mom and Sarah into choosing a different bakery now that ceremony has been pushed back till April, thanks to Enterprise’s launch being pushed back until May due to Starfleet politics and the personnel shortage. The only downside was that she would be spending another semester in the linguistics department.

If she ever harbored the dream of retiring to a life as a Starfleet linguistics professor, she was over it. She wanted to be in space so badly. Mostly, so she doesn’t have to deal with the Academy rumor mill. She’s never had a problem with people talking about her (and they have a tendency to talk about you when you’re sleeping with a professor), but she may toss something else at another colleague if she had to listen to anything else about Ivy. She still has one strike and can’t deal with another.

“I think we’re just going to go with ‘the congratulations, It’s a girl’ cupcakes.” Jim said with a sigh. “Two dozen?”

“Three. My stepmom is coming along with Admiral Pike and several of Arlene’s friends, despite being told to wait a few more days.” But Nhi is thankfully leaving Christine far away because Jim can’t deal with her right now. At least someone listened to one of their directions.

“And she’s still ridiculously pregnant and will eat at least four all by herself.” Jim shook his head. “Actually, make it four dozen.

“Traditional or contemporary colors?” The clerk asked.
"Contemporary. Pink makes Arlene nauseous." Or at least did during the nursery shopping. Thank God. Jim has gone baby crazy and they had a full nursery together three weeks before baby Jamie was scheduled to arrive.

“I also have aversion to pink since my egg donor forced me to wear it every day for the first six years of my life.” Ivy said bitterly. Why did Nyota feel like there was a story there that her sister had yet to share with her.

"Okay, definitely no pink."

"Flavors?"

"Okay, I know we can’t get everything in chocolate because of the Vulcans, but does your mom have any weird food sensitivities due to her species?” Jim asked Ivy who would probably know better than Nyota’s since she’s spent more time with De'bo'rah.

"Lemon makes her sleepy so I would definitely not go with the lemon chiffon.” Ivy responded. “You could get raspberry truffle cream. Although she really can’t do gluten so doubt she will be eating any of these cupcakes so you probably can just get whatever you want."

"Okay in that case, let’s do two dozen blueberry shortcake, one dozen chocolate sun rise, and another dozen of the raspberry passion.” Jim told the cashier. She’s not even surprised about the blueberry shortcake. Jim has been obsessed with blueberries now that he can eat them without going into anaphylaxis. “Also, can you do a dozen gluten-free raspberry truffle crane cupcakes?"

"Sure, no problem. Do you want these with the survivors design? You know, we can do the baby cupcake wrappers with inspirational sayings or the contact information of various women’s shelters in the area that we use in our survivor’s series. Although considering what was on the news, I assume you’re past that stage. Actually, we could do the wrappers on baby shower cupcakes. Maybe we can use the kidnapping prevention wrappers we use for the care 4 kids events we do with the Federation Center for Missing and Exploited Children."

All three of them were staring at the cashier in surprise. Nyota is not even sure Spock would show this little tact.

"Okay, I’m done. Also, just because something is all over the news does not mean I want to talk about my fucked up family issues with the person who is making my cake. I have a therapist for
that.” Jim said angrily.

“That you’re not going to see.” Nyota thought to herself as Jim stormed out of the bakery.

"Look, I will go calm down your special friend and you can finish with this.” Ivy told her as she left to follow Jim and will probably prevent him from doing more property damage. He may or may not be banned from a certain area hospital for breaking a screen. Nyota wasn’t sure she could finish this. She was 30 seconds from throwing a cupcake at that someone. Thankfully, an older lady came from the back.

"Cari, why don’t you go back inside the shop and work on the decorating, and I’ll finish up the Kirk order."

"I am May, the owner of the bakery and I’m sorry about what just happened. Sometimes my daughter goes a little too far. Your truffle cakes will be on the house and I promise it will be in the regular paper.” May said with a smile.

“It’s okay.” Mostly because you got her away from me and you’re giving me free cupcakes.

"It’s just I created the survivors line of baked goods after Cari and I survived getting almost burned alive by my now ex-husband.” It was at that moment that May pulled up her sleeves to show the scars underneath. They were obviously caused by the incident described above.

“I think she just wants to try to save everybody who has gone through what we’ve gone through. She kind of latched on to your boyfriend’s story because although different, it’s a story about someone you thought you love trying to kill you. I’m sorry she overstepped her professional boundaries.” May apologized again.

“It’s okay. You don’t need to explain.” Nyota said before thinking of something she really would like the answer to.

"Why didn’t you undergo dermal regeneration?” She knew she shouldn’t have asked that question. It was extremely impolite, but her family life is all over the net, so maybe that entitled her to ask a few less than appropriate questions.

"So I wouldn’t be tempted to go back. Physical scars are a better reminder than emotional ones.” She
answered simply.” Now, do you want the baby shower cupcakes in the baby bottle paper or the rattle paper?”

“I don’t really care, as long as there’s no pink and we can get it delivered to our house in two hours.” Nyota said as she handed over her address, trying not to react to what she was told before.

“Five dozen cupcakes are easy.” She said before grabbing something out of the case. “Here, give this to your boyfriend as my way of apologizing.”

“We’re just friends.” She hated saying that publicly and really nobody believed her.

"Honestly, it’s better to have friends than lovers, Even if you are sleeping with said friend.” Definitely nobody believed her. With that, Nyota was out of the shop very quickly.

She walks out to find Jim and her sister in line for coffee. She wasn’t surprised mostly because that was one of those coffee places that served wine too. She also finds a text message from said sister telling her to go to the printer down the street to see if she can get a custom welcome home banner made. Apparently somebody doesn’t want to use holo-projections. Probably Jim. Or maybe Ivy just wants to talk to Jim alone which is okay because somehow Jim and her sister have become friends. They have bonded over their mutually dysfunctional childhoods.

Which is good because maybe Jim will share with Ivy and this way she gets to eat his cupcake. Which was also good, because the bottom of the wrapper had the address to a domestic abuse survivors support group. It was probably for the best because she just placed it in her purse in case Jim or Arlene would need it and went on her way to find the perfect banner. Maybe she could do something with baby elephants.

XXXXX

"So you came to calm me down?” Jim asked once he realized that Ivy was following him out of the bakery.

“Yes, but I mostly came out here to drag you to get coffee. I could use a frappe after back to back classes from hell today. The guy covering your self-defense class was a jerk.” Note to self: ask Sulu to take over while he was still on paternity leave. They could use a lesson or two about fencing.

"Forget coffee, I’m getting wine.” Okay, he really wanted hard liquor, but the upscale coffee shop next door only served red and white wine.
“What about iced hot chocolate? If you get wine, I’m going to want wine and you know your girlfriend will not be happy with either of us if we end up all tipsy. Also, I’m pretty sure your doctor said no alcohol.”

“Because Bones is a hypocrite.” Jim mumbled under his breath, but he still had the iced hot chocolate in his hands 10 minutes later as they were walking back to his fortress of an apartment. Spock put biometric scanners on that thing. He was still thinking that his boyfriend had to be well connected and extremely wealthy to get so much work done in a very limited amount of time.

“Are you sure we don’t need to go pick up decorations?” Jim asked as they kept walking.

"Nyota is getting the banner. Because we were originally having the baby shower a week from tomorrow, I may have hit up an actual brick-and-mortar Party City last weekend before everything went chaotic.” Ivy explained. “I assume we’re just going to do a double shower next month with your pseudo-mommy when we were planning to just do her shower? “

“That’s the plan. So Jamie will be strong enough to be around three dozen of her closest friends.” Jim responded.

“And yet we’re still getting four dozen cupcakes because of the high amount of random people who will be showing up over the next two days.” Ivy lamented.

“I hope you have paper plates. I’m not doing dishes.” The house is going to be filled with people, but at least that way he won’t have to talk to Nyota’s stepmom who probably already doesn’t like him. Okay, he shouldn’t have said what he said this morning, but whatever. He did not need those statistics after everything.

"Yep, with cute little baby kittens on them.” He’s not even surprised.

"Okay, I think someone is taking the baby shower thing too far."

“Speaking of things going too far, would you like to talk about what happened in the bakery?” Jim should’ve known this interrogation was still going to happen eventually. Ivy is too much like her sister for his own personal sanity.
"Nope."

"Okay, would you like to talk about getting in a fight with your brother in the middle of the maternity Ward 2 days ago?"

"No." Jim answered emphatically.

"How about..." Ivy started, but he cut her off to words in.

"I also don’t want to talk about finding out my brother conspired to kill me by allergic reaction the weekend before only to get Spock instead. Nor do I want to discuss the possible links between the allergy inducing hand soap and the attempted kidnapping of Arlene."

“I get why you don’t want to talk about this, I’ve really do but...”

"Unless one of your siblings tried to kill you, you have no idea what is going through my head right now." Any interpretation of ‘I know what you’re going through’ annoys Jim, even if he was sure Ivy would get it more than most.

"What if it was my biological mom?" Okay, Jim choked on his frozen hot chocolate at her words. He wasn’t expecting her to say that.

“The abuse was that bad?” Nyota said some things, but never gave real details. Then again she was already in Australia so maybe she never knew how bad it really was. This is the first time Ivy hinted that it was this bad.

“In addition to the psychological manipulation and the occasional beating that daddy dearest never picked up on, it was highly probable she was putting poison in my food.”

“What?”

“Just a little to make me sick over time. I think she just somehow convinced herself that if I was gone, she could have her husband back. She forgot that they were only married in the first place because I exist. When dad found out what was happening, we were gone. That’s when they found
the poison in my system.” Ivy clarified

“And she never did time for child abuse, let alone attempted murder?” Jim was furious.

“Did any of your abusers do time?” Ivy asked pointedly.

“No.” Although Frank did end up in jail for embezzlement and then he made the mistake of mentioning what he did to his wife and step kids. It was made to look like a suicide, but Jim knew it was prison justice.

“They couldn’t prove it was her anyway. There’s dozens of ways that the toxin could’ve gone into my system, some from the natural environment. Also, she lawyered up and because I will never have to see her again, I let it go.” She explained.

“But it still hurts?”

“Because you’re taught that your family is supposed to love you, but that’s total bullshit. Just because you share blood or somebody gives birth to you doesn’t mean that they’re going to love you. Sometimes their hearts are so black and shriveled up on the inside that love is impossible.” Ivy’s almost crying at this point.

“Sam blamed me for dad dying.”

“Seriously?”

"There’s a video file of Sam holding me once I’m out of Starfleet medical NICU after being born three months early and in space. Mom looks like she’s going to cry at any moment and then Sam asked if they can take me back to the hospital to get George back. Mom loses it and just starts bawling. Then Grandpa Tiberius had to explain all over again why dad’s not coming back. But Sam doesn’t get it. The entire time. He still blames me."

“That’s a Sam issue, not a Jim issue. It wasn’t our fault that they didn’t love us. I only know about your dad from class because, for some reason the Kelvin incident is covered during the first week of great battles in Starfleet history.”
“I don’t think I would use the term great.” Jim interrupted. “And don’t feel bad because I only know him from the textbooks and stories.” Honestly, most incoming freshmen know about as much as Jim knows about his father. “Even before she got sick, Wynona and I really didn’t talk about George.”

“Regardless, it seems like your dad was the type of person who would have stayed on the ship to the bitter end. Even if he wasn’t trying to get his kid to safety, he did what he did to save his crew and you just happened to be part of that. But that sacrifice would have happened regardless.”

“You’re right about that, but I didn’t get it until I almost died for my crew.” Not that he could tell Ivy how close of a call that really was.

“Which is why newer starships have Kelvin pods. We covered that two weeks ago in Introduction to Starfleet. That reminds me, I have to work on my history of the USS Franklin paper this weekend.” Jim is so happy he tested out of that class.

“I think family is made up of the people who love you for who you are regardless of blood. You have De’bor’ah. And I get Arlene who is a much better sibling than Sam ever was.” He was also legally Jamie’s other parent, which was something he wasn’t expecting to happen, but it was a good thing.

“For how much longer?” Ivy asked wiping her eyes in an attempt not to cry. “The only reason why she’s not divorcing my father is so she has the power to make healthcare decisions.”

“She came here for your hearing. She didn’t have to do that.” Jim pointed out.

“That’s what she said anyway. What time is the food delivery going to get here?” Ivy asked trying to change the subject.

“30 minutes before Spock shows up with the guest of honor. I bet he’s already left for the hospital. He likes to get there extra early.” Jim explained. Spock was the one picking up Arlene mostly because he could nerve pinch anybody who tried to take baby Jamie again.

Also, Jim, kind of sort of ended up being banned from the hospital outside of a medical emergency due to getting in a fight in the maternity ward with his asshole brother. Which was stupid because it wasn’t like he was planning to get into a fight with anyone in the maternity ward. He was also protecting baby Jamie from getting kidnapped by the Bastard. It was so unfair. (Okay, it was probably breaking that monitor that put him on the banned list, but he was really tired of political
pundits trying to blame him for Sam trying to kill him and kidnap his daughter.

“I think De’bor’ah really came here to meet you.” Ivy said after a few moments. “Even if things went really bad this morning, allegedly. I knew I should’ve been there.” He wasn’t sure Ivy’s presence would have kept things from escalating.

“I don’t know if it would have made a difference. I’m just really sensitive about Jamie right now because of what happened. I already have 1001 worst-case scenarios running through my head. I did not need the statistics to back it up and I reacted badly. It is not the first time I’ve done something like that. Ask Spock.” Jim explained.

“But with him, it’s flirting.” Ivy said with a smirk and a laugh.

“Valid point. I hope you realize that if De’bor’ah just came out here to give Nyota’s boyfriends the third degree then it means she cares about Nyota despite the sort of, but not really divorce. If she cares about Nyota despite the extenuating circumstances, then that means that she cares about you.” Jim was there for her angry 2 AM phone call to the Admiral. However, due to his security clearance, he can’t tell Ivy about what he overheard.

"Why do you have to be so logical?” Ivy said with a sad pout.

"I have a mental link to Spock and apparently things are rubbing off on me. Come on, let’s make this house glittertastic." Which they did so it was probably best that Spock was already gone. Okay maybe the baby rattles everywhere were a little too much, but it was cute and he wanted to make sure Arlene did not think about what happened early Monday morning. He was trying to repress, but it wasn’t working.

To be continued

Chapter End Notes

So I just want to let you know that I’m currently focusing on completing my winter story for KS Advent 2016. Therefore, there’s a really good chance that I will not be updating this story again until early December. On the bright side, you’re going to get a 20,000 word plus completed story from me in December.
Chapter 23: The Other Stepmom

Chapter Notes

Thank you to everyone who read or reviewed the last chapter. You are all absolutely lovely.
I am sorry to have disappeared for nearly 2 months on this story. I’ve been working on my entry for KS Advent 2016. It’s sort of ballooned to 34,000 words. I uploaded the story Monday. Check out How to Survive (Until) Your Wedding if you haven’t read it yet. It is my first foray into Star Trek Beyond territory.

“Most times a parent or parental figure feels like their number one responsibility is to protect their child/charge from the cruelties of the world. Eventually you realize that’s not possible. This is not a reflection of your parenting skills, but rather a reflection of reality itself.” Chapter 17 of The Idiot’s Guide to Family Bonding, revised third edition.

xxxxxx

"Is Nyota okay?" Nyota’s stepmother De’bo’rah asked as they made their way to the hospital to pick up Arlene. The doctors were finally comfortable with young Jamie leaving the facility. Technically Arlene had been discharged the day before, but after her former boyfriend tried to take Jamie from the facility, Arlene wouldn’t leave without her daughter in her arms. Thankfully, they only kept Jamie one more day than her mother.

He was with De'bo'rah because of her early morning clash with James. Nyota asked him to smooth things over due to the fact that Spock actually had known De’bo’rah longer than he had known his girlfriend. Nyota’s stepmother was a contemporary of Spock’s mother. They spent years working together on various projects related to stopping sentient trafficking.

"Much like the word fine, the term okay is vaguely ambiguous and has various degrees of meaning. If you are referring to Nyota’s overall mental stability, she is ‘okay’." Although he does wonder about her emotional state. She did cancel her appointment with the Vulcan mind specialist.

"Good to know. How is she taking her father’s hospitalization?” I wish you would not ask such questions because I am not entirely certain how she is handling the situation due to her lack of specific comments on such.

"She is resigned. And somewhat upset." Because he hurt Ivy and us, but she doesn’t discuss how he hurt her. Except she hasn’t said those words out loud to him. Those are the stray thoughts that he is picking up during what Jim refers to as mind meld sex.
"And in regards to the situation that resulted in his hospitalization?" Anger. That was the only thing he was picking up from her on that, but she wasn’t talking about it. Spock was uncertain if she would ever want to talk about it.

"It may be better to ask Nyota directly about her feelings on the subject." He said instead because he wasn’t sure how to phrase Nyota’s feelings on the subject, especially when he wasn’t completely sure what those feelings were.

"She will not answer." Have you tried asking? Spock thought to himself at her question.

"I know she is upset, but I do not know the specifics due to the fact that Nyota has yet to give me any specifics.” Again Spock has seen little things when he’s entered her mind during the mind meld, but they are always surface thoughts such as her father reading to her as a child or her guilt over not taking Ivy with her when she ran away to Australia. But there is nothing in her thoughts about recent events except for the feelings of rage.

Again he doesn’t know how to articulate this and more importantly he’s not sure he should articulate this with Nyota’s stepmother.

"Okay how is she taking the fact that you decided to get another boyfriend without breaking up with her first?” He is not even surprised she asked this question. Humans were rarely this direct, but De’bo’rah was not human.

"I’m certain that your husband may have framed the situation differently,” and Spock was certain that he framed things in the worst possible way. “But it was Nyota who decided that we should include James in our relationship." He loved both. He never wanted to choose and thankfully he would have no need to because Nyota loved James as well.

"But you fell in love with him first?” De’bo’rah asked.

"Yes.” Spock confessed. “I was never planning to actually act on those feelings. I love Nyota. I am committed to Nyota.”

"But you still fell in love with someone else and were fortunate enough to have a girlfriend who accepted that."
“You saw how Nyota interacted with James when he was hospitalized two days ago. Do you really feel that I am the only connection between them?” Spock asked.

"No. I realize Nyota cares about him, but…”

"I have a mental connection to James. I can feel his feelings and even though what he feels for Nyota is different than what he feels for me, the intensity is very similar." James loves Nyota.

All conversations ceased after that. Spock was of the mind that De’bo’rah only volunteered to come with him so he could be interrogated about their relationship. Spock really wished she had not done so when they arrived at the hospital to pick up baby Jamie and Arlene and ran into his father and Alexis.

Apparently this completely awkward situation occurred because he forgot to inform his father that Jamie was being released from the hospital today. Due to the fact they did not want Nyota’s mother, stepmother, and Alexis in the same room together, they had chosen not to inform Sarek of the open house. It was already chaotic enough with De’bo’rah interacting with Nyota’s mother out of sheer necessity. At least in that case, they bonded over their mutual desire to keep their children safe.

"Your father is dating my estranged husband’s ex-girlfriend?” De’bo’rah asked as they walked back to the car to pull it around to get Arlene and Jamie. Actually their real purpose was to bring all of Arlene and Jamie’s presents to the car first. Spock is surprised by the amount of goods Arlene has acquired in the last 24 hours from her various visitors. There are six children teddy bears alone.

"I not certain if dating is the correct term." Spock knew his father would never use the term dating. Yet, Sarek acted very tenderly with Alexis. Also, the mere fact that she was with him when they arrived at the hospital pointed to a more familiar acquaintance then attorney and client. There was affection there.

"I saw him caress her hand. I know what that means in Vulcan culture." Spock did too. He would be remiss in not acknowledging that this bothered him. His father said that he was not replacing Amanda. And yet he was with someone else. He wasn’t going to begrudge his father moving on, even if it was painful. It was another reminder his mother was gone.

"I prefer Alexis to my father’s former fiancéé who tried to sleep with me.” Spock answered simply. This resulted in De’bo’rah mumbling various curse words in her native language.
"He’s not handling your mother’s death well, is he?" De’bo’rah asked as they reached the vehicle.

"I think he is handling things better now than he was previously." Spock answered as he moved to the driver seat. Which was not at all. Then again Spock strangled his future boyfriend.

“He is not to live much longer." De’bo’rah whispered.

"Your husband?" As he parked the car out of the parking space.

"They think that he may have three or four more months. He already does not remember me.” Spock is uncertain of what the appropriate gesture would be at this moment, especially because De’bo’rah is neither human nor Vulcan.

"I shouldn’t be upset. He’s dying because he contracted an STI due to the fact he was fucking around on me.” This news was surprising to Spock. They all assumed that the disease that caused the man’s current incapacitation was contracted well before he began his relationship with De’bo’rah.

“Are you sure he did not contract the virus before your relationship?” Spock asked.

“Not possible. We got tested before the wedding and he was clean. That means he had to sleep with the wrong person after the wedding. I’m just thankful he contracted something I’m immune to.”

“It was very fortunate. Your daughter would be very upset if you were also to succumb to the illness.”

“The irony of the situation is at one point I did love him. I knew that he fucked around on his first two wives, but I assumed it was different this time and it wasn’t. Now I just wonder if he ever loved me."

"I do not know."

"I really don’t think he ever did. I don’t think he ever could. Some people can’t love anybody but themselves. I stayed for Ivy. She didn’t need to be alone with him. But once she was safely tucked away here in San Francisco. I was going to leave." She confessed.
“I’ve been working with a lawyer for months. What he was doing to Nyota was the last straw. Am I happy that you fell in love with someone else? No. But you still love Nyota, which is more than I can say for her dad. But I never had to enact my plan.”

“Because his actions left you with no choice, but to institutionalize him.” Spock answered.

“Those actions being sleeping around for probably our entire marriage. It didn’t matter at this point. Everything I once loved about him is gone, even if I can’t remember what that was in the first place. And yet I’m still hurt. I’m still watching him die little by little. I’m still afraid that Ivy is not going to want anything to do with me because I’m just a step mom.”

“She does consider you her real mother. As I stated earlier, she would be devastated without you.” De’bo’rah did not respond to that comment because they were met by an orderly pushing Arlene and baby Jamie out of the hospital. Spock quickly moved the car in front of the entrance.

“I’m so happy to be leaving. You did bring the car seat?” Arlene asked as he stepped out of the car.

"Yes, James put it in after he was released from the hospital. He spent three months researching the safest model." Spock said as he got out of the vehicle. He would be here, but he’s currently banned from the property.

“I’m surprised your husband’s not here to pick you up,” commented the woman escorting Arlene out of the facilities.

“Jim’s not my husband. He is my brother and that’s his husband.” Arlene clarified.

“He is currently banned from the facilities outside of a medical emergency due to breaking the video monitor in his room.” Spock added.

“I thought Mr. Kirk was Jamie’s other biological parent? I was told he was allowed to come get her.” The attendant said as she was looking at her PADD. Spock could now see that she was a candy striped named Michelle.

“My stepdaughter’s boyfriend has a kid with someone else?” De’bo’rah asked from the vehicle.
Spock raised an eyebrow at her in annoyance.

“I thought he was married to the Vulcan?” Candy striper Michelle looked perplexed. Spock was annoyed because he was not allowed to publicly acknowledge the true nature of James’ relationship with both of them.

“You know it’s very rude to refer to somebody by their species.” Arlene stated as she handed Jamie to Spock to place in her car seat.

“I apologize, Mr. Kirk.” Spock chose not to correct Candy Striper Michelle. Actually a part of him enjoyed being referred to by James’ surname.

“Jim and I are co-parenting Jamie because Jim is twice the guy the asshole who got me pregnant is. Four times actually.” Arlene started to get up from her chair. “Jamie got an upgrade. Also, the guy who got me pregnant is the same guy that tried to kidnap Jamie.”

“I thought the guy he punched was his brother?” The woman said as she helped Arlene make her way to the vehicle.

“Technically, Jim is Sam’s biological brother, but Jim likes me better. So I got Jim in the breakup.”

“I’m confused, but it doesn’t matter. You definitely seem to have a family that loves you. Have a safe ride home.” Candy striper Michelle said before closing the door and returning back into the hospital.

“How many people will be waiting for me at the house?” Arlene asked as Spock started to maneuver his way out of the hospital.

“Due to the fact we live in Embassy Row, there will be no journalists waiting for us outside. We also instructed everyone not to stop by the house until tomorrow. James expects no one to follow those instructions which is why he procured several dozen cupcakes for anyone who does come by the house.

"Well, as long as there are cupcakes, it’s all good." Arlene said before pretending to be asleep, therefore causing Spock to explain the truth of Jamie’s legal parentage on his own. This was also when he was asked to not repeat his earlier discussion with Nyota. Spock only acquiesced because De’bo’rah agreed to tell Nyota the truth in the morning.
As predicted, even though they told no one to come over for a few days, everyone did except for the Sulus because they actually listen and Ben is a pediatrician. They really should have got more non-chocolate cupcakes since most of their visitors were Arlene’s Vulcan acquaintances from work, especially one Vulcan in particular, Sonik. Arlene won’t explain why the guy brought her two dozen roses.

It wouldn’t be so bad if Jim and Arlene were not utterly exhausted. They did mention in the parenting class that newborns were the greatest cause of sleep deprivation ever, but Jim didn’t take it that seriously. He was a starship Captain. Seriously, he survived the Vengeance incident where the only sleep he got for about four days was when he was unconscious. And yet being woken up every 90 to 120 minutes by a screaming child seems worse in many ways.

This time Jamie only made it 52 minutes before she was screaming. Half-asleep, Jim took a bottle out of the nursery fridge and placed it in the bottle warmer and then grabbed Jamie out of her crib. It was 2:44 AM which most likely meant that this was a breakfast cry. Although Jamie had a lot of cries, especially very early in the morning.

This is probably the reason why Peter decided he was bunking with Ivy in his room instead of sleeping on the futon in the nursery. Jim was sleeping on the futon instead because one, he does not want to wake up Spock and Nyota by having a screaming baby in a bassinet by their bed. They were back at work while Jim was on paternity leave until the end of November. At least he could sleep during the day when Jamie decided that 3 PM was a great time to take a nap. He can’t wait until she gets on some semblance of a schedule.

Jim is taking the night shift this week because Arlene was still recovering from shoving a bowling ball through her vagina. More than that, she was recovering from Sam being a bastard. She definitely did not need to deal with a baby who will not stop screaming after having to spend the day answering questions from detectives about all the bad things Sam did.

“I know you want the good milk,” Jim told Jamie as he placed the nipple at her lips. “But mommy is still suffering from having to push you out of a really tiny space after getting shot by a crazy person -- crazy Vulcan anyway. So you’re just going to have to deal with a bottle. Jamie responded by crying and more screaming. She just refused to take the nipple.

“Okay that’s a hard no on milk.” Jim said after 10 minutes of trying to get her to drink. “I kind of wish I had my boyfriend’s mind reading skills right now. That would be nice.” Then he would know exactly why Jamie has yet to stop screaming.
“What about a fresh diaper?” Her response was more screaming as Jim did the baby diaper check. He was actually getting pretty good at it.

However, the diaper was still good. Which makes sense because he just changed her an hour ago. And yet, she would not stop screaming.

“Do you just want to cuddle?” Jim just got more crying at the question.

“Okay, I know you want mommy, but mommy needs to sleep. So you’re just going to have to deal with Uncle Jim.” Jamie got quiet for about a minute just long enough to give Jim a little bit of hope and then the screaming started again.

“Okay, let’s try a little song. Not Perfect though,” That was starting to become Jamie’s favorite lullaby, but Jim was so sleep deprived that he may start singing the original version of the song. “How about I sing to you a song your grandma Winona used to sing to me when I was little.” Jim told her as he grabbed the bottle again. Maybe a little lullaby would get her to eat because again, Jim knew it was breakfast time. She was just trying to be picky because she wanted some straight from the tap.

Hush my baby, dry your tears.
I’m here to keep you safe
Baby, you already know
It’s a cruel world outside
Sad things happen
Bad things happen
There’s no reason why
There’s nothing you can do
But there’s no point in tears.
Tears don’t change a thing.
I’m sorry baby girl.

Hush my baby, dry your tears
I’m here to keep you safe
I wish I could keep you from the world.
I wish you would never know pain
I wish you would never know fear
I know that’s not possible
I will try always
I’m sorry baby girl

Hush my Baby, dry your tears
I’m here to keep you safe
From the all too cruel world.
I’ll always be by your side.
I’ll always wipe away your tears
I’ll keep you warm.
I’ll give you love
I’m sorry baby girl
He is not here
But I am.

By the last word of the song, not only was Jamie not crying, but she was drinking her breakfast. Thank god.

“That is an interesting lullaby.” Nyota’s stepmother said as she walked into the room. Of course Jamie managed to wake up the person with the best hearing in the house.

Yes, the stepmom was still there much to Jim’s annoyance. Because Ivy was staying at their house since freshman cadets are assholes, so was De’bo’rah and she had no trouble sleeping on the convertible sofa in the living room. Jim would like for his girlfriend’s stepmom to leave, but she wasn’t leaving until Ivy was settled and that was going to take a while. A very long while considering Ivy is sleeping over at their house in David’s room to avoid her classmates at the Academy.

“It was something Winona sung to me, I just gender swap the lyrics. I think she wrote it herself. I also had the change the last line because I’m really happy her dad is not here.” Jim’s hoping that
bastard takes a plea because Jim doesn’t even want to see him at the hearing. Okay, if Jim sees him again, he may strangle him. The more the lawyers tell him about what Sam did, the worse Jim feels about the whole situation.

"You’re her father."

"I’m just Uncle Jim, but that’s okay. That works. And hey, at least I’ll be more stable than Uncle Frank."

“DNA has very little to do with being an actual parent.” Deborah remarked.

“Ain’t that the truth.” Jim agreed as he gently swayed around the room with Jamie. Please baby sleep. Just please sleep.

“Who is Uncle Frank?” See Nyota’s other moms know not to ask that question. Probably because the Admiral has full access to his real Starfleet file. After reading that thing, you’ll wonder how he managed to pass the psych evaluation to be a Captain. Some days, Jim wonders the same thing.

“Frank was my first ex-stepfather. Abusive Bastard who liked to molest little kids.” Part of him would like to believe that she will assume that he wasn’t one of Frank’s victims, but Jim has read De’bo’rah’s real file too. 15 years of forced sexual slavery.

“Were you one of those that he molested?” Of course she was too smart to not ask that question. She knew too much because she survived 15 years of things worse than Frank. It was just 12 years ago that Deborah was rescued by the captain of Enterprise’s predecessor.

“Yes.” He could’ve lied, but anyone who survived over a decade and a half in sexual slavery is going to see the truth in his eyes. “It doesn’t matter. The bastard is dead now because prison justice is better justice than Federation justice occasionally.” De’bo’rah actually smiled at those words. It was a predatory smile.

“That’s one of those things I’m trying to fix.” Jim was well aware that De’bo’rah was a child welfare advocate in addition to speaking out against sentient trafficking.

“Good luck with that. People turn a blind eye to the situation all too often. That stuff is not supposed to happen in the modern Federation. Sam knew what was going on. Yet he still left me there. He ran
away and saved himself, but left me in Frank hell. He’s always been a selfish bastard. The only reason why he met Arlene was because he came to get money from me.”

"You do realize that he could have been a victim as well." Why did she have to be so logical?

“I don’t believe in the Freudian excuse. If Frank was using him too, I think that makes it worse. Because if he was Frank’s victim too, that meant that he purposely left me there to be used.” Even if that was the case, it doesn’t excuse what Sam did. Because Jim went through hell and came out of it on the other side better. He was an effective Starfleet Captain. He survived. “I don’t leave anyone behind, not in a situation like that, especially the people I care about.”

"Does that include Nyota?" Jim is not surprised by that question. Of course she’s going to look out for Nyota first.

"Yes. And it’s not just because of Spock. If he decided to run off and leave us to have Vulcan babies with some random Vulcan woman, I would still stay with her."

"That can’t actually happen?"

"No. Spock and I are sort of Vulcan married and Nyota is supposed to see a mind healer about that possibility.” Jim explained. “Today actually, or rather yesterday at this point, but she canceled.”

"If you’re planning to bond in the Vulcan tradition, Nyota should see a specialist.” Okay, maybe there is an advantage or two to having one of his mother-in-law’s be not human. “Although you are aware that’s more permanent than marriage.” Or maybe not.

"I’m aware, even if in our case it was sort of an accident that was touched off by an incident too classified for me to tell you about." Okay, now his sort of mother-in-law was glaring at him.

"How do you accidentally get married?” Of course she would ask that question. “Was sex pollen involved? Spock told me that he did not begin a relationship with you until Nyota gave him permission. We both know that Vulcans being 100% truthful at all times is a myth.”

"I really can’t tell you. It really is classified.” Mind meld with alternate version of my boyfriend and then accidentally getting choked by him when he was in the middle of a nervous breakdown. “But, no non-con was involved and sex pollen is very non-con.”
“I would be less concerned for Nyota’s well-being, if I knew the exact circumstances. However, I will remind you that if I discover that you did engage in a sexual relationship with my daughter’s boyfriend before the mutually agreed-upon time, I will make your existence quite unpleasant.”

"My girlfriend really does have three mommies and I’ve gotten the shovel talk from all of them. I even got a variation from my lawyer who may or may not be dating my boyfriend’s father.” Jim is going with predating. “So I think that one counts as a shovel talk from Spock’s side of the family."

"I think eventually it will. But this is not the shovel talk. And I’m not her mom. I’m just the stepmom." Jim is not going to point out the fact that she just referred to Nyota as her daughter a few moments earlier.

“Even if you see yourself as just the stepmom, you’re the good stepmom. That means a lot considering your predecessor was a coldhearted sociopathic bitch. You are the type of stepparent that I wish Winona gave me. Even stepdad number two was a bastard. He sold us out for a week’s worth of rations on Tarsus. Funny, we survived and his body is in one of the mass graves.” Jim said bitterly.

"My parents sold me for a house, at least that’s what I think happened. I was 10 at the time." Jim really wants to break out the alcohol right now. But Jamie is sleepily drinking her bottle and he doesn’t want to disrupt her. Five more minutes and maybe he can put her down for two more hours of uninterrupted sleep. Okay, more like 45 minutes of uninterrupted sleep, but he’ll take it.

"At least you understand what it’s like to be screwed over by your blood relations."

"Too well."

"Ivy is afraid that as soon as the divorce is finalized, you’re going to be gone from her life forever." Jim confessed because it’s been four days and Jim knows Ivy hasn’t talked to De’bo’rah about it.

“That’s ridiculous. I wouldn’t be here right now if I felt that way.” De’bo’rah tried to reassure him. “The only reason why I’m not her legal mother is the egg donor refused to terminate her parental rights and we couldn’t find enough evidence to terminate them for her.” Because the wicked bitch was really good at covering her tracks and apparently some judges should not be judges.

"I tried to point that out to her, but she had a hard time believing that." Probably because her
biological mother tried to poison her. Jim thought bitterly.

"I wouldn’t be sleeping on your couch right now if I felt otherwise." De’bo’rah said poignantly.

“It is a nice couch.” Jim joked. “I’m personally more worried about Nyota. She’s always loved and respect you and she’s a little worried that you’re going to disappear from her life after the divorce.”

“How is she worried?”

“Let’s see, Friday after we got home from the bakery Nyota said, ‘Jim, can you please apologize for overreacting at breakfast this morning. I know that you don’t want to deal with the reality of what your asshole brother did to us, but I really do want you to get along with De’bo’rah. I don’t want Ivy to be the only person in the family she’s still talking to after she leaves dad for good.’"

“She actually said that?” De’bo’rah asked.

"Yes." Along with promising head, but overprotective stepmom number two does not need to know that. Jim really can’t defend himself holding an almost sleeping baby.

"Was that actually why you apologized two days ago?"

“No.” Jim answered. “I really did overreact; I just don’t want to think about what Sam did or was planning to do. I don’t even want to talk about it. I don’t want to deal with it. I just want to be with Jamie.”

“Who is at least not crying right now.” De’bo’rah remarked.

"The singing works." Jim smirked.

“Or possibly the bottle.” Jamie actually pulled away from her bottle at that moment letting Jim now that she was done. She drank about 75 mL that was good.

“It could also be the cuddling. She is cuddling extra hard right now." Jim said as he moved over to
the rocking chair. It was easier to burp her sitting down. Also a few minutes in the chair should send Jamie to sleep town.

“There’s not going to be a divorce.” De’bo’rah said several moments later after he had Jamie perched perfectly on his shoulder with baby towel already in place. He lost his shirt two days ago before Arlene showed him the error of his ways.

"I’m pretty sure you’re not going go back to him once he gets better.” Winona did that too many times, but De’bo’rah did not seem like the type of doormat that Winona was.

“Your mom is in a long care treatment facility. I think you understand what’s going on more than Nyota does. He’s not going to get better.” Deep down, Jim knows this. He won’t tell Nyota. He cannot do that to her.

"Which is why you should just sign the paperwork and be free to move on or more likely have a judge handle the situation.” Because we both know your husband is in no position to sign the papers himself.

“There’s no point when he only has three or four months to live. Besides, this way Nyota doesn’t have to deal with end-of-life decisions." Jim knows those decisions. He’s been Winona’s guardian for as long as he’s been an adult because no one else in the family would deal with it.

“Have you discussed this with Nyota and Ivy?” Jim asked.

“Not yet. I told your boyfriend, but I told him not to say anything until I told her.” And Spock hadn’t said anything yet. Although he did choose a movie about a daughter who must come to terms with her father’s death for yesterday’s movie night. Jim was kind of surprised because he was sure that choice would be on Spock’s trigger list. If the Vulcan would actually acknowledge having emotional triggers.

“The other reason why I came was to tell Nyota the truth. This isn't something that you find out over the phone.

"You’ve been here almost a week and haven’t said anything yet.” Jim said, annoyed. How can De’bo’rah be so forthright sometimes and be so timid in other situations.
"Because how do you tell somebody that their father is dying? He wasn’t the best person. I’m not even sure that he loved me. I’m not even sure sometimes if he loved the girls considering what he did in the end." Using Ivy the way he did was definitely a step too far.

"He was sick." And yet Jim was defending him because Winona did so many things when the medication wasn’t working.

"You know this isn’t the same situation as with your mom?" He knows it’s not. Winona never tried to kill him.

"It is still a long goodbye. Winona doesn’t even know about Jamie. She definitely doesn’t know Sam is a bastard. I called her because I was worried that she would see things on the news even though I asked them to take news feed privileges away. She asked me if I was still dating the cute Vulcan transfer student and linguist club president.” De’bo’rah just gave him a weird look. Jim took that moment to put a now sleeping Jamie in her cot. Jim was mentally celebrating his success at getting Jamie down for the night or rather morning.

“My mom lives in a world where she still thinks I’m in high school and living with the Pikes. Although now she just thinks I’m living with Nhi and slightly jealous of the new baby. She’s also integrated Spock and Nyota into the fantasy.”

“I can now see why you and Nyota have developed a relationship with one another," was De’bo’rah’s only response.

"Yes. Equally fucked up families. Spock has the stable family in our group and he went almost 5 years not speaking to his dad which only ended when his mom died when his planet blew up.”

Of course at that moment, Jim looks up from a sleeping Jamie to see Nyota standing in the hallway. Because of the position of the door, there’s no way De’bor’ah can see her. Jim couldn’t either when he was rocking Jamie. Nyota makes eye contact with him before leaving. She’s essentially telling him to stall De’bo’rah long enough for her to successfully get down the hall. He does that, but De’bo’rah does eventually leave when Jim starts, yawning.

“So how much did you hear?” Jim asked Nyota when she crawls into the futon with him 10 minutes later.

“Everything.” Jim pulls Nyota as close to him as he can.
To be continued
Chapter 22: Ghosts

Chapter Summary

“Do not make assumptions about how much another person is able to handle. If you keep doing so, you’ll never see their true strength.” Chapter 2 of the Idiots Guide to Family Bonding, revised third edition.

Chapter Notes

Thank you to everyone who read or reviewed the last chapter. I’m sorry for the lag between updates. I had a little bit of a creative block on this story so I kept working on other things until I was ready. We are really getting towards the end of this part. Sometimes it’s hard to tie all the parts together. I had to step back for a moment to figure out how I wanted things to go.

Nyota’s head hurt. It had for the last few days, but it was worse now. She also wants to strangle one of her boyfriends, due to not telling her things that she needed to know. Spock has had days to tell her the truth about her father, but didn’t and that meant she found out by accident in the worst way possible. Thankfully for him, she was restraining herself.

It’s a silent ride to work as she ignores Spock. She spends most of her time picking at the toaster strudel that Jim forced her to bring with her. She wasn’t that hungry. Not after discovering that her father came with a ticking clock. Her stomach is too upset to keep anything down.

She wished Ivy was with them so she had somebody to talk to, but today was one of the days where Ivy had morning classes at the downtown UF San Francisco campus. Maybe it was for the best because in addition to giving Ivy a reprieve from the various Starfleet cadets gossiping about her, this gave Nyota more time to figure out how to tell Ivy that their father is dying because of his own actions.

Nyota still has no idea how to do that. Does she tell Ivy the truth or does she sugarcoat it? Did Ivy already know that their father completely sucked at monogamy? How does one begin a conversation like this? Maybe this is why De’bo’rah keeps putting it off. Maybe she should wait until De’bo’rah actually tells her officially.
At the same time, every day that she keeps the bad news to herself, it is another day with their father lost to Ivy. Nyota doesn’t know exactly how Ivy feels about losing that time, but maybe she would want to spend that time with the man. Does her little sister miss their father? Does she want to see him again? Does she need to say a proper goodbye?

Nyota knows she doesn’t want to see him again. She’s still too angry about his recent actions. However, maybe things are different for Ivy. Yes, he tried to use her to hurt Nyota, but he was also the one who kept her away from her monstrous biological mother. Maybe Ivy would feel like she should tell him something because of that.

Ivy spent more time with him than Nyota ever did. Nyota spent her formative years with Sarah. Ivy was with their dad. Always daddy’s little girl, maybe because he was the one who got her away from hell. Their past relationship may mean more to Ivy than recent actions, especially actions made under diminished mental faculties.

Although just because Nyota understands how difficult saying something like that is, it doesn’t mean that she’s not mad at Spock for withholding this information from her for days. Which explains why she can’t talk to him. (Okay, she was madder at De’bo’rah, but she couldn’t actively express her anger at De’bo’rah because her husband was dying and Nyota didn’t want to push her farther away.

"You’re angry at me." Spock finally says 10 minutes into their drive. Oh good, he’s getting better at picking up social cues.

“I’m not angry.” That was a blatant lie and she knew it.

"You’re upset with me." And apparently so did Spock.

"No.” She responded very quickly.

"You’re lying” Nyota closes her eyes. Seriously, why did he have to get this perceptive?

“And you’re using contractions which worries me.” Spock raises an eyebrow at her.

“I’m not angry. I have a headache and I did not sleep very well last night.” And I keep dreaming about my father’s funeral. But I’m not going to discuss that with you.
“Do you need some acetaminophen?” Spock asked genuinely concerned.

“I took some before we left the house and I think it will kick in any moment.” Not a lie and she hopes it really does.

“Do you feel that you are able to perform adequately at work, regardless of your incapacitation?” Spock asked, still concerned.

“I’m okay. Besides class will be more restful with Jamie still grasping the concept of sleeping for more than an hour at a time.”

"You were able to get her to sleep successfully last night." The reason why she ended up overhearing that particular conversation is she lost the coin toss on who would go help Jim get Jamie to sleep. Really, it was for both of them because neither could sleep through that.

"De’bo’rah was already with Jim and… Okay I don’t even know how to explain what happened." She really doesn’t.

"De’bo’rah told you the real reason why she came?" And yet, Spock knew.

“No, she didn’t tell me anything. Just like she hasn't since she got here. She did tell Jim about my dad being on his deathbed and I just happened to be in the hallway. That means that no one has told me that my father is dying, including you.” She gives Spock icy glare number three.

"I felt it most prudent for De’bo’rah to tell you the truth. However, I did try to prepare you for the eventual possibility." Which involved strange movie choices and talking about his attempts to make amends with Sarek after Amanda’s death.

"Because movies make everything better right? Sometimes I think you just kept quiet because you didn’t want to deal with pesky human emotions." Nyota accused.

"I do not like seeing you in pain.” He tried to grab her hand, but she pulled away.
“I’m in pain because you didn’t tell me and I have a headache.” She rubs her temple with her fingers."

"There are various techniques I can utilize to help alleviate that pain.” Spock starts to move a hand towards her.

“Don’t,” she pulls away again. “Just keep your eyes on the road. If you touch me right now you’re going to be home for at least a week due to psychic backlash."

She’s angry at everyone. Nyota was furious with De’bo’rah because she never told her what was going on. Not just her father dying, but about the fact that her marriage has been a sham for years. Nyota can understand why she didn’t tell Ivy, but Nyota is a 27-year-old Starfleet officer. She watched an entire planet be imploded in front of her. She can take the truth that her father managed to ruin marriage number three due to the fact he cannot keep his dick to himself.

She can take the truth about his mortality hurried about by his own choices. Instead she finds out by accident and now she’s stuck wondering how to break the news to Ivy.

Of course De’bo’rah would not have been put in the position that she was if her father did not do what he did. She’s specifically angry at the man for putting De’bo’rah’s life at risk. They got lucky about the STI. He could have passed the same death sentence to De’bo’rah and it only did not happen that way because of her alien heritage.

Nyota was also angry about the man’s hypocrisy. Apparently it’s okay for him to sleep around and cheat on his wife. You know, as long as it’s just one person at a time. But it’s not okay for her to have two boyfriends that respect her and treat her as an emotional and intellectual equal (when they’re not trying to keep bad news from her).

She’s angry at her father for not being immortal. He was going to leave Ivy to fend for herself because of his bad choices. There’s enough prophylactics in the galaxy to not have stuff like this happen. You don’t even have to pay for the stuff. It is part of the Federation’s goal to eventually become a money free society by next century.

She’s furious at Spock for not telling her or at least not directly letting her know this was coming. His movie choices do not count because she’s just assumed that he was working through Amanda issues. She’s just a bit of a mess.
"I can feel your anger and sadness without physical contact." Spock’s words bring her back to the present.

'Do you realize how much of it is directed at you?' She thought to herself. Then she remembered all of those journal articles that Jim’s ex-boyfriend Dr. Kim sent her about Vulcan mental bonds.

"Should you be able to do that?" She asked, because Spock would have to know more than her. She’s already well aware that Vulcans keep a lot of their mating practices to themselves. Arlene had to sign two nondisclosure agreements before they would fill her in on some of the more job pertinent things that she needed to know.

"I do not know. I feel that is a question best suited for Dr. Weston. You should make a new appointment with her." Spock suggested.

“I will after midterms,” she told him. “Spock, we have dated each other long enough for you to know that I hate being lied to. And that’s what you’ve been doing for the last several days. So don’t expect me to want to pretend like everything is okay right now because it’s not. Because as mad as I am at my father for screwing the wrong person and putting himself into this mess. I’m mad at you for knowing about it and not warning me.”

She told him going off in a semi tirade. Seriously, why did they have to be caught in traffic? If they just had a vehicle with hover capabilities, this wouldn’t be a problem, but Jim loved his vintage vehicles and apparently, this car belonged to Amanda before she married Vulcan royalty.

"I did not lie." Spock replied.

"A lie of omission is still a lie." She tells him.

"I am aware."

“How long have you known my father is dying?” Nyota asked

"Since we brought Jamie home from the hospital." Spock’s response made her even more upset.
"It’s been days. Why didn’t you say anything?" She wasn’t yelling at Spock. She was almost yelling at Spock, but she was not quite there yet.

"It was De’bo’rah’s place to inform you. She wanted to do that herself. Although I did try on multiple occasions to get her to discuss this with you directly."

“Obviously not hard enough.”

“I am of the opinion that the only possibility that would have worked was to lock both of you in a room together until you discussed the situation. Even then, I am not certain.

"My father is dying. My father’s dying because he fucked around on his third wife. And apparently everybody thinks that I can’t take this news. But I can." Her words were calm and even which surprised her. She was tempted to scream, but that would just disprove her point.

"I do not believe De’bo’rah delayed in informing you of the situation because she does not see you fully capable of handling such news. I believe she delayed because she’s not ready to tell that her husband is dying because he engaged in sexual relations outside of their relationship without permission or notification."

She knows that there is a valid point here. Okay, she can understand why De’bo’rah was reluctant to tell her this, but it still doesn’t change the fact that she had a right to know and was purposely kept in the dark for too long.

“That still doesn’t change the fact that I should’ve been informed immediately.” Nyota argued.

"Are you more upset about the fact your father is dying, the circumstances that led to his death, the fact that De’bo’rah did not disclose the true nature of his current circumstances to you directly or the fact that I was aware of those circumstances before you were informed due to indirect means?"

“I don’t know.” She said going back to ignoring her boyfriend because all of the above is not an option.

Xxxxx

Thankfully they were only in the vehicle for five more minutes before they reached the underground
parking garage of the Academy. As soon as he parked, Nyota is on her way to her Introduction to Klingon class. She doesn't stop to kiss him, which is a normal part of their morning ritual. Spock doesn’t try to kiss her. Maybe he realizes how upset she really is.

She’s thankful her 9 AM is a small class of about 15 students at this point. Many people dropped when they realized that this would not be an easy class at all. This makes attendance easy which is why it’s easy for her to notice that Kevin Chan’s girlfriend, Elizabeth Simmons, isn’t there. She’ll check her email later to see if Liz informed Nyota of her absence before class. Notification of your Professor is a requirement at the Academy, especially in the language classes.

Too much of their work involves participation, such as with today’s class. She lets the students run through of the study guide for the midterm while she takes something else for the headache because what she took earlier is not working. She’s feeling worse. She should probably read her emails while her students are busy, but everything on her PADD is starting to blur together.

Finally after two hours, she’s able to leave. Of course, when she gets back to her office, there is a box of chocolate dipped pretzels waiting for her. Once she sees that they’re from Spock, not Jim, they go into the compost bin because her head hurts too much to deal with this.

“What did those chocolates ever do to you?” Her officemate Garcia asked.

“They were from Spock and I’m a little upset at him right now.” So it's best that they go into the trash so she doesn’t stress eat, not that she wants anything from him right now.

"Why? What could he have done that warrants throwing away what was probably good chocolate covered pretzels? It’s not like he is sleeping with his assistant. My now ex did that a lot." Her colleague explained.

"Because he doesn’t have one.” Nyota quipped back. “It is nothing that sordid. I’m just not in a chocolate pretzel mood.” Although maybe she could find a way to make the headache and nausea go away.

"There has to be more to it than that. Why are you upset?” She asked.

'My father’s dying.’ The words are on the tip of her tongue, but she doesn't say it. She really doesn’t want to say it out loud. That will make all this to real.
"My stepmom told Spock something about what’s going on with my dad that she has yet to tell me about directly and I found out that Spock didn’t tell me. That’s why I’m not in the mood for apology pretzels." Nyota explained

"Did she purposely ask him not to tell you yet?" Garcia asked.

"I don’t know." Spock made it sound that way, but she really doesn’t know for sure

"You should probably talk to him or your stepmom before you get all self-righteous. He obviously feels bad about it. He did bring you chocolate covered pretzels, good ones at that." Nyota knows she’s right, but she’s still upset with Spock.

She doesn’t say anything else to Garcia and picks up her personal communicator. It’s filled with messages from Jim and Spock. Most of them from Spock, at least, are apologies because apparently De’bo’rah really did tell him not to say anything. She doesn’t reply to any of his messages because she’s still mad. But trashing the chocolate covered pretzels are a great improvement over the cell phone throwing at her former cubicle mate incident from last school year.

She does reply to Jim because first, she’s not as upset with him. He didn’t lie to her. He just held her in bed as she cried last night. Jim didn’t even try to get her to talk about what happened. She was really thankful for that. The other reason why she needed to check up on Jim was only half of his messages are coherent.

Me: Did you tell Spock to get me apology pretzels? Also, when did you last sleep? You last three emails were all about dim sum.

Captain sexy pants: Dim Sum Funeral. It’s a movie about dealing with parental death. Although maybe The Descendants would be better. Not the remake, the old version with George Clooney.

Me: I do love a good George Clooney movie. Although I am worried about your sleep deprivation.

Captain sexy pants: I’m fine, mostly okay. This is worse than that time I went four days without sleep because Scotty did something very Scotty. Newborns are worse.

Me: We are so getting a live-in nanny. Spock’s Vulcan royalty. We can completely afford it.
Captain sexy pants: Are you okay?

Me: That is a ridiculously loaded question. I have the world’s worst headache and I’m a little worried about my students’ lack of understanding of the Klingon language. Midterms are going to be a nightmare. Or rather the days before midterms are going to be a nightmare because I’m going to be dealing with panicky students for days beforehand wanting last-minute help.

Captain sexy pants: I meant about the situation with your father.

Me: I don’t want to talk about it. I just need to be upset. So, if you could tell our mutual boyfriend that I don’t need an apology present right now, that would be lovely.

Captain sexy pants: You can send your message to snookums yourself.

Captain sexy pants: It’s okay for you to be angry. Just don’t be numb.

Me: What does that mean?

Captain sexy pants: Gotta go, Peter is finger-painting the carpets again.

If anyone else did that, she would think it was an excuse, but she could completely see Peter finger painting on the carpets again, especially because she’s 99% sure De’bo’rah got him more paint. That’s the other reason to be unhappy. She doesn’t think about it instead. She starts reading her emails, not one from Cadet Simmons. If she doesn’t show up tomorrow, that means she’s going to have to send an email. The things you have to do when you’re Professor.

She does have several panicky emails about the upcoming midterm. She needs to finish writing it. She’s been distracted with Jamie coming early and Spock and the antics of Jim’s crazy brother. She decides to concentrate on that for the remainder of her office hours. Or at least she tried to. Halfway through, she realizes that you should probably never write a test when you have a nasty headache or you’re really mad at your boyfriend. You probably shouldn’t ask your students to translate phrases about idiot boyfriends and dead fathers.

In her afternoon Introduction to Vulcan-based languages class, she gets a text message asking her to
bring dinner and cleaning supplies. Apparently the painting on the carpet thing was not an excuse to end their conversation. Really, she’s surprised they haven’t replaced the white carpets yet. Spock’s house was not made for small children. They’re going to have to renovate after the five year mission if they want kids.

It’s weird. She’s mad at Spock and yet, she’s thinking house renovations post five-year mission. In the past she never thought that far ahead. No more than from anniversary to anniversary and now she’s thinking five years down the road and maybe that’s why she’s angry. Can you make it five years down the road when there are secrets? She’s not sure.

She doesn’t ride home with Spock. Her excuse is she has a meeting with one of her panicky students whose freaking out about midterms. This was not just an excuse to avoid Spock because Damien really was an absolute nervous wreck. Of course she’s the one who set that time to make sure she had a reason to not ride home with Spock.

The fact that he left her the car and takes public transit home makes her feel a little better. Good enough to pick up something other than a bucket of chicken for dinner. Her original plan was to make Spock fend for himself, but she does get him the squash casserole and the quinoa side dish, even though he’s the only person who will eat quinoa.

Dinner was an exhausting affair, mostly because she was avoiding everyone. She was avoiding De’bo’rah because she didn’t want to deal with even thinking about her father’s impending demise, nor did she want to talk about it. Really, this makes it easier on De’bo’rah because if Nyota doesn’t talk to her than she doesn’t have to lie to her anymore.

She did not want to talk to Spock because she was still upset and she just knows that he’s going to try to talk her into going to Pretoria to see her father one more time because of course Spock wanted one more time with Amanda and obviously assumes that she needs the same closure that Spock wishes he could have. Okay maybe she’s projecting there, but she still just isn’t ready for a Spock conversation.

She’s also avoiding her sister as well because she still wasn’t ready to tell her that their dad was dying. She’s not even sure how to do that. She’s had all day, and she still doesn’t know where to start so she eats as quickly as she can and does baby duty. She also tucked Jim in with Spock. (Jim was out the moment his head hit the pillow and she’s pretty sure Arlene was right behind him. What did Jamie put her caregivers through during the daytime?)

She can completely take care of one baby, or at least that’s what she thought when she volunteered to do this to let Jim get some sleep. Except she can’t because it’s 2 AM, Jamie won’t stop crying, and she’s supposed to be up in four hours to get ready for final midterm prep. Although in Jamie’s defense, she probably wouldn’t fall asleep anyway because she keeps dreaming about her father’s
funeral. That’s not good.

After 15 minutes of continuous screaming Nyota is seriously contemplating waking up Jim to deal with his... If Jim is on the birth certificate as the other parent, she should probably go with daughter not niece but she’s just going to let her boyfriend decide on those labels. She is too sleep deprived to think on those things which probably means it’s a good thing that she didn't see Spock walk into the room.

"I was informed that it’s my turn to take over baby duty.” Spock says as he takes Jamie from her arms.

"It’s fine.” Nyota said as she tried to take the baby back, but Spock wouldn’t let her. “I’m not sleeping anyway so there’s no point of two of us going without sleep.”

"Are you contemplating the nature of mortality?” Spock asked.

Do nightmares about a dying father count? She’s not sure.

“I am contemplating the nature of sleep deprivation. When does she start sleeping for the night?” Nyota yawns when she asked this question

"I will need to consult one of the baby books.” Spock says matter of fact. She can’t help but smirk.

“I knew you wouldn't be able to leave by yourself.” Jim walks into the room to grab her.

"Because I can stay. I’m not convinced sleep with a headache is possible.” Nyota argues, and Jim is not having it. He’s giving her his ‘I am the captain you will do what I say’ death glare.

“You’ll feel better in the morning.” Jim says, dragging her off to bed. “You need sleep and Spock is volunteering. I say we take full advantage of the fact he can be fresh as a daisy with two hours of sleep.”

Jim definitely had a point there, especially after he gave her a massage (with the happy ending) before putting her back to bed.
Unfortunately, she still woke up with a headache and she still had to go to class. (Although she was a little less tense because of her middle of the night orgasm. The morning drive to Starfleet Academy was better today. Maybe because she was less angry at Spock. Or maybe because Ivy was there. Probably because Ivy was there.

"Are you still unwell?" Spock asked from beside her halfway to the Academy.

"Are you sick? Or maybe you’re pregnant." Okay, what she said earlier about being glad Ivy was with them. She takes that back. Seriously, what is with her sister?

"I’m not pregnant." If her head did not hurt so much, she would have rolled her eyes when she replied.

"If you’re sexually active, it’s always a possibility or at least that’s what De’bo’rah said when she put me on the shot."

"Oh, thank God Jim is not in the car.” She mumbled under her breath.

"Look, we cannot have children without medical intervention and let’s leave it at that. Right now, I just have a bad headache that I’ve had for way too long. You speculating about something that will not happen anytime soon, is not helping." Nyota tells her sister from the front of the car.

"So that’s why you went to the fertility clinic last month?" Ivy asked.

"My head hurts too much for this conversation. You are up, Spock." She said as she put her head in her hands. She should’ve wore sunglasses.

"You should see Dr. McCoy." Spock told her.

"That’s not going to work. Nyota has always hated doctors which is why I’m kind of surprised you got her to go to the fertility clinic or that she’s friends with Dr. McCoy for that matter." Her sister snickered.
"That does explain why she keeps canceling her session with Dr. Weston." Spock commented. Of course, he knew that she kept canceling her appointment. Dr. Kim probably kept calling about it.

"I’m fine." Of course she says this with her eyes shut trying to avoid the sunlight because it’s probably making it worse. She’s pretty sure they’re both glaring at her.

"Okay I know you hate that word, but I really am." She argued.

"You have had a headache for the last two days."

"Three days, actually." Nyota corrected.

"Okay, we’re so dragging you off to the doctors.” Ivy said from behind.

"I am inclined to agree with your sister. It is practical that you stay in good health for her.” Spock argued

"What went unsaid was you’re going to be the only family she has left after your dad finally dies. She’s almost grateful for that wording because Ivy still doesn’t know."

"Fine, you both win. If I have any more symptoms, I will see, Dr. McCoy."

Xxxxxx

Now, originally, she was planning on not keeping this promise, but she was willing to say anything to get out of that car. Of course, that’s because she wasn’t expecting to show more symptoms, but then she threw up on her cubicle mate and Kevin Chan. She called Spock and Kevin called Jim and she ended up visiting Dr. McCoy.

"I really am fine." She argued as the doctor examined her in his office at Starfleet Medical.

"According to the toddler, you had a headache for three days and you threw up on a student." He said with tricorder still in hand.
"I threw up in a trashcan next to a student." Nyota argued back.

"Your sister thinks I should give you a pregnancy test." Nyota responded by baring her head in her hands.

"I think my sister just wants another playmate. Jamie’s enough." She mumbled through her fingers.

"Yes, you’re displaying new parent circles under your eyes so I say yes one child is enough. The pregnancy scan came up negative anyway." He told her.

"There was no point in doing one. I may be off the chemical birth control, but we’re still using barrier prophylactics." Because the radiation isn’t exactly out of Jim’s body completely yet. "In addition to both of my partners having extremely low sperm counts."

“I would be a bad physician if I didn’t run one. I’m looking into all logical explanations about why you threw up on a student. You are showing no evidence of virus or infection, so I decided to indulge your sister." The doctor explains.

"It was stress." Nyota argued.

“That I can see. Although it should be getting better now that Jim’s brother is locked up. Also it’s not like you’re the one taking the midterms. I’m going to be dealing with stressed-out freshmen for the next two weeks."

"Kevin Chan showed up in my office this morning to explain why his girlfriend has been missing from my class for the last two sessions and it sort of triggered a stress reaction." Nyota started to explain

"And whatever he said to you made you throw up?" Leonard asked.

"Liz’s father died last weekend.” Which is ironic considering the man survived the hell that is Tarsus to get taken out by cancer.

“Why would that make you sick?” Leonard asked.
"So Jim didn’t tell you?" She kind of assumed he would because Leonard was Jim’s BFF.

"What should Jim have told me?"

"The reason why De’bo’rah came up in addition to helping Ivy with her legal problems and her upcoming conference is to break the news that my dad’s dying." Nyota confessed.

"Fuck."

"I think I said something similar, at least in my head. I didn’t say that loud because I learned all of this by overhearing De’bo’rah telling Jim the truth and I didn’t want them to know I was there." Nyota explained.

"Definitely stressed. Although I’m arranging for you to see Dr. Weston tomorrow to look into a few other possibilities."

"Why do I need to see a mind healer?"

"Because those sex therapy mind melds that I know you’re doing may be the reason why you’re having headaches. Now that Jim told me about." From his tone, it’s obvious that Leonard wishes he wasn’t informed of it.

"We haven’t done that for about two weeks.” And they won’t be happening for a little while longer because she really doesn’t want Spock in her head right now. Again she is less mad than before, but she doesn’t understand what she’s feeling. So she doesn’t want anyone else to try.

"Than the absence could be the reason for the headache." Leonard hypothesized. “I can also give you the name of the few support groups for what you’re going through. I’ve dealt with a terminally ill parent before and it’s not easy.”

"I already have a therapist."

"Have you talked to your therapist about this or your boyfriends?"
"I don’t have an appointment till tomorrow. We’ve been cutting down to once a week because I’ve been doing better. I haven’t thrown a single object at Spock’s head for knowing about this for days without telling me."

“I guess I’ll squeeze you in with Dr. Weston before that appointment in the morning. I should be happy with the progress you’re making. Take it from somebody who has gone through this, you need to take support when it’s offered to you. I didn’t take that support. I turned to the bottle instead of my wife and now I don’t have a wife.” Leonard told her.

"It’s not like that. Besides, De’bo’rah has all of the end-of-life decision-making capabilities. That’s probably the only reason why she’s still married to him." Nyota explained.

"In addition, it would be a waste of money because the death do us part of the vows are coming sooner rather than later." Leonard quipped.

"I’m not ready to joke about it." Nyota crossed her arms over her chest.

"That’s understandable. Looking back on it, I think the waiting was worse than his actual death. I kept hoping for something to fix things and there wasn’t anything." She could hear a hint of sadness in his voice.

"I was going to ask you to look over his test results to see if there was something that they were missing, but maybe that’s wishful thinking on my part."

"I can, but this is when you need to prepare for the worst outcome."

"I know." She exhaled slowly. “There’s so many things unresolved. Ivy doesn’t even know and I’m not sure De’bo’rah will ever tell her. I don’t know if I even want to talk to him or see him again. I just… don’t know what to do.” Nyota felt like crying.

“First, you’re going to go to your appointments with Dr. Caraballo and Dr. Weston, even if I have to drive you there you myself tomorrow. Actually first thing you’re going to do is talk to your boyfriends about what’s going on. Don’t internalize it. Again, that was one of the contributing factors to my divorce.”
“I thought you ended up divorcing because she ended up sleeping with someone else?” Nyota asked.

“It was one of the contributing factors. Tell Ivy the truth. Don’t sugarcoat it and tell her as soon as possible. Make plans to be in Pretoria for Christmas. Figure out what you need to say to him. Prepare for goodbye.”

“I don’t know if I can. I’ve been mad at him so long, but I don’t even know if I should be because he’s sick. We are never going to have a chance to fix things between us. I’m never going to have a chance to ask if he really hates my current relationship so much or was it just his sickness? I’m never going to be able ask him why he did what he did to Ivy. I don’t know if I can forgive him. I am never going to be able to talk this out. He’s never going to get better.” By this point, she’s crying. It’s the first time she’s cried about it since the night with Jim and that was only a few tears. This was like the floodgates have opened up. She felt her friend put an arm around her.

“I’m not going to say it gets better because that would be empty platitudes and I don’t do that.”

“Because you really do have the world’s worst bedside manner?” She joked between tears.

"Possibly. You’re one of the strongest women I know and you’ll get through it. I know you will." She really hopes he’s right.

Leonard gives her the good headache medicine and it does help. At least it did until about 1:45 AM when Jamie decides that Jim’s attention is just not enough. She decided to tag Jim out because Arlene had the day shift and Jamie may have woken her up from a not so nice nightmare about burying her father. Maybe some time with the cute cuddly crying baby will help. Jamie’s kind of cute when she’s not screaming.

Although Nyota will acknowledge that all the screaming is making her seriously reconsider letting a team of fertility doctors get her pregnant sometime in the future. This is the point that De’bo’rah comes in.

"You’re watching Jamie tonight?” She asked slightly surprised.

"We are taking turns.” Nyota explains because she really doesn’t want to talk to your stepmom right now, especially not after her breakdown with Leonard that afternoon. She’s barely keeping it together right now.
"She likes singing." Deborah suggested.

"I know. I overheard Jim’s special lullaby a couple of nights ago. Jim has a pretty good voice.” And Winona was actually pretty good at putting a lullaby together.

"Oh.” Was all the woman said as she put the pieces together. “How much else did you overhear last night?"

"Everything you told Jim anyway. I haven’t asked Spock to give me details on what you told him." She doesn’t want to know anything else. What she knows is enough.

"I meant to tell you. It’s just hard to acknowledge that things went the way they did. There was nothing to stop it. Telling you would make it all real.” De’bor’ah acknowledged. “And maybe I just want to pretend that this isn’t happening for a little bit longer."

"But that’s not really an option. You need to tell Ivy. You’re her mom. You need to do this.”

"I know. After midterms, Jim suggested that I get Dr Caraballo to come and help.” That’s not actually a bad suggestion if it’s not just an excuse to put things off.

"Are you still going to be here after midterms?” Nyota asked." Don’t you need to get back to…” ‘Watch him die’, she couldn’t quite get that out.

"Things are stable. I also have a conference in San Francisco next week on sentient trafficking that I’m headlining so there’s no point in going back for just a few days. Of course I could get a hotel."

"It’s fine. We have the space."

“‘You do have wonderful foldout couches." Deborah joked.

At that moment baby Jamie decides that the milk she drank about 10 minutes earlier is not working and promptly throws up over Nyota. De’bo’rah takes Jamie away while Nyota changes and takes a
tiny shower. How can a baby that tiny have that much milk in their tummy? Thankfully, it didn’t get in her hair.

By the time she gets out of the shower, Jamie is asleep and so is De’bo’rah. She doesn’t have the heart to wake De’bo’rah up and move her to the convertible in Spock’s office. Instead she goes to her bedroom and crawls in next to Jim. The good drugs Leonard gave her kicks in and she gets a glorious four hours due to her doctor deciding she’s getting a sick day.

Of course, for her to get a sick day, said doctor drags her to Dr. Weston’s office. Jim and Spock are also there as reinforcements. Thankfully they stay in the lobby. Spock wanted to come in, but Dr. Weston firmly wanted to examine Nyota alone or rather as alone as possible with Nyota’s primary care doctor in the room.

Dr. Weston was a very sweet woman, at least by Vulcan standards. She even made jokes about this being no worse than a gynecological visit. That didn’t put Nyota’s mind at ease because she absolutely hated the speculum tricorder. Hundreds of years and they have yet to come up with something less invasive because apparently normal tricorders just doesn’t cut it.

After half an hour of chatting, including discussions about her recent headaches in excruciating detail, Dr. Weston decides to look inside.

“Your bond is perfectly healthy so I don’t think that is what’s causing your headaches. Dr McCoy successfully ruled out other possibilities, such as a tumor the day before. I believe that stress is most likely the cause. Although I’ve also been informed that you recently went off your chemical contraceptive and your hormone levels readjusting could also be a contributing factor.”

“What did you say?” Nyota asked, obviously mishearing her. There is no way that she was bonded to Spock. It wasn’t supposed to be possible, if what other Spock said was true. Of course, Sulu wasn’t with Ben in the other timeline either, so who knows.

“Your bond is perfectly healthy. Although I am surprised to see it, considering that you were initially referred to me because you believed you had trouble forming a bond, but were able to form one spontaneously.” Nyota didn’t hear much after this because she promptly lost her breakfast. She totally blames Jim for forcing her to eat the French toast.

To be continued.
Chapter Summary

To survive this world, make a plan and don’t be upset when life decides not to follow it. Chapter 2 of The Idiots Guide to Family Bonding, revised third edition.

Chapter Notes

Thank you to everyone who read or reviewed the last chapter. I’m glad that you all enjoyed. You are all lovely. Thank you. Sorry, this chapter was delayed by doing grown-up things such as taxes.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

"Are you okay? What did the doctor say? Did they figure out why you’re having headaches? Are you having an allergic reaction to our favorite touch telepath?" James asked Nyota the moment they stepped foot in the parking garage underneath Starfleet medical. Spock is surprised he waited this long. The entire time they were in the office, James was pacing anxiously across the small waiting room. He was quite upset that they were not allowed to meet with the doctor which resulted in him cursing the doctor several times.

“No, I’m not allergic to Spock. Yes, she could figure out what’s going on. I’m fine." Nyota said as she pressed her thumb against the car’s reader to unlock it. Her words would have been more convincing if she did not wince as she spoke.

“I don’t think that’s a medical opinion. You should probably sit in the back so you can lie down.” James suggested which is for the best because Spock prefers to drive when Nyota is unwell. Nyota agreed because she did crawl into the back of the car, leaving the driver seat for him.

“I am inclined to agree with James.” Spock said as he sat down in the driver’s seat.

“It’s nothing serious. The headaches are a residual effect of going off my birth-control. My hormones are just a little out of whack which is triggering the headaches.” And obviously, the stress regarding
her father is making the situation worse. Spock felt it imprudent to mention that. Spock also felt it most prudent not to mention the fact he was certain that Nyota was not being entirely honest. He just felt like there was something she wasn’t saying. Her language and tone seemed very guarded and he was picking up a sense of worry from her despite the lack of physical contact. “Also, the therapeutic mind melds that we have been doing were not a contributing factor, except for the fact that we haven’t been doing them lately. The melds were actually keeping the headaches away before.”

"That’s good. Mind meld sex is awesome." Nyota responded with a glare at James words. “I mean, I’m sorry that my desire to have children someday is giving you headaches in the present.

"Did she say anything else?" Spock asked once he started the car and began to make his way out of the parking garage.

"That I am not my counterpart, and therefore, my mind is capable of forming a psychic bond between us." Spock is relieved. He loves Nyota and he does want to be with her completely and is pleased with the possibility of that eventually occurring. He did not want to contemplate the other possibility.

James responds by turning around to kiss Nyota.

"See, we are not the same people that we are in the other timeline. Life is not predestined. We get to make all our own screw ups.” James said pulling away from her. Spock would like to join in, but he must keep his attentions focused on driving. It is advantageous that he is part Vulcan otherwise he would have missed a stop signal.

“Now, Sarek will at least get to plan one bonding ceremony since apparently we did the Vulcan shotgun wedding sort of thing.”

"Vulcan culture never had any weapon that resembled a Terran shotgun.” Spock said poignantly.

“Baby, it’s an expression. Apparently, this must be the dimension you two are crazy in, if you think I’m going to do any type of actual ceremony. Besides that may not be…” Nyota paused momentarily before saying something different than what she was obviously planning to say before. “If Jim didn’t have to do a formal ceremony than I’m not. Always said that we would be fair in this relationship.”

“Which is probably for the best because you know your father would probably invite every ambassador in the Federation.” James joked, Spock thinks.
“I doubt that, due to the fact we could never find a venue to house that many.” Spock remarked.

"Obviously, your sense of humor is a universal constant. Maybe we’re in a parallel dimension.” Jim suggested. “From what I’ve gleaned from a certain cryptic Vulcan that we know and love in one form anyway, Sam being an abusive ‘selling his child into slavery’ prick is something exclusive to this dimension.”

“I could quote experts from a recent article on quantum mechanics and interdimensional theory, but …”

“Only Jim finds that sexy.” Nyota interjected.

“I also believe your alternate dimension theory to be 83% more probable. For example, I have been informed that Ensign Chekov is four years older in this timeline" Spock said poignantly.

“Don’t forget the old guy did practically choke on his tongue when I told him about Sulu’s new husband and subsequent baby plans. That means that differences have to be triggered by something other than just the Kelvin incident." James states.

"Vulcans do not choke on their tongues, or otherwise.”

"I don’t know. I think I did a really excellent job of choking you on my cock the other night." James said as he placed his hands on Spock’s upper thigh.

"Not recently. Please keep your hands to yourself when I am driving."

"Babies are sleep depriving. We should take a baby moon. That way I can touch you both as inappropriately as I want to without having to take a break for diaper duty or getting walked in on by the stepmom.” James said as he reluctantly removed his hand.

"I think you usually do that before the babies are born. Also, we were in Iowa just a couple weeks ago. I also have a midterm to write.” Nyota responded.

“Iowa does not count as relaxing by any definition of the word. You’re also constantly throwing up
due to stress. A break would be good. Spock, please back me up with some statistics.” Considering
the look Spock saw in the rear-view mirror, he decided to stay silent.

"Due to a hormone imbalance.” That statement caused James to turn around to look at Nyota.

“Okay, some of it may be stress, but you have to admit that the last few months have been stressful.
Both of you have almost died multiple times since February.”

“I don’t know if it should count as multiple times when it was only two apiece.” James received
another glare for that statement. “We all need a vacation. Okay, maybe not now, but what about at
Christmas. We’ll have a couple of weeks off before you to have to go back to classes and Spock and
I get to start heavy prep for Enterprise’s relaunch. We have like 600 positions to fill. This will be so
much fun.” James lamented.

"I never have fun reading through thousands of resumes despite my eidetic memory." Spock
despised it. If he was willing to admit that he could feel any emotion that strongly.

"Nice to know you hate it too. By that point, Arlene should have the hang of mommy duty and
probably of a Vulcan boyfriend.” Or fiancé. Spock has already had to point out the finer nuances of
Vulcan dating etiquette. The two were already at the making out stage, even if Spock was the only
one aware that such constant hand stroking meant such a thing.

“You don’t have to commit now because Mister perfect Vulcan can probably put signs together in
like an hour when it would be good to just get away from everything. We could leave the planet or
maybe at least the country. There’s this Christmastime tradition of going back home. Nyota, since
I’m never going to go back to Iowa again and…


"I was trying to find a polite way to say that."

"I don’t think there is a polite way to say that." Nyota added, "Also, if you suggest going to Pretoria
for Christmas, Jamie is going to become your roommate permanently.”

"I was going to suggest Christmas in Melbourne or somewhere else in Australia. I had several
Christmases in Iowa. I would like to be somewhere where it’s not snowing.” Spock wondered if that
was a last-minute change in what he was intending to say.

"Sarah still has a house there, but you forget that by December you’re going to have another small child that you’re helping with, two actually. Don’t you have another doctor’s appointment that you have to be at in an hour?"

“I told Christine that I would be busy with you all day.” Jim explained.

"And how many not nice text messages have you received in the interim?” Nyota asked just as his phone buzzed again.

"I think that might be number 17." James said with a groan. “I still think she’s completely nuts and ridiculously needy.”

"Okay, you’re going. Aren’t you glad the condom never broke with her?” Nyota snickered.

“Yes. From now on, you will be the only pregnant woman I will spend quality time with at an OB/GYN with.” From rear view mirror, he could see Nyota smile at that.

“I better be.” She replied.

Xxx

"You don’t have to take the entire day off.” Nyota told him as she removed the crayon from their formally pristine white couch. After dropping James off for Admiral Pike’s appointment, they returned to their home. “I’m a big girl. I can take care of myself. Also, if I didn’t throw up on the drive here, I think I can be left unsupervised.”

"I only have office hours for the rest of the day. Considering my officemate’s tendency to blare loud music, I will be more productive here.” It was at that moment they heard Jamie crying from the nursery.

“Yes, I’m sure you will be more productive with the screaming, barely a week-old baby in the house. Just because Dr. Weston said that meld sex helped with the headaches does not mean I’m doing it with you with small children in the house during the middle of the day. Actually, you’re not getting near my head anytime soon.”
“I’m aware. I would still rather be here.” He placed a hand on her shoulder, underneath the fabric of her blouse. He decided it was time to apply a Vulcan technique for leaving pain. He’s not surprised that Nyota felt a combination of happy, fearful, nervous, worried and confused. These have been the emotions he has been feeling a lot from Nyota recently. Although Spock is pleased that happy is the primary emotion.

“You really dislike your office at Starfleet Academy, don’t you?” Nyota asked as she leaned into his touch.

“Yes. I even prefer the office that we had previously to the relocation.” Mostly because James was with him, but he did not feel the need to clarify.

“That bad? Okay, keep touching me because the headache is halfway gone.” Nyota moaned. “I’m not myself for being mad at you for the last couple of days because this is really helpful.”

”Despite Starfleet regulation 6.3 A which requires all Starfleet faculty to be in uniform always when on duty, including during office hours he constantly sits at his desk without his regulation top.” His statement caused Nyota to start laughing.

“Well, is he at least hot?” She asked with a snicker.

“Literally, yes, because he’s quite sweaty. Figuratively? No. He is actually quite hairy.” Spock remarked.

Nyota turned around to look at him, ”Which you would be too if I had not introduced you to the wonders of waxing. Is it possible that he has his shirt off all the time because you have the office on Vulcan comfortable? Jim and I are used to it and it gives us an excuse to always sleep naked before we had little kids around anyway.”

“That is irrelevant.” Nyota glares at him, although she may be doing that because he stopped his massage.

”Do you not want me here because you are still angry at me for not telling you about the information I gained from your mother regarding the true status of your father’s health?” Spock asked.

“I am going to take that crazy subject change as ‘yes, I do have the climate control on my office set
to tropical sauna’. Look, just put it back on normal temperatures and I’ll get you a self-warming sweater. Or three. It is October.” She tells him.

“You are still upset with me?”

“No, mostly because you give a good massage.” Nyota remarked.

“Do you wish for me to begin again?” Spock asked.

“Yes, but I think De’bo’rah is here too and I really don’t want her to walk in on anything a third time.”

“Agreed.” That situation was quite embarrassing.

“I’m sorry, I acted the way I did the last couple of days. I realize that sometimes you need to keep things to yourself for a little while. I did talk to De’bo’rah last night and we’re going to tell Ivy soon. After midterms.” Nyota explains. Spock already knew this because Jim decided it was appropriate for them both to listen in on the conversation via the baby monitor. Jim’s justification was if things got volatile, they could walk in and rescue Jamie if need be.

“Are you afraid to tell your sister the truth? Is that why you feel so stressed.” Spock asked, but he already knew the answer was yes. He could feel it, quite literally.

“Part of it.” Nyota answered.

“But there must be more. Your level of distress increased by 15% after your appointment with Dr. Weston this morning. Is there a component of your diagnosis that you have yet to disclose?”

“I’m not dying.” He believes that Nyota was trying to make a joke. Spock was not amused. Of course, he rarely is.

“I am relieved to hear that.”
“And yes, the doctor did find something else during the examination, but it’s not something bad. It’s just something I need to digest. I will tell you eventually. And yes, I realize that makes me really hypocritical considering how I’ve acted in the last few days.”

"I’m aware that humans are very hypocritical by nature." Spock remarked.

"We illogical humans thrive on hypocrisy." Nyota leaned over and kissed him. He felt an actual crackle of electricity between them.

"Are you actually displeased that we are able to bond? I know that you dislike the concept of marriage."

“I don’t hate the concept of marriage.” Spock raises an eyebrow at her in response.

"Okay, I did, but I was pissed at you for the last couple of days and at the same time I’m thinking that when you do get me pregnant, we are so hiring a night nurse. Jamie’s cute, but I think the sleep deprivation might be making the headaches worse." This statement was said with Jamie still crying in the background.

"What did the doctor say regarding this?"

"I kind of forgot to mention it. Although I’m sure Leonard knows we are helping Jim raise his daughter. He obviously accounted for it during initial diagnosis.”

"Technically, niece." Spock corrected.

"He’s on the birth certificate as the other parent. He has joint custody of Peter as well. I’m pretty sure that once Sam is stripped of his parental rights by the Federation, Jim will be listed as secondary parent."

"That’s highly probable."

“But here’s the thing, I don’t find this terrifying at all. I like it. Before, I didn’t date guys with kids. I was also a firm believer in using at least two types of birth control at all times. I mean there’s hardly
any chance at all of you getting me pregnant without intervention, but I still stayed on the birth control regardless. Now I am changing diapers, making bottles, making more plans to have children later, and that doesn’t scare me. I’m looking forward to it. Just the fact I’m making plans is an important thing.”

“How does this relate to your evolving opinions on marriage?”

“Marriage is temporary. Children are forever. If I’m okay with children and this new family we’ve created, then that means I’m ready to commit to us. Anything else is just a formalization of the truth.”

“The human marriage is temporary. Vulcan marriage is forever. However, I think I do understand the meaning of your words and I am satisfied with the fact that you are ready for a long-term commitment to this relationship.”

“Okay, I think that’s a Vulcan lie. Your father is divorced from your half-brother’s mom, no matter what type of phrasing you use. Also, I got a ton of literature today on how to break bonds and how to prevent them. It would’ve been nice if you mentioned that the equivalent of an ‘engagement’ bond can be created with repetitive mind melding without outside assistance.” He didn’t need to be touching her to realize there was a vast amount of sarcasm in her words. But why? Also, why was she given literature on how to break a Vulcan bond?

“Bonds should only be severed in the case of great neglect or spousal abuse or the other party chooses to join the priesthood which was the case with my father’s first spouse. Yes, spousal abuse exists or rather did exist on Vulcan despite how illogical it was.”

“I’m aware that Vulcans are nowhere near as logical as they claim to be. Although a warning would’ve been nice, unless you didn’t know that it was possible to form a bond through repetitive melding?”

“A bond created through repetitive melding without the aid of a mind healer can only occur if both parties want the bond to form, at least subconsciously. Such a bond could not happen if both parties did not want it to happen, which is why such bonding is quite rare on Vulcan… In Vulcan culture. The statistical probability is even lower in our case due to my biology. Which is why I did not bring up the possibility.”

“What are the exact numbers?” Nyota asked.
“Considering your recent diagnosis, 1 in 999,000. It was one and 193.2 million previously.”

“I've always felt that you were one in 1 million.” Nyota said cryptically.” Also, you don't need to correct yourself. I know what you mean."

"It is illogical to hold on to the past." It has been more than 18 months and he is still adjusting.

"It is. I've been holding on to a lot of baggage. I never saw a functional marriage growing up, which was part of the reason why the institution terrified me so much before.”

"We’ve discussed this previously in relation to your own mother’s upcoming nuptials." Usually it comes up whenever Nyota is asked to participate in some aspect of wedding planning.

"I know, but I have a lot to say. So, let me just start at the beginning. You weren’t entirely sure that your parents loved each other, but at least you knew that they didn’t hate each other. By the time I was 10, I don’t even think my parents could be in the same room with each other without it practically turning violent. At some point, I think I resented the ideal of love and happily married couples and fairytales because I didn’t have that. It was just a mess of screaming and bitterness.” Nyota explained and Spock grabbed her hand in support.

“This is understandable considering the environment in which you grew up.”

“It probably would’ve went better if I knew my two moms were in love with each other, especially because I kind of always wanted my moms to be together.” Nyota explains.

"I am aware."

"Then I met you and I fell in love with you, even though I knew that falling in love with your professor is not good. I didn’t care because somehow you made me believe that love is real. I needed that."

"My father told me that it was logical to marry my mother because he loved her." Spock strokes her fingers in a kiss.
"Because your father got it. Even then I think somewhere in my head, I thought things would end eventually even if I did love you because I never believed that love was permanent, I never knew that was possible. Due to my A+ in Vulcan cultural studies, I felt like no matter what you would leave me for a proper Vulcan wife someday and that was before I knew you would need a mental connection, just for your very survival. My fears got worse after you became a member of an endangered species. Survival of the species is more important than love."

“I never went into our relationship with the date of termination.” Spock wrapped an arm around Nyota.

“I don’t think anybody does, but things happen. No, you didn’t leave me for Mrs. Perfect Vulcan, but you fell in love with someone else and I fell in love with someone else.”

"Fortunately, it was the same individual.” Spock remarked.

"Thank the universe for Jim Kirk’s charms and grace. It wasn’t that we fell out of love with each other, maybe it was just that we had too much love for just each other. Thankfully we met this other person that filled up all the other empty spaces, spaces I didn’t even know were empty until we found him. I like where we are. I’m happy I’m in this place. Okay, I might get mad at you and him for doing stupid things like not putting up the toilet seat, but I can deal with 3 AM feedings and everything else."

“You are becoming an expert at mixing formula.” Spock quipped.

“Even then, I’m now willing to acknowledge that I was jealous that you and Jim have this connection that we don’t have and that I am not going to be able to share with Jim. Or maybe I was worried that I wouldn’t be able to have that and eventually both of you would leave. Because despite everything with my dad, I’m happy right now and I don’t want to lose that."

“As I stated earlier, I have no specific end date in mind for terminating our relationship unless it involves the date of one of our deaths and I prefer not to consider that possibility.” Spock explained.

“Again, you’re now aware of how screwed up my childhood was. Love is not permanent, at least that’s what my parent’s divorce taught me. Of course, I’m going to be terrified of everything falling apart especially when I was pretty much told by your counterpart that a bonding was never going to happen and was the reason why we fell apart in another dimension."
"They are not us."

"No, they’re not and we are not my parents. The future is unwritten, but I want it with you and Jim and this family that we’ve created. I’m even okay with the fact that someday you’re going to be able to know how I’m feeling without a word.” Nyota tightens her fingers around his as she speaks. He feels her contentment and wonders if he should inform her of that.

“We can have such a bond, if that is something you desire.” Spock tells her, because that is something he wants with her.

"I know you want that. More than I did a couple of hours ago.” Maybe he does not need to inform her of the fact that he can feel trace amounts of her emotions.

"I do. I do not want to imagine an existence without you or James.” Such a reality is something he never wants to contemplate.

"I do want a bonding, at least on a subconscious level. That’s what you said earlier, that both parties need to want it for a bond to form through continuous melding.”

At that point, Spock remembered his earlier description of the process for a meld bond to form and the fact that he can feel Nyota’s emotions and has been for weeks. It is possible that his earlier calculation of the probability of a bond forming naturally via repetitive melding was incorrect. Did such a bond already form between them? Was Nyota informed of this possibility during her session this morning? Was this what she was unable to tell him earlier?

Unfortunately, Spock did not get to voice that question because that is when Nyota’s sister arrived.

"You’re supposed to be in class?” Nyota said turning to her sister as she walked through the front door. Spock is quite thankful he ended his massage earlier, otherwise he would need a throw pillow to strategically place over his genitalia.

“We are doing review sheets and I really don’t want to spend any more time around my classmates. Right before midterms is not the time for a kegger.” Ivy said taking the seat next to Nyota. “People get more mature once there in space, right?”

"Usually. Jim’s getting better.” Nyota told her sister. Spock chose not to mention the incident
involving three members of the engineering staff, an unofficial distillery in engineering that Spock was not supposed to know about, and an explosion. Thankfully, there were no fatalities, just vast amounts of property damage.

"Jim has kids now." Ivy pointed out. "Kids are like maturity in a bottle for most people. Not dad, but most normal people." Nyota’s eyes focused on the carpet when her father was mentioned.

"True. I hope that means that Sulu will stop having fencing matches with various crew members in the hallways." That was another incident report that Spock does not want to remember.

"I thought you said it got better. Operations officers ‘practicing’ for their practical exams in the hallway is the other reason why I’m fleeing to your house. That sign that you got me for my door is gone."

"I promise it will get better after the freshman purge. Although, just in case, I’ll have my mom or Jim make some calls and get you moved to one of the other class dorms next semester."

“Yes, to the upperclassman rooms, and thank God the idiots will be gone soon.” Ivy said happily.

“There is no actual purge, just 20% of incoming Starfleet freshman did not return for their second year due to insufficient academic performance." Spock explains before mentally deciding to help with securing a new dorm room for Ivy.

"That’s so comforting.” Spock believes Ivy’s words were sarcastic. “How was your doctor’s appointment? Any playmates in my future?""

"The only nieces and nephews you’re getting anytime soon, are the ones that Jim adopts."

"Admiral Pike looks ready to pop so I’ll have new playmates soon."

"I didn’t play with you enough as a child?" Nyota asked slightly concerned.

"Because we weren’t allowed to play. Remember when she who will not be named burned all my Barbie dolls?" This explains why Ivy has a box of said dolls that she keeps in their apartment. She
said that they’re to play with Peter, but Spock now believes otherwise. Nyota’s response was to hug her.

"You’re not dying, are you?" Ivy asked pulling out of the hug.

"My body is just having a weird reaction to going off birth control.” Ivy smirked at that. “No, that does not mean you’re going to get a new playmate soon. That just means there’s no point of being on birth control when I’m in a monogamous relationship with two people that cannot get me pregnant without medical intervention."

"Well, it’s going to take at least nine months."

"Also, this is not making my headache any better. I’m going to our bedroom to write exams. You deal with her." Nyota said as she leaned over to kiss Spock gently on the lips before getting up.

‘I don’t want to be alone around her right now because I may tell her about dad and I’m not ready too.’

Spock heard that thought very clearly. Therefore, he was 99% certain that a mental bond has formed between Nyota and himself.

“Moments like these make me almost wish I was an only child.” Nyota said departing.

"She would absolutely be hated, but you would know for sure.” Ivy remarked as she pulled out her school PADD out of her backpack.

“No, I would not because I am not an only child. My father had another son from a previous relationship prior to my conception. He is no longer among the living.”

“I’m sorry.” Ivy told him sincerely. “I would hug you, but I think my sister, future brother-in-law and the babies are the only ones allowed to do that.”

“Your condolences are appreciated, but not necessary. We were never close. He tried to smother me as a child.” In addition to several other incidents that Spock does not desire to discuss.
“I guess I got lucky regarding my half siblings. They like me, even the half-brothers, despite the fact our mutual egg donor is extra crazy and psychotic. Remind me never to play ‘whose family is more fucked up’ with you and Jim because I could lose. You’ve both had to deal with homicidal siblings, parental death, and a strained relationship with your living parent. It’s like my sister is dating my future support group members.”

"Technically my relationship with Sarek was strained before my mother’s death. It actually improved after we lost her." Spock tells her, not addressing her other comments.

"Was losing your mom hard?" Ivy asked.

"Yes, especially due to the circumstance." He did not just lose Amanda, he almost lost everything associated with her that was not in the San Francisco property.

"I guess just having your parent die due to some random illness is easier to handle than having them die due to a planet destroying terrorist attack." Ivy tried to say it as a joke, but Spock knew better.

"I tried to rescue her. Her hand slipped out of mine, just as we were beamed out moments before disintegration." Spock confessed.

“That had to suck. I’ve always known that my father is not the best person.” Ivy confessed in turn. “I knew about the other girlfriends, even the ones that he was seeing when he was technically married to my egg donor. I tried hard to make sure it didn’t happen this time around, because De’bor’ah was better than that. She deserved better than that. Do you know that I kept his office loaded with condoms? Half the school thought that I was a slut because they would see me pick up various prophylactics at the chemist.”

"My mother once told me that I am not responsible for the stupidity of others." Spock felt it was best to share this with Ivy.

"And when did she impart this piece of advice to you?"

"When somebody referred to her as a human whore.” The first time it happened was when Spock was just a small child.
“So, Vulcan children are assholes too?”

"Yes."

“I think your mom was really wise. Those are definitely words to live by."

"And in this case quite applicable, your father choosing to engage in risky behavior led to the current situation. He is responsible for the consequences, not you."

"And yet they still affect me. Nyota doesn’t get it. Their relationship has always been bad. But for me, he was the good parent. The one who got me away from she who will not be named and now I’m going to be an orphan. At least you still have your dad. As bad as your relationship was before, it was still better than what I had with my biological mother. At least I think so. He never tried to kill you. Did he?"

"No." Spock answered nonplussed.

"That’s good."

“You still have your stepmother who is quite fond of you. She came all the way to San Francisco to support you in your time of need.” Spock explains.

"And how will she feel when she finds out that I knew? That I’ve always known what was going on and I didn’t tell her because I was selfish and because I needed her.” Ivy confessed. However, at that moment Spock looked up at the doorway to see De’bor’ah standing there with baby monitor in hand. James chose to get the vintage 21st-century ones (with additional PADD streaming) because he wanted something that would not be swallowed by a small child.

“I knew the entire time that he was doing that to me, but I was selfish because I wanted you.” Deborah confessed as she walked into the room. Before Ivy could react to her stepmother’s words, she was enveloped in a hug.

"Before the wedding, I caught him was someone else, but then I thought of you and the fact you would be all alone and I went through with the wedding. He was never going to take the ‘forsake all others” part of our marriage vows seriously and I knew that going in. I want you. I want your sister. I wanted to be part of this family and if that meant looking the other way when your father had a
dalliance, I did. I did it because you needed me more than he did." At this point, De’bo’rah was crying.

"We have a listening in problem in this family." Ivy was also crying at this point in the conversation.

"We really do. How did you find out?" De’bo’rah asked.

"I overheard your conversation last night." Ivy confessed. “Jim has baby monitors and nanny cams all over the place.”

At this point, Spock felt it best to leave the two women and join Nyota in their bedroom.

“Your sister is aware that your father is dying.” Spock said directly when he entered the room.

“Sweetie, sometimes you need to lead into things. Although I already knew.” She said holding her PADD, which was streaming the nanny cam that was in the living room. Again, he is not surprised.

“Is it wrong that I’m kind of glad she overheard? I really had no idea what to say and I think that kind of made me frustrated with you yes. Like if you would have just told us both at the same time, then I wouldn’t have to deal with it.” Nyota confessed.

“No.” Spock said as he lay down on the bed next to Nyota and placed an arm around her. He instantly felt her contentment at the touch with sharp clarity.

“When were you going to inform me that that we managed to form a bond while melding?” Spock asked. He was now certain that was the case.

“When I was 100% sure that I did not want to get the bond dissolved before you even realized it was there. However, I decided to keep it after I left you to have your little chat with Ivy.” Spock responded by kissing her.

“I am pleased by your choice. Although, if you preferred not to have a bond, I would respect your choice. I gave James the same option.” Spock tells her.
“I know and I choose to be Vulcan married to you and possibly eventually legally married to Jim. We’ll have to figure out the logistics for that eventually. Wait, how did you not realize it was there?”

“I’ve been shielding at higher levels than normal lately due to James’ distress over his brother’s recent actions. James is quite angry.” Most of the time. James is full of anger. He is better when he’s with Jamie, but still the anger is beneath the surface. This has intensified recently with the revelations about Nyota’s father. “I was also not expecting it. The statistical probability of this occurring was quite low.”

“Yes, slightly less than one in 1 million. How mad will your dad be that he’s not going to get to plan the perfect diplomatic bonding ceremony?” Not very much, because I believe he will be planning his own wedding soon. Much to my personal discomfort.

“If Vulcans did become disappointed, I believe his disappointment would be alleviated by the fact that he will be planning a wedding for his assistant soon.”

“Probably. I think I saw a basket full of traditional Vulcan courtship cookies in the kitchen.” Nyota said just as her communicator went off.

Hey Jim, you’re on speaker. Please tell me I don’t have to tell you off after you tried to punch out Christine?” Nyota says in greeting.

“So, it turns out that Nhi is dilated 4 cm.” Jim tells them both. Spock is surprised because she has another mouth. “Can you please bring my coaching bag to the hospital?”

To be continued.

Chapter End Notes

Okay I need more baby names for the Pike twins who will be arriving very soon. One of the girls will have the middle name Christopher because in the 23rd century, every
name is unisex or at least that’s my hope. I’m leaning for both girls having a traditionally male middle name, so keep that in mind when you make suggestions.
Thank you to everybody who read or reviewed the last chapter. You’re all fabulous. Thank you to everybody who gave me baby names. They were lovely. Some will be used. You’ll see. So, it turns out that this is our preliminary chapter. I’m awful at figuring out where my stories are going to end. I usually don’t know until I am writing the last chapter. The final chapter is done and I’m just proofreading right now. Your reviews can make me proofread faster.

You may not think love is worth all the pain that you may go through, but love is always worth it. Chapter 20 of The Idiot’s Guide to Family Bonding, revised third edition

You would think in comparison to Arlene’s trauma induced delivery that Nhi’s delivery would almost be normal, but no. The babies Pike were impatient little brats who were ready to roll early and quickly.

Nhi didn’t even realize she was in labor. Although, in her defense, it is kind of hard to know that her lower back pain recently was contractions due to old Starfleet injuries. That’s why she and everyone else in the room were shocked when the OB/GYN informed them that they needed to go to the hospital because she was already almost 4 cm dilated and therefore in the active labor stage.

This was cemented by the fact her amniotic sac finally decided to rupture on the way to the medical facility. Jim was kind of sad that it did not gush like in all the movies because he would’ve loved for all the amniotic fluid to get on Christine’s shoes. She was being a bigger bitch than usual, which is quite an accomplishment considering it’s only recently that he stopped having a restraining order against her. (Because he really didn’t need to hear her speculation about when he will be dumped by either his boyfriend or girlfriend right now. Now that they were aware that Nyota could bond with Spock, he was already panicking about that possibility all on his own.)

Jim barely had time to call his boyfriend and girlfriend to bring his go bag to the hospital. Arlene’s labor was long, grueling, and exhausting. Nhi’s labor was appearing to be grueling and exhausting, but it probably wasn’t going to be long because she was already at 6.5 cm and they’ve only been at the hospital for an hour. His go bag hasn’t even arrived yet. Anything from the ‘keep mommy calm box of things’ would be really helpful right now. Christine and he really suck at trying to make small talk with each other to distract Nhi.
Okay, it was so bad he was about 30 seconds from strangling Christine for reminding Jim so bluntly that Jim was responsible for Chris not being there. Jim reminds himself that he can’t do that because Nhi needs a coach. It was his fault that Chris wasn’t here to hold his wife’s hand so Jim is going to do it for him even though he really wanted to punch out Christine. After 20 minutes of snide comments, Jim had enough.

“Please be quiet or at least speak about something halfway pleasant to talk about. The book says that we are supposed to be calming and keeping your aunt relaxed.” Jim said as he started to massage Nhi’s back. “Your current subject,” a.k.a. your uncle who was murdered by an augmented nut job, “Is not helpful. Both of us need to be here for your aunt so please behave like the Starfleet officer you’re supposed to be.” Grow the Fuck up.

“No, we don’t both need to be here. You can leave and I can do this on my own. I’m a nurse as well as working on my MD.” Christine shot back. They’ve been having a variation of this argument for the last six months. You would think she would be done with fighting him by now.

“You are a Starfleet nurse not a pediatric nurse. There is a difference. I’ve coached somebody through childbirth before. 90% of what they told us in class was absolute bullshit.” Jim responded.

“That’s so comforting to know.” Nhi said sarcastically from the bed.

“Just because you feel guilty for getting Uncle Chris killed doesn’t mean you should be here. Just go back to your little girlfriend and boyfriend before they decide to leave your ass because they finally realize you are an asshole and stop touching my aunt.” Christine snapped back.

He doesn’t argue the Chris point because he does blame himself already. It’s best not to say anything else since his first attempt did nothing. (Jim is also not going to touch the boyfriend/girlfriend remarks because part of him is scared about that too). He remembers from Arlene’s delivery that Nhi would need him to focus on her and to keep her as comfortable as possible. She needed them to support her. It was about the babies, not Christine, so he was just going to keep massaging Nhi.

Serious, next time he goes through this, it’s going to be Nyota on the bed and Spock as his co-coach. Spock was his co-coach last time, which was nice because the Vulcan didn’t even need a watch to time contractions. God, Jim loves that Vulcan.

"Get some ice chips, Chrissy." Nhi hissed. Jim was 99% sure another contraction was starting. The equipment on the side agreed.
“Oh, come on you know it’s true. If he didn’t fuck up and violate the Prime Directive then you and Chris would’ve been out having dinner delivering the good news when Starfleet was attacked. Uncle Chris should be the one with you not him. I told you before, he’s not family so you don’t need him. I can do this by myself.”

Unless you didn’t take your medication and I’m starting to wonder if you didn’t, because you’ve been acting like this all day. Jim thought to himself.

“Jim is like family. Look, I know you’re not happy that your ex is here, but Jim is my friend and I want him as my coach as much as you.”

“Or as a replacement husband,” Christine mumbled under her breath, but Jim heard her very clearly.

"Are you aware that I have a boyfriend and girlfriend that I love dearly?” Jim asked flippantly. “You must be considering what you said a few moments ago.” Could she just stick to the baby book?

"I’m sure you can deal with a fourth because obviously you are already screwing your brother’s ex-girlfriend." Seriously, what is wrong with her?

“Okay you have problems. I kind of see Nhi as the good mother figure. So, put your claws away.” Jim kind of wanted to shiver.

"How nice you got her husband killed." 

“I am right here and this is not part of my birthing plan.” Nhi yelled. “Stop with that shit. Yes, I wish Chris was here, but I don’t have time to play the blame game. Chances are Chris would have been called in any way being an earthbound member of the Admiralty. Can we just calm down into the breathing exercises? I feel like I really need to do the breathing exercises”

“Breathing exercises are good. Also try to find your calm place.” Which is obviously not in this room.

"You don’t know that." Christine argued.
"And neither do you Chrissy. I blame two people for what happened to Chris. One is now in stasis and the other had his neck snapped by the one in stasis." It was a head crush, but Jim didn’t want to put that in the report. He is still trying to repress what he saw. There are reasons why he sees a therapist twice a week and not all are related to his crazy family. “Neither of those individuals is in this room right now. I don’t give a fuck about why you are so mad, but I am going to be pushing two tiny beings through my cervix very soon and I don’t need the stress."

"But he…” Christine started to say, but Nhi placed her hand against Christine’s lips.

"Is dating your ex-boyfriend. Really I cannot… fuck… deal with this… shit!” Jim is going to count that as another contraction. They are now at three minutes and three seconds apart.

"Ice chips now, Chrissy." Nhi yelled out.

"Fine." Christine said as she left.

"You know I could’ve left. You didn’t have to send her on a wild goose chase for ice." Especially because the candy striper droid would have brought some if they asked.

"I’d rather you be here.” Nhi grabbed his hand. “I love my niece, but I’m pretty sure she forgot to take her hypo or just forgot how to act civilly around people you kind of hate. Dammit. I should’ve told her to do that instead to get ice chips."

"You can do that when she gets back.” Jim started to rub circles on her back again. “Let’s just focus on your peaceful place. Play, Mother’s Day mix number one.” He ordered. A computer in the room subsequently began to play Dear Mama. The original version by Tupac, not one of the countless remakes.

“Well at least you went with hip-hop songs about moms. I was expecting instrumental Beastie Boys.”

“I considered it.”

“Just help me breathe and forget about Christine. I think she’s just extra upset because this is reminding her way too much of her own childhood and she is acting out.”
“How is the situation reminding her of her childhood?”

“Her biological dad died before she was born during a mission to find the Kelvin attackers.” And that totally explains why she is so different than the person other Spock described.

“This completely explains why she hates me. Although it doesn’t quite explain why she slept with me in the first place unless it was a kind of revenge thing.”

"Ask me these questions when I don’t feel like my entire body is being attacked by Klingons every three minutes." The three minutes was yelled out. *Yep, right on time.* Jim thought to himself as he went back to helping Nhi.

"Why did I want to have children?" She asked once the contraction was over, sweat forming on her brow.

"Because you were married to the perfect guy and you thought he would be here to hold as you push out these watermelons." *And it’s my fault he’s not here.* “Instead, you’re stuck with me. I’m sure he would’ve chosen a much more appropriate music list.”

“I’m sure he would be running around panicking.”

“I didn’t see him panic when tortured by Romulans. I think he would be okay with the baby, but we will never know,” *because of my screw-up.*

“Don’t listen to Christine, especially when she didn’t have her hypo.” Apparently being in active labor gives you clairvoyant abilities. “Don’t feel guilty. We are career Starfleet. We take our oath at graduation. We know we may not be coming back home.” Which is why the two watermelons already have those documents regarding what will happen to them in the event of their mom’s possible death. “Our mission is to explore and protect. As you learned recently, protection is the more important of the two. Chris died in service of protecting the Federation and the values that we hold at our core. That’s all you can ask for.” Nhi said sadly.

Jim doesn’t say anything about the senselessness of it all as he wiped the sweat from Nhi’s brow. If Marcus hadn’t done what he did, they wouldn’t be bringing two fatherless girls into the world right now.
"I get that. I’m not only here because of some guilt complex. I’m also here as part of my duties to the
Starfleet orphans club. I’m the founding member after all." He joked, but not really. Jim feels like he
has a responsibility to make sure others do not have his childhood.

"I am not Winona." She is reading his mind.

"You didn’t drink yourself into a deep depression, so there’s that." Jim joked.

"Well I didn’t want to risk fetal alcohol syndrome, but I’m not planning to start afterwards either." Nhi quipped back.

"That’s good."

"I miss my husband. I’m not going to lie and say that I don’t. But I love my children too. And I just
can’t lose myself in grief."

"Winona couldn’t do that."

"And that’s not your fault."

"Tell that to five-year-old me, who had to deal with Frank and the other bastard stepfather."

"And being around for Jamie and the watermelons is your attempt to prevent that?" She asked.

"I think being around makes a difference. Sam probably would not have turned out to be such a dick
if there were positive role models around, but there was really no one. I really think that Winona
would’ve avoided her Frank stupidity if she had more of a support system. I think she only ended up
remarrying because she needed help and there was no one else there."

"I’m going to give you that one." Nhi said, breathing hard.
"I think I only avoided turning out that way because of Sunday dinners at your house when you two were planet side, while at the Academy."

"Well it kept you out of most trouble."

"I’ve heard the ‘well-adjusted’ version of me that didn’t lose his dad at two minutes old also pulled the Kobayashi Maru stunt.” He used finger quotes when he said well-adjusted because he knew his other self went through Tarsus and nobody who survived that can be considered well-adjusted.

"Nice to know there are some constants in the multi-verse." Nhi said half smiling.

"You know, you and Chris were the first functional relationship I had experienced. Without your influence, I don’t think I would be with Spock and Nyota right now."

"I think you would’ve got there eventually."

"Preferably without the near dying.

"They both love you."

"Enough to deal with all my baggage and I have a lot of baggage."

"In good times and bad, in sickness and health until death does us part. Of course, I wasn’t expecting that part so soon."

"And if you knew?"

"I would have still said the vows anyway. Without him, it would’ve been worse. Never having our children would have been worse. And God, this hurts." She screamed.

"You are the one who wanted a drug-free birthing plan." Jim mumbled under his breath as he helped her during the next contraction.
"Well obviously I was stupid." She huffed out. "Oh, and look at the doctors here to give me drugs."

"I need to look first. The sensors have just informed me that your contractions have hit two minutes and 59 seconds."

"Transition stage here we come."

"We’ll see." The doctor replied as she looked under the strategically placed sheet.

At 8 cm, Nhi was in transition and things were getting busy. He was so busy helping Nhi, he didn’t realize Christine never showed back up. Okay, his hand was re-broken and Nhi threatened at least twice to find an omnipotent being that could bring Chris back from the dead, just so she could kill “the bastard” herself for putting her in this situation in the first place. It was probably best Christine never came back. If he wasn’t already in pain, maybe he would have asked why, but when baby one came out screaming into the world, he forgot everything else. Babies tend to do that to you.

Xxxx

Maybe because of Nyota’s spectacularly awful childhood, she never pictured herself being a mom or married, but things were different now and she wanted her version of those things. Part of the reason for that was Jim looked adorable holding small babies. He had sent her a photo entitled Father Figure to Three Girls. She likes to think that it’s karma for the Kitty Cat Twins threesome and similar things that Jim has done over the years to the female species.

It was 7:35 PM when Jim came out holding the littlest Pike twins. This was a lot earlier than she expected after Arlene’s long grueling labor. She was expecting at least two or three AM, which is why she brought her own go bag with a change of clothes and toiletries.

"They are adorable." Nyota said grabbing the little girl in the purple onesie. She was starting to like the new baby smell. Although, she would never tell Ivy that because she’s going to try to talk Nyota into having one before the five-year plan.

"Probably because this is the first time they’ve been quiet since leaving club uterus." Jim joked. "We came out here to visit aunt Nyota to give mommy a little quiet and see if we can find Cousin Christine." Nyota tried very hard to keep a straight face at mention of Christine’s name. They never liked each other and that was before Leonard had to use a dermal regenerator to get rid of the bruising and cuts an hour ago.
They did arrive only an hour after Jim called. They would have got there sooner, but she was grabbed into a group hug with her stepmom and sister. Nyota may have also agreed to Christmas in Pretoria. At least they didn’t find out about her accidental Vulcan marriage to her long-term boyfriend. Otherwise they would still be at the house and in the middle of an interrogation or possibly a congratulatory celebration. Her family was weird. Of course, if they were at the house, Spock wouldn’t be banned from this medical facility.

"Where is Spock? Is he getting dinner? I could really go for a sandwich." Jim asked, and Nyota managed to get Jim a granola bar out of her go bag despite the baby in her arms. She was hoping to distract him with food.

“Ivy is bringing dinner at 8 PM, but the granola bar should hold you over for a little bit. So, who am I holding?” Nyota asked.

“At a respectable 2.5 kg and 28 cm and a healthy set of lungs for being a little early, you are holding Ariel Christopher Pike.” Nyota raised an eyebrow at the middle name.

"She already has a cousin Christine and I don’t think Nhi wants to accidentally name her daughter after her niece who abandoned her in the middle of labor.” Especially one that makes nasty comments about her boyfriend and then gets in a fight with her other boyfriend. Also, someone that throws a sucker punch. Yes, best not to tell Jim what happened when Christine went out for ice.

"And who are you holding all dressed in pink?" Nyota asked, not just to distract. She did want to know the other baby’s name.

"Kana James," Jim said proudly.

"You have another namesake?"

"Yes, but thankfully this time it’s a middle name and nobody uses their middle name."

"Sure thing, Tiberius." Nyota joked.

"Hey, it could’ve been worse. I could have ended up with something like Whitelaw." Jim remarked.
"True." She kissed him on the mouth. They were alone so it would be okay.

"Although I’m sure Christine is going to be pissed whenever she gets back.” Please Jim, just focus on the babies and don’t ask questions. “Okay, you just twitched again.”

"I did not twitch." She shot back.

"Every time I mention Christine or Spock for that matter. Your eye does this thing. It’s the same thing you do when you’re pissed at the underlings."

_Dammit. He really does know her way too well._

“The reason why Christine never came back and Spock is not here is because they’re both banned from the premises.” Nyota finally tells him.

“What happened? He nerve-pinched her, didn’t he?” Jim asked as he sat down in the chair next to her, still supporting the head of baby KJ.”

“Yes, actually.”

“This is going to be an interesting story. What did she do that managed to piss off our Vulcan enough to get rendered unconscious?”

“We got here only like an hour after you called and the nursing staff remembered us so they let us walk on back. That was probably a mistake. I’m sure you’re aware that Vulcan hearing is excellent.” Nyota told him.

“He heard Christine being a bitch to me?” Jim asked.

"Yep.” Nyota confirmed.
"And he reacted in great Spock fashion by telling her to go get fucked Vulcan style?"

"His exact words were ‘just because you are unhappy with your inability to keep a partner does not mean you must project your feelings of rejection on someone else, someone who rejected you solely due to your own failings.’"

“Yes, that is definitely a Vulcan fuck you. Please tell me there’s video footage?”

“Due to the fact security arrived promptly when Christine decided to punch Spock, I would say yes.” Nyota informed, Jim.

“She tried to punch a Vulcan? What is wrong with her?” Jim asked.

“Yes, but my face got in the way.” She was trying to prevent an altercation. “That’s when the nerve pinch was employed.” Jim responded with a sigh.

"So, are we going to have to bail a certain Vulcan out of jail?"

"He was just escorted off the premises, along with your co-coach."

"Which sucks because I just had my hand broken again." He now knows it’s a brace there. Bone regeneration takes a little longer each time.

"How does that keep happening?"

"I have no idea. Great, at the rate we’re going, you’re going to have to give birth at home because we’re going to be banned from every maternity Center in the greater San Francisco area."

"That is a long way off." And she likes to think that they’ll end up settling someplace that’s not San Francisco. She’s not sure where they would end up but somewhere else.

"Right, we may not make it that long."
"Oh, we will make it. I just mean, I’m not sure if we’ll be here. You know, Spock is going to talk us into at least a year or two on the colony at some point."

“Probably. Although, you don’t know if I’ll be there too. You’re able to bond with Spock if that’s what you want now. You don’t need me.” Okay, Jim has ridiculously low self-esteem and Christine being Christine probably did not help.

"I’m always going to need you.” She leaned over to kiss Jim again. “Also, your kind of already bonded to Spock so your kind of part of the package deal which is great because I love a good two-for-one sale."

"As evident by your shoe closet." Jim joked. “Girls, you’re going to love shopping with your auntie Nyota. She’s going to get you all the cutest stuff.”

“No, Uncle Jim is going to buy them the cutest stuff. Oh, by the way Spock and I are already kind of bonded.”

“What?”

“Did you know that it’s possible to bond without a mind healer? If you keep melding repeatedly and subconsciously want to be with the other person for all eternity, it kind of just happens."

"That explains the extremely weird vibe I got from you on the car ride this morning." Jim remarked.

"Vulcans don’t divorce. So, we are here together and we are going to be here for a while, even if Spock keeps doing stuff that requires the lawyers.”

"Spock’s father is actually a divorcee. Also, this is greatly surprising because I was expecting me to be that person that requires lawyers due to violent outbursts." I’m not sure if we’ll be here. You know, Spock is going to talk us into at least a year or two on the colony at some point."

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“I don’t think Spock plans to join the priesthood anytime soon, so I think we’re good." Nyota quipped.

"I think he likes sex too much."
"Extremely true. I keep having this hammered to me by you and Spock, but we are not our parents, you’re not going to leave me like my dad left everybody and I don’t think I’m going to end up at a nice mental health facility in the California desert."

“I concede your point. So, you’re bonded to Spock and I’m bonded to Spock, but we could just end up as a type of sibling spouses that can’t stand each other.”

"Were never going to be like that. I love you." She kissed him.

"Even when I’m covered with babies." That’s when she noticed the wet spot on his scrubs.

"Especially when you’re covered with babies. If it would make you feel better, we can always go down to City Hall and get a marriage license."

"Is this your idea of proposing?" Jim asked slightly surprised.

"Possibly. I think it is as long as there’s no dress or wedding cake picking involved."

“Okay, so you’re not against marriage, just weddings.

“I’m just against giant shows that mean nothing. While labor was starting to go too quickly for you, I found out De’bor’ah went through with the wedding even though she already knew dad was fucking around on her behind her back.”

“Why?” Jim asked.

“Because she wanted me and Ivy and she decided to put up with dad to get the kids that she wanted.”

“Well, I think you’re worth putting up with a lot. Just to put your mind at ease, the only other person I will be sleeping with is Spock and usually that is in front of you.”
"Hand job shower yesterday." She said pointedly.

"I thought you were sleeping."

"You’re very loud." She remarked just as baby Ariel Christopher started crying.

"And so are you, little girl." Jim remarked just as his namesake also started screaming.

"I think it’s time for the babies to go back."

"Probably."

"We’ll talk later when I’m not sleep deprived and starving. That granola bar did not take off the edge."

“Because it was a real granola bar, not a Starfleet ration bar. Come back in 20 minutes. I promise I’ll have food. Real food, not granola bars." She said handing back Ariel.

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The food did arrive at 8 PM as planned. Although, her sister wasn’t the delivery person. (which was good because she did not want to talk about her dad again.)

"How did you get in here?" She asked Spock as he placed several take-out containers on the table.

“Apparently, the security staff did not recognize me in Terran street clothes. Your sister will be up momentarily. She is currently procuring balloons at the gift shop.” It was at that moment she looked at Spock. He was wearing jeans and a T-shirt.

"Are you wearing one of Jim’s band T-shirts?" She asked slightly shocked and a little turned on.

"Yes."
“Jim is going to love that.”

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“You are sexy as hell dressed in my clothes.” Jim whispered as Spock bent down to kiss him. Jim was sitting in the rocking chair in the room with a baby in each arm. Nhi was sleeping and possibly drugged. They apparently make an awesome post labor resting hypo now.

“This almost makes up for the fact that I had to tell Nhi that her niece is now banned from the hospital because she managed to get into a fight with my allegedly pacifist boyfriend.” Jim said as he traded one of the babies for a sandwich, it being hard to eat and hold two babies simultaneously.

Nyota tried very hard not to snicker. She hasn’t believed the pacifist thing since she saw him beat down John Harris several months ago.

"She caused you an undue emotional distress by saying things that are false." Spock replied, grabbing the other baby from Jim. Of course, he grabbed baby KJ.

"Yep. You two are absolutely enough." Jim smirked.

“The words I found troubling were her attempts to blame you for Christopher Pike’s death as well as the fact that we do not hold you in high regard.”

"I know you both love me because you snuck in here dressed in my sexy clothes to bring me food and she proposed like 20 minutes ago." Spock turns around to give her an eyebrow.

"I was explaining the bonding thing and I just mentioned that if he felt things were uneven, we could always get married."

"When I’m less stoned from pain medicine, I’m good to look up to see if that would get us shared quarters.”

“Technically, as written, if we are all married or the equivalent under Federation standards, we would qualify for shared housing.” Of course, Spock would know. “Why are you on pain medication? Your hand was broken again?”
"Yes."

"Starfleet would be so pissed, mostly the ones who want us to stay quiet about actually being together."

"Do you care?" Nyota asked Jim.

"Nope." Jim said as he kissed both her and Spock."

To be concluded.
Chapter 27: Family or Something Like It

Chapter Summary

Family are the people who will be there for you in good times and bad. You get to choose who those people are and don’t let anybody else tell you otherwise.


Chapter Notes

Thank you to everybody who read or reviewed the last chapter. Also thank you to everybody who has been with this story and this series from the beginning. This is the last chapter of The Idiot's Guide to Family Bonding (although not this series).

I won’t call this an epilogue because it’s not. We’re just time jumping a little bit.

November 2259

"Do you think we have enough cupcakes?" Jim asked Ivy as she helped him put out the second layer of food for the baby shower spectacular. After having to reschedule twice due to early birth and once for Sam’s hearing, they were finally having the joint baby shower (and quietly celebrating the termination of Sam’s parental rights).

"Six dozen, I think that’s enough." Ivy remarked. “You also have two cheesecakes the admirals can feast on if we run out. Really, there’s no reason for you to suck up this much for work reasons.” Ivy sounded annoyed at this point. Maybe Jim is a little paranoid.

“One of which is my girlfriend's mom and the other one is the guest of honor. And another one may or may not be your boyfriend’s mom. Also, I like for as many members of the Admiralty to like me as possible, because it’s really better for everyone when they’re not actively trying to kill me.”

“That’s true. Also, I’m not dating Kevin Chan." Jim was just about to point out the obvious bite marks on Ivy’s neck, but his fellow snarky Vulcan beat him to it.

"If so, why does your heart beat increase by 32.3% in his presence?" Spock said as he placed a
container of chips on the table. Jim couldn’t help but kiss him. He loves when Spock goes into sneaky Vulcan ninja mode. It was kind of hot.

"Keep making out with your boyfriend. It keeps him from freaking out about the number of cupcakes we have. I am not going to pick up more cupcakes. You have enough dessert to feed an army of people."

“You love driving Spock’s vintage convertible. I’m sure we could put in an emergency order that you can pick up in the car. I’m just not sure six dozen is enough.”

“When did you allow Ivy to drive my vehicle?” Spock asked concerned.

“When your crazy boy toy had me running around for the perfect hummus. It’s probably for the best that you’re not planning to have a big wedding. I think Jim would turn into bridezilla.” Ivy remarked.

“We are not having anything resembling a wedding at all.” Jim remarked as Spock raised an eyebrow at him. “We have a lot of Vulcans at this party and therefore I needed to have more vegetarian and vegan options. Which reminds me, do we have enough non-chocolate desserts? We definitely have more Vulcans here than what was planned.”

"Arlene does work at the Vulcan Embassy." Spock pointed out in a way that made Jim want to give him a discrete Vulcan kiss. Vulcan style kisses were wonderful when you were trying to pretend you were not dating. And honestly, they were not pretending that hard.

“Who apparently don't understand the concept of RSVPing.” Jim said as he let go of Spock’s hand. “Do you think we need more vegetarian options?”

Obviously, Jim was worried. He hasn’t been this concerned about an event since his first state dinner. He wanted Arlene and Nhi to have a good baby shower. Especially Arlene who spent the last week battling her bastard ex-boyfriend in Family Court. It should’ve been an open and shut case considering how many charges were lobbied against Sam now, but Sam just dragged it out as long as possible.

"Hey big sister, please come calm down your fiancé.” Ivy yelled. Jim is just going to hope that everybody who doesn’t know about him just assumes that Ivy is referring to Spock. Vulcans can be nervous or at least Spock can be.
"He is not my fiancé." Nyota remarked as she walked to him. She also removed the tray of cupcakes that he had been holding.

"But you are both planning on getting married?"

"Eventually." Nyota and Jim responded simultaneously.

"In a couple years," Nyota added.

"Unless we have to deal with assholes." Jim said, pointing to the hordes of Admiralty that were ignoring him from the kitchen. He could see them. They couldn’t see him.

"Total fiancé." Ivy remarked.

"Maybe -- definitely." Jim said as he went over to kiss. Nyota then Spock.

"I believe it would be most advisable to put out the cupcakes." Spock remarked.

"Yes. Before that hungry masses start biting the furniture and you three have sex on the kitchen table." It was a really tempting idea, but the shower came first.

Okay, Jamie started screaming her ‘I need a new diaper’ cry and Jim was off. The shower was a hit if you ignored the fact that Peter dropped an entire tray of raspberry blue cupcakes on the pristine white carpet. Which of course resulted in them running out of cupcakes. He knew he should’ve ordered more.

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December 2259

Nyota stared at the motionless monitor, part of her wishing for it to start beeping once more. She held on to her father's now cooling hand unable to let go. He gave his last breath 42 minutes ago and yet she hasn’t let go of his hand. Nyota hasn’t cried either, not one tear. Ivy has been practically inconsolable with Jim wrapped around her. Her boyfriend is going to need a new shirt. De’bor’ah sat on the other side of Ivy, holding her other hand. There were tear tracks running down both cheeks, but Nyota sat there numbly with dry eyes and a mind on autopilot.
Nyota and her partners have been in Pretoria for two weeks and by her father’s side for just as long. He couldn’t speak. He couldn’t recognize her, not at this point in the progression of the disease. Maybe she should have come sooner, but she wasn’t ready for the long goodbye. Nyota wasn’t even ready to be here now, but time was up. Her father’s time was up and yet she wasn’t ready to deal with this.

Her father was dead. She hated him and she loved him. She needed him to understand her choices. She didn’t need his blessing, but some part of her wanted it all the same. Their last conversation was so angry and now he really is gone and there was no fixing it. She wanted to say the words that would never be said. And yet the tears could not come.

She just sits here now and listens to Ivy cry as Spock makes the arrangements. Nyota remembers doing the same for Spock. When Amanda died, neither he nor his father were ready to deal with the reality of her death. So, she handled it and now Spock was doing the same for her. She didn’t think it was possible to fall in love with him more until that moment.

She’s thankful for Spock being there because she’s not ready to deal with the reality of her father’s death despite knowing that it was coming for weeks. Looking at patterns in choosing funeral venues would make it too real. Spock can deal with funeral planning and hospice. She can’t, she really can’t.

She doesn’t look at the clock, not really. Time seems to stand still as if it doesn’t exist or maybe it just slows to a state of nonexistence. She doesn’t really register anything until they come to take the body away a.k.a. forcing her to finally let go. Even then they give her, De’bor’ah, and Ivy a few minutes to say goodbye.

Ivy’s goodbye was tearful broken words and screaming. She’s pretty sure Ivy told their father to go fuck himself at least three times. She thinks the book that her therapist gave her to help prepare for the grieving process said that sort of thing is okay. Of course, Nyota never could bring herself to read beyond the introduction to The Idiot’s Guide to Grief and Mourning. Maybe that would be helpful right now.

De’bor’ah was calmer, more resigned. She guessed that comes with age and surviving the type of life De’bor’ah had. Pain is nothing new to her and neither was death. It never was.

Nyota was the last to leave. Maybe because she couldn't figure out what to say or maybe it was because she couldn't quite bring herself to leave. She could hear Spock telling them to give her another few minutes.

“I honestly don’t know what to say to you.” Nyota began. “I hated you for so long. I blamed you for
mom going away. I blamed you for fucking around. You hurt so many people. You used Ivy to get my boyfriend arrested. I know you weren’t well and haven’t been for a while. I also know that you were not well because of choices you made, but I forgive you.” The words finally flow out of her as if they were a river. She’s not forgiving him for him. She’s not even sure if it's for herself, but she can’t keep the anger inside of her forever. She lets go of the pain for Ivy, who is devastated, and De’bor’ah, who is in pain, but not for him.

She doesn’t really remember what happened during the next few minutes. Although Spock must have let her out of the room and into the back of a cab. She’s pretty sure Jim was in another with Ivy and De’bor’ah or maybe they went somewhere else. Nyota is not sure. She wasn't really paying attention to anything but Spock.

“I’m surprised you haven’t asked me if I'm okay yet.” Nyota finally spoke when they made it back to their hotel room. She couldn’t bring herself to stay at her father’s house. Too many memories.

“Such a question would be illogical and counterproductive. I am aware you are not functioning optimally,” Spock said as he led her to the bed. Nyota just wanted to crawl inside and never get out.

"Since you can feel everything I am feeling because of the bond?” Nyota asked as Spock lay down beside her.”

“Yes,” Spock told her as he placed an arm around her.

Nyota was trying to do the shielding techniques, but she can’t right now because she feels everything and nothing. She needs to cry and she can’t.

“But also, I understand your current state of upheaval because I remember my emotional state when I lost my mother.” Spock wrapped his arm around her in an embrace “I understand any definition of the word fine or okay would not be applicable to your state of being now.” He placed a kiss on her forehead.

“Just because you did not cry does not mean that you do not feel your father’s death. Perhaps it means that you feel it too much. The book that Dr. Caraballo gave you states that everybody grieves differently. Tears are not necessary.” Nyota didn’t say anything. She just allowed Spock to stroke her hair until she fell asleep.

The next few days were long, agonizing, and seemed to go in slow motion. Spock planed the
funeral. She didn’t even have to give him funeral colors. She loved him for that. Jim kept her and Ivy fed. He also kept them clean, forcing both to shower and change after the first 24 hours of mourning. She really had no appetite, but Jim kept finding things that she would eat. Through the entire process, she fell in love with him just a little bit more.

xxxx

The funeral was awful. There were way too many people coming up to her and telling her what a nice man her father was when all she wanted to do was tell them the awful truth. But she didn’t. What was the point of speaking ill of the dead? Her therapist told her that funerals are for the living and maybe Ivy and De’bor’ah needed her to pretend for a little bit.

Surprisingly enough her half-brothers were there. Nyota knows that they came for her and Ivy, because honestly, they probably were fighting the urge to spit on their former stepfather’s grave. (Thankfully, he was cremated, so that wouldn’t be an issue.)

These were not the circumstances that she wanted her stepbrothers to meet Jim, but here they were. Jim was a hit because he never left her side unless he was switching with Spock to take care of Ivy. Yes, her boyfriends traded off who would look after her little sister.

She could hear family members whispering about her close relationship with Jim when she already had a boyfriend, but she didn’t care. If they were important, they would’ve known the truth. She had other things to deal with.

xxx

A week later, a.k.a. the day before Christmas, they were back in San Francisco with her father’s ashes (De’bor’ah stayed behind in Pretoria). Part of her was surprised that her father asked for his ashes to be spread on the green of Starfleet Academy (and for De’bor’ah to not be part of it). Considering he was so anti-Starfleet in the end, Nyota is surprised he never changed that.

“Maybe, he chose this to be his final resting place because he had good memories here.” Jim suggested as he took the lid off the urn.

“Or maybe he wants to haunt the campus for my entire time here.” Ivy stated as she grabbed a handful of ashes.

“It is illogical to assume that his essence…” Spock started to say, but Ivy interrupted.

“I was joking. It's a perfectly human thing to joke at funerals.”
“Because you either laugh or cry. And laughter is more productive.” Jim remarked as he placed her father's urn in front of her. Nyota wordlessly grabbed a handful of ashes. She said nothing as she opened her palm and allowed the wind to carry her father away. She and Ivy repeated the process multiple times until there was nothing left.

No, that wasn't true. Jim and Spock stood behind them the entire time making sure neither would falter. In life, her father never showed her what love truly was. Through his death, Nyota saw the truth. She had two people who loved her unconditionally, who would be by her side through funerals and family chaos. She had two people who didn't expect her to be strong or to carry the entire world on her shoulders. She had two people who made her feel safe, to the point where when they got home that night, she finally did cry.

Xxxxxx

January 5, 2260

Spock lay in bed next to a still naked Jim wrapped around him. Since Ivy has already moved into her new private dorm room for this semester and Arlene is spending the night at her new boyfriend’s residence with children in tow, James saw no point in getting dressed from the evening before. (Although Spock is sure in Jim’s case, it is because Spock had the temperature in the room high enough that only tank tops were practical for his lovers). Or maybe James is just too exhausted.

January 4 was always emotionally draining for James and most likely his least favorite day of the year, if it were logical to have a least favorite day. Considering the many tragic experiences that James has encountered over the years, the fact that January 4 is his least favorite day points to how many tragic emotions are tied into the date. The only thing outside the norm that James did yesterday was call Winona. After his hour-long phone call with his mother left James in tears, he was led to the bedroom where Spock and Nyota took care of him. Now that Jamie could sleep through the night and did not need constant monitoring, their bedroom activities were no longer restricted to special occasions.

Therefore, he was surprised to see Nyota walk into their bedroom with two cupcakes with candles on top along with pancakes (thankfully they were not crepes), fresh berries and chocolate with cream in a portion size that would sustain three individuals. He distinctly remembered an extended conversation about not celebrating Jim’s birthday. Spock sent out a memo last year, instructing people not to wish their Captain a ‘happy birthday’.

“You know I love breakfast in bed, especially when at least two thirds of us are not wearing any clothing, but I think I have a strict rule against anything involving candles anywhere near the week of January 4.” Jim responded.

"So, I know you don’t want to celebrate your birthday, but today’s not your birthday. And you never turn down a cupcake." Nyota also kissed Jim on his cheek after speaking. Or at least she tried to.
James tilted his head just enough to meet her lips.

"Because it happens to be the same day that my dad died." James said as he pulled away. “And really we want to avoid all talk of dead dads right now.” The last month had been very difficult for Nyota. Between watching her father die and going through the aftereffects of his death, his girlfriend was emotionally and physically drained. The fact that the new semester is starting next week, added to her stress.

"I thank you for not mentioning that because it hasn’t even been a month yet." And yet, Nyota has made more progress than he did during the first month after his mother’s death. It probably helped that she is seeing a therapist.

"Yet you still brought me a cupcake with a candle on it. Two cupcakes, actually."

"The day after your birthday, not on your actual birthday. I know I’ve been an emotionless bitch for the last couple of weeks. And I thank you both for loving me enough to deal with it. But I owe you both. The birthday cupcakes and pancakes are my way of saying thank you for putting up with me through this mess." Nyota said as she placed the cupcake in Jim’s hand and then gently kissed him on the lips once more.

“Berry kisses, my favorite. Your dad died. It’s okay for you to be upset. It’s also okay for you to not bounce back to where you were before. It takes time. We will be here for you no matter what.” Jim reassured her as he stroked her cheek.

“But I still want to thank both of you. That’s why the other birthday cupcake is for Spock.” Nyota said as she gave Spock his cupcake along with a kiss. She tasted of James and berries, Spock’s preferred combination.

"That’s right, tomorrow you hit the big 30. You are an old Vulcan now." James punctuated his words with a kiss. He tasted of Nyota and berries, his other favorite flavor.

"Actually, the Vulcan life expectancy is at least two times that of a human. Therefore…” Spock was silenced by Nyota’s fingers against his lips.

"Okay, we don’t talk about death on birthdays." Nyota remarked.
"That’s going to be difficult considering my birthday is the same day as when my father died." Jim joked, Spock thinks. He is still mastering human humor.

"I propose a new family tradition, we split the difference between your two birthdays and celebrate both of your birthday is on January 5." Of course, at this moment Nyota placed her finger in the frosting and then placed her finger at James lips. “Private celebration of course.

“Because cupcakes do not make me feel guilty, I like this proposal.” James said as he licked the frosting off Nyota’s fingers.

"Vulcans do not celebrate birthdays." But I am not necessarily opposed to watching James lick frosting off your fingers all day.

"But you do love a good chocolate raspberry buttercream Cupcake." Nyota said handing the other cupcake to Spock, just as she placed the rest of breakfasts on a nearby table. For some reason, she grabbed the container of chocolate with cream

"These are good cupcakes. I can't wait to lick the rest of it off your…” That’s when James stopped talking and Spock looked at Nyota, who was currently disrobing. Underneath her white fluffy robe was black and red lace panties set that accentuated her curves perfectly.

“Actually, Jim that's what I brought the whipped cream for.”

“I fucking love you. Is this going to be another birthday tradition? Because I am so about new traditions." Jim said as he grabbed the aerosol canister from Nyota.

“Yes.” Nyota answered.

"I think we can give this January 5 thing a shot." James answered with a lascivious grin as he licked his lips in anticipation.

"Logical."

Yes, they did have to get a new comforter set because blueberry syrup and chocolate with cream
stains are very difficult to remove from fabric but it was a very productive non-birthday.

xxxx

February 2260

Jim doesn’t exactly have the best opinions of the Starfleet dress uniform. It probably has something to do with the fact that something bad usually happens when he’s wearing one such as getting demoted or facing the firing squad that is his former high school and then finding out that his pseudo-sister was attacked in their own home. Today he was putting the uniform on, and remembering all those who lost their life one year ago today.

"You look good." Nyota said, coming up behind him to adjust his hat. She was already dressed impeccably.

"I hate the dress uniform. Except on you and possibly Spock." Jim remarked with a leer. He was really looking forward to taking it off Nyota and or Spock later.

"It is illogical to hate any uniform." Spock was also dressed and looked even better than last time. He thinks that the replacement uniform from the paint incident was even more formfitting than the last one is such a thing were possible.

"You wear the regular female uniform for a couple of hours in a possible combat situation and see how you feel. At least the dress uniform has pants." Nyota remarked.

"I don’t have the legs for it." Jim joked. Maybe he could just talk them into staying here. He really did not want to go on stage and talk about everybody who died last year, especially because no matter how much therapy he goes through, a part of him still blames himself for what happened. Especially for Chris’s death, even if everyone tells him otherwise.

"You’re fidgeting. Why are you fidgeting? You already have your introductory remarks together. You do already have your remarks ready?" Nyota asked slightly worried.

“He does. I proofread them earlier.” Spock reassured as he walked into the room looking edible. “I found your anecdote regarding your first dinner at the Pike household fascinating.

“Which totally explains why it was the only thing you left intact.” Jim remarked.
Spock really took the red pen to his original speech, mostly to get rid of Jim’s snarky and maybe slightly inappropriate remarks. Looking back on it now, it probably wouldn’t be right to go on a rant about now disgraced Admiral Marcus. That would just be out of place for the event. Thankfully, Jim only had the three-minute introduction and would not have to give his own remarks. At least not this time. He’s already been warned that he would have to give a full speech at the Enterprise rechristening when the ship is relaunched in May. That was for the best because Jim really felt like throwing up right now.

"I hate memorials. Too many bad childhood memories." Like Winona throwing up on his shoes when he was six or Sam trying to trade him to an ambassador from a planet Jim can’t even remember to get his dad back. Of course, Jim did not tell his partners that because they already knew most of Jim's Kelvin Memorial war stories.

"It is illogical to despise any type of event." Spock remarked as he pulled James hand in for a Vulcan style kiss. Jim decided to move in for a human one.

“Yes, I’m totally being an illogical human right now. “Jim said pulling away ‘Tell me again why we’re planning to spend a three-day weekend in the Caribbean, a three-day weekend that just happens to coincide with the second anniversary of the battle of Vulcan?’ That way Spock can avoid attending any embassy or Starfleet sponsored remembrance ceremonies, but the Vulcan is never going to say that out loud.

"I can understand why you find this event distressing." Spock responded without acknowledging his own apprehension, just as predicted.

“Last year was awful for you, but imagine going through it as a small child. Also, your dad is an expert at diplomatic bullshit. Winona was never that skilled which makes the whole thing nightmare inducing. Now, KJ and Ariel are even younger than me at my first memorial and they are going to have to go through this for a long time or until something bigger happens and people forget about it. They shouldn’t be going through this. Especially because…” I fucked up and Chris saved my ass and paid the ultimate price in the process.

“The Admiral is not Winona and the twins are not you. And this is not your fault. You’ll do fine.” Nyota told him as she moved in for a kiss.

"I know, I’m just worried." Jim entwined his fingers with Nyota us.

“I would tell you that worrying is illogical, but you will do so regardless of our efforts to calm you down.” Spock grabs his other hand.
“But you can try kissing again. Kissing really keeps me calm. Other activities would keep me calm too, but we have a car picking us up in 10 minutes.”

And yes, they did make the car just five minutes late. Jim may have got a little carried away and misplaced Spock’s hat. Halfway through the ceremony. Jim realized that his fears were completely unfounded. This was not a repeat of the Kelvin memorials of his youth. Nhi wasn’t behaving anything like Winona did. There was no hysterical crying the moment the program started. He didn’t have to deal with someone blaming him for what happened like Sam blaming him for their dad’s death. Of course, that was most likely because Christine already left on her new assignment that just happens to be on the other side of the quadrant.

Also, Nhi was protective of her kids in a way that Winona was not. Nhi did not allow the babies to be on the stage where Jim spent way too much time there as a kid. Nyota and Spock ended up holding the babies while they were speaking. Nhi wouldn’t let the paparazzi get anywhere near the babies and Jim is pretty sure his first words were on the Internet somewhere.

The paparazzi also didn’t get a tear stained speech which became a Winona trademark until Tarsus happened. Nhi did lose her husband but she wasn’t wallowing in grief. (It helped that she saw a therapist twice a week and Jim had no trouble babysitting during that time.) She was finding purpose in making Starfleet the place it was supposed to be and that was something Winona never really had. Nhi was working her ass off making sure that the circumstances that led to Chris’s death would not happen again. That’s quite a feat considering she just got back from maternity leave. Her speech was about her desire for Starfleet to live up to its original promise. Winona’s speeches were always about how much she missed her husband.

So, this event was not a complete disaster. It went better than almost every single Kelvin event he was ever forced to go to. Although somehow Admiral Barnett’s wife, Jane, still ended up changing the diapers of the twins because there are some constants in the universe.

Xxxxx

March 2260

"I can’t believe we’re spending our one year anniversary at Pizza Forest of all places." Nyota heard Jim lament beside her.

“I’m sorry I agreed to babysit Peter and several of his young Vulcan friends. I’ve really got the dates mixed up.” Jim glared at her.
“Okay, Ivy got back at me for telling De’bo’rah about us catching her with Kevin and she purposely moved my engagement reminder to next week and arranged for us to spend the day watching small children.” And by catching her with Kevin, Nyota means walking in on her sister performing fellatio on her boyfriend. Nyota is still traumatized and felt it was best for De’bor’ah to know what was going on. Nyota liked Kevin, but her sister was barely 18.

“I’m all for friendly sibling pranks,” especially because his own brother is now serving a life sentence for trying to kill him last year. “At least the pizza’s good.” And she was still slightly shocked that a pizza place with an electronic animal had gourmet pizza.

“And after all the media attention the last couple of weeks, maybe it’s good for Peter to just be a kid for a little while.” Nyota remarked.

“Very true. Besides, this way I can hold your hand under the table without risking being caught by the paparazzi.” Jim joked. “Also, now I have pictures of baby Vulcans playing in a ball pit.”

"I think we lost Spock in the ball pit." Nyota said, pointing to Spock, who was currently being pelted with balls by small children.

"I think I’m more shocked at the fact that Peter got Spock in the ball pit. You know he’s not going to be happy later."

"That’s because Uncle Spock is his favorite. Doing whatever his favorite nephew wants him to do always makes him happy. If he is willing to acknowledge being happy." Jim remarked.

"I’m sorry that our champagne dinner is not happening.”

“I'm not. This place has artisan beer and I always have a Plan B.” Jim smirked.

“What's your plan B?” Nyota asked.

“We will be returning the kids to their parents in an hour and there's champagne chilling at home.”

“That does have some interesting possibilities.”
“In the meantime, have a cupcake.” Jim said passing the cupcake to her. It was one of those gourmet cupcakes with decorations that looked real.

“That looks like an actual engagement ring. Which bakery did you go to?” Nyota said just as she removed the ring from the frosting.

“That’s because it is a real ring.” That’s when she noticed that Ivy was sitting at the table behind them recording everything. Why did she have a feeling this was a total set up?

“Is this your way of proposing?” She asked. That was also when she realized Spock was watching from the ball pit. This was a set up.

“You already proposed when the twins were born. I’m just getting you the ring.” Jim said as he grabbed the ring from her to place it on her finger.

"You know I would’ve strangled you if I had swallowed this. Or if one of the kids did. But it is a pretty ring.” It was a vintage Tiffany’s engagement ring that had the set inlaid which meant she could wear it on duty.

“That's why I kept your cupcakes segregated from the others.”

"Smart man. Give me a paper towel to get rid of the frosting and you have a deal."

"Perfect."

“Although, you know it’s not happening until after the five-year mission.” Unless Starfleet tries to take you away from us. She thought to herself.

“Of course.”

Xxx

April 2260 a.k.a. the second anniversary of the destruction of Vulcan
Spock attempted to meditate while his partners were still sleeping. As usual Spock woke up several hours before his partners. Usually he uses this fact to his advantage by assisting Arlene with Jamie or preparing breakfast for the family. However, they were in a villa in Puerto Rico (the part of the island that survived global warming) so meditation was the most productive use of his early-morning time.

He assumed going out to the porch so he could be surrounded by the ocean would help him focus. The sea was still something of a novelty to him due to growing up on a desert planet. Even his time in San Francisco by the Bay did not lessen his wonderment at being near the water. There was something peaceful, almost serene about the sound of the waves. Spock could almost forget about what this day is. And yet he could not, and therefore meditation was impossible. Instead, he stood on the balcony watching the ocean, remembering the first time Amanda took him to a beach as a child.

"I never thought I would find you daydreaming on the balcony." Jim said dressed in only boxer shorts as he handed Spock a container of something that was highly chocolate with a high brandy content.

“I was trying to meditate, but I was unable to reach a state of calm.”

“So, you decided to go with the human style? Drink your chocolate. You’ll feel better.” Jim stated as he placed an arm around Spock.

“It is 7:23 AM local time. It is too early to indulge in substances that could incapacitate.” Spock remarked, not taking a drink.

“I seem to remember you eating a whole container of chocolate with cream on our not a birthday by licking it off me and Nyota, for breakfast, no less.” That was a very pleasant memory. “Besides, it’s always 5 o’clock somewhere.”

"Actually, since it is 7:24 AM local time. It is not 5 o’clock somewhere. It is 4:54 PM in Mumbai.”

"Close enough. If there was ever a day to get drunk before 8 AM, it would be today. Your mom died on this day two years ago, so I feel like maybe you would like to start the day with something really chocolate and really alcoholic.” James placed the kiss on Spock’s neck.

"You did not get inebriated on the anniversary of your father’s death.” Spock remarked.
“Bones has some Academy stories, but we had small children around and I had to act like a functional adult. Also, it’s been 27 years. It helped that I wasn’t alone this year, which is good because Bones makes awful company on the bad days.” James explained.

"Is this why you also did not imbibe vast quantities of alcohol on the anniversary of Admiral Christopher Pike’s passing?” Spock asked.

“In that case we engaged in my other favorite coping mechanism, sex after the ceremony.”

"Are you out here getting Spock chocolate drunk before 8 AM?” Nyota asked as she walked out to join them dressed in only a robe.

"And in December I will be getting you normal drunk before 8 AM or maybe I’ll just bring you crepes. Crepes seems to be your comfort food.” Spock frowned slightly at the mention of that breakfast food.

"Considering we will be in space in December, I think alcohol might be easier to come by then decent crepes.” Nyota remarked. Replicators always left much to be desired. The replicated Enterprise crepes were nowhere near as good as the ones Amanda made when he was a child.

“I’m working on the replicator program.” Jim said with a smirk.

"Amanda made excellent crepes. Not often, but on special occasions. January 6 being one of these occasions. No one’s crepes taste like hers.” It would be ridiculous to try.

"No one else ever will.” Jim said out loud. As both Nyota and Jim wrapped themselves around him, he thought that his earlier statement was mental only, but he must’ve been projecting because both of his lovers could hear him.

"It’s okay to miss her. She was your mom.” Nyota said taking a drink of the chocolate concoction Jim brought him.

"How much brandy did you put in this?” Nyota asked, Jim.
“Enough to get you wasted and Spock open to talking about his feelings.”

"I do not need chocolate laced alcohol to talk about my feelings. Not with you and Nyota at least."

"That’s good." Nyota remarked.

“I called for room service to bring up pancakes. While we’re waiting for food, you can tell us more stories about Amanda’s superior cooking skills. Winona could burn water, which is why I’m pretty sure I learned to cook at five."

"I always preferred her grilled cheese and tomato soup.” Spock told his boyfriend and girlfriend as he began to share various stories about Amanda from his childhood. By the time the food arrived, he felt almost at peace. He will always miss his mother, but at least he wasn’t alone in his grief and that was enough.

xxxxx

Late April 2260

James Tiberius Kirk is not a wedding person. A baby shower person, yes, but those were practical and had games. He kicks ass on pin the diaper on the baby. Also, video files of tipsy admirals could come in handy later.

Weddings were nowhere near as fun. Especially this wedding which was taken over by protocol and Jane Barnett. There were diplomats everywhere and no fun in sight. This thing did not even have a DJ. Also, according to the seating chart he would be sitting at the Starfleet Captain’s table which may be torturous considering he will be the baby of the bunch. There were ice sculptures. Why on earth were ice sculptures there? Even though it was April, it was also 30°C outside. He’s not sure that they will make it to the reception. He’s sure Jane was responsible.

The whole thing made him thankful that his girlfriend is not a wedding person either and he already managed to do the Vulcan equivalent of a Risa quickie wedding with Spock already. So at least he’ll never have participated in one of these overly pretentious events at a position higher than best man. He is sure Jane Barnett is sad about that because he’s pretty sure she already has a binder together.

Jim was especially thankful he didn't even have to be an usher like Spock at the Starfleet hijacked affair. Maybe being the secret fiancé of the bride's daughter had some advantages. Being the public boyfriend, Spock had to participate in the wedding festivities and Jim would get to hang out by the
“Could you please zip me up?” Nyota said as she walked out of the bridesmaid changing area wearing her lilac bridesmaid gown. Nyota looked good in the color. Another advantage of not being in the actual bridal party is he could hang out with Nyota in the bridesmaid suite as she got ready. He may even get a few kisses with Ivy keeping Sarah’s cousin occupied elsewhere.

"I don’t know whether I should be upset that Sarah said no dress uniforms or be happy about it. You look really good in an actual suit.” Nyota remarked as she straightened out his tie.

"And you look great in that dress" So much that Jim really wanted to be unzipping it instead of the other way around.

"Sarah really did choose great colors.” Jim is pretty sure Jane chose the colors, but he wasn’t going to say anything.

"Are you ready for this wedding?” Jim asked instead.

“The other two bridesmaids are MIA so I’m going to have to go with no.” Nyota joke.

“Your sister and Sarah’s cousin went to find emergency pantyhose. There was an accident.” Jim explained.

“Well, as long as that’s the worst thing that happens today, then we will be okay.” Nyota said fidgeting with her bouquet.

“Okay, you’re nervous.” Jim said, taking the bouquet from her before she could seriously damage the flowers.”

“I am not nervous.”

“Yes, you are. You were 30 seconds from destroying your bouquet and I’m not sure if the wedding planner brought extra. Are you worried about your mom getting remarried?” Jim asked.
“If it was anyone else, I think I would be. But Sarah and my mom have been in love with each other for a really long time. This is just making that official.”

“I think you told me repeatedly that the piece of paper doesn’t make a family which is why you won’t go to the courthouse with me before the start of the five-year mission.”

“If we survive the five-year mission with sanity intact, then the marriage license really will be just a piece of paper.”

“True.”

“At the same time growing up, I used to dream about this happening. I kind of always imagined that this would happen, that I would get my real family.”

"And now it’s happening. You got your wish." Jim said as he gently kissed Nyota on her lips.

"No, I already have my family. I’ve had it for a while. You and Spock are my family.” Nyota said as she kissed him back. Unfortunately, that was the moment that Ivy and the cousin arrived, which resulted in him being kicked out to enjoy the pre-wedding canopies.

The wedding was good. Nobody objected, although it probably helped that the Admiral’s ex-girlfriend came with Nhi as her date and Jim is not going to ask if that is a just friends thing. He doesn’t want to know. Thankfully, no hostile forces landed in the foyer and started shooting up the place. Also, none of the foreign dignitaries invited started shooting during or after the ceremony.

The worst that happened was Peter decided to take off his shoes during the middle of the ceremony and toss the ring pillow at Spock. Jim wonders if Sarah is now regretting her decision to make Peter the ringbearer/flower boy. Arlene who was posing as his date for this event couldn’t stop laughing.

The reception was also going well so far except he kind of really wished he was at a completely different table. Because nobody knew that he was dating the bride’s daughter, he did not get to sit with his boyfriend and girlfriend at the family table, but instead was at the Starfleet Captains’ table. The whole thing made him kind of glad that he skipped working under another Captain. It probably would have ended in tears and writeups otherwise.
Also, because he was the secret boyfriend, he did not need to speak like everyone else sitting at the family table. Which is good because Jim is not sure he’s going to ever be able to top Spock’s reading of pre-reform Vulcan love poetry. Spock’s voice can be indecent sometimes. Jim could listen to him read the phone book and still get hard. Thankfully, Sarah went with the long table cloths.

As much as Jim wanted to send Spock a text message asking him to meet him in the men’s room in 10 minutes, he needed to stay for Nyota’s speech. His girlfriend has been working on it for weeks and he knew that she was nervous. The napkin in front of her is in shreds and Jim is pretty sure she's on her third glass of wine.

“I literally speak dozens of languages and yet I wasn’t sure how to begin this toast. Ask my boyfriend and he will tell you how many iterations of this speech I went through. I just wanted everything to be perfect for my two moms. And yes, you are both my mom and have been for a really long time.” Nyota said turning to Sarah and the Admiral.

“I really love you both and I’m glad that you found one another. Growing up, I thought of Sarah as my other mother and I’m happy that today it’s now official.” It was obvious that Sarah was tearing up at this point.

“Being a child of divorce, at some point in my adolescence I stopped believing that love and happy endings were real. Again, my boyfriend will confirm this.” The audience laughed and Sarah smirked at him.

“Thankfully, as an adult, I discovered that I was wrong. Despite how badly things went last time for my mom, I’m glad you never stopped believing and you gave Sarah a real chance. You were friends long before you were lovers and maybe that's the secret to your success. If you want to really be in love with someone for the rest of your life, make sure they are your best friend first. You two taught me that. Thankfully, I followed your example.” The Admiral smiled at Spock, but Sarah was smiling at him.

"I love you both and I wish you all the happiness in the universe.” Nyota said as she raised her glass. “Maybe I'll be fortunate enough to find love as strong as yours. To the happy couple."

As Jim raised his glass in solidarity, he realized that with Spock and Nyota he already had that, even if no one else realized he did. That was enough.

xxxxx

**May 2260**

The desert ride to visit Winona was almost becoming normal for Nyota. This was the fifth time that
Spock and Nyota have accompanied Jim on this trip, the last time being just two months ago. Of course, this time they brought Peter, Arlene, and baby Jamie along. This would also be the last time Jim would be seeing his mother in person for the next five years (barring something catastrophic and Nyota was hoping that they would have an easy five-year mission without any major catastrophes).

The Enterprise rechristening was only days away. With the rechristening came the start of the five-year mission. She was excited and terrified all at the same time. She was going to miss spending every day with the kids, but she was looking forward to doing something other than teaching remedial Romulan to freshman that really didn't care.

Of course, there were a lot of things that you had to do to get ready to leave the planet for five years. Suitcases were packed and the boxes were prepared for storage. Arlene would be taking over the master suite once they left and they knew it was just a matter of time before her fiancé of exactly 2 days moved in. It would be good because at least the apartment wouldn’t be empty while they were gone.

They even sat Peter down and explained to him that they would be going away in space for a while, but they would call and write him all the time. Peter cried a lot. Then Jim got him a stuffed Spock because Starfleet had licensed their likeness and it was okay. Nyota wished she had a mommy stuffed animal growing up, because maybe it would have made the separation easier when she was little. Also, maybe Peter stopped crying when he found out that they would see each other in a couple of months at his mom's wedding to his other favorite Vulcan. Nyota thinks that might be the main reason why Peter’s okay with Arlene getting married and getting a stepdad.

Visiting Winona was their last loose end that needed to be handled before leaving. Nyota felt like Jim was saving it for the last because they weren’t sure which version of Winona they would get. On two visits, Nyota was Jim’s classmate that he has had a crush on forever. One time she remembered that Nyota was Jim’s fiancé and the other time Winona didn’t remember her at all and thought that Jim was George. That was the last visit in March. So of course, Jim was worried and she could feel it.

When they got there, it was obvious that Jim had nothing to worry about. Thankfully, this time Winona recognized that Jim was her son. Even better, she remembered he was 27 and engaged/bonded to two people. She also remembered that Arlene was Sam’s ex-girlfriend and played grandmother. Winona adored Peter and thankfully did not think that he was an adolescent Jim. Jim and all the doctors were worried about that possibility since Peter looks almost exactly like Jim at that age.

The worst thing that happened was Winona referring to Jim as Peter’s dad, instead of Sam. Considering that all traces of Sam have been obliterated from Peter’s birth certificate that wasn’t necessarily a terrible thing. Honestly, they all wanted to forget that Sam even existed at this point. So overall, it was a good visit.
Nyota is not exactly sure how it happened, but she ended up being the last to leave Winona. Okay, Jamie needed a diaper change and Peter somehow managed to cover himself, Jim, and Spock in finger paint.

"You’ll make sure that my baby comes back?" Winona asked just as Nyota was getting ready to leave.

"Always." She said giving Winona a final hug before leaving. She manages to find Jim standing in front of the restroom with the green paint successfully out of his hair.

"I’m sorry I left you in there alone. I just needed a moment." Jim tells her.

“And a washcloth,” Nyota joked. That’s when she noticed Jim’s red eyes, “Were you crying?” It was obvious.

"With Spock in the men’s room while Peter was scrubbing the paint off his hands. You know, there are some advantages to having a partner that has the same gender as you." Jim said with half a smile.

"I have no trouble sneaking into the men’s room if you need me."

"I know. You have for less benevolent needs. If there wasn’t a three-year-old in the men’s room right now, I would suggest just doing that"

“Later. I think things went well today."

“By Winona standards anyways. In some ways that makes it worse. She knows where I’m going and she knows that I may not make it back." Nyota could hear the concern in Jim’s voice.

"Oh, you’ll make it back. I guarantee it.” Nyota quickly looked around to see that they’re alone before giving Jim a quick kiss on the lips. Of course, it’s at that moment that an extremely hyper 3 ½ year old managed to run right into them.
"You must allow me to remove the paint from your hair." Spock called from behind. That’s when Jim bent down to grab Peter.

“I think you look cute with green hair, but I’m not sure what your mom or Uncle Spock would think so we’re going to have to wash it out.” Jim said as he carried Peter into the restroom and Nyota followed behind. It’s their own fault for not having a family restroom. “You know I think I’m going to miss this in a couple of weeks.”

She would too. But at least she was taking some of her family with her. She would also make sure that Jamie and Peter knew that they were loved even if half their family was light years away.

Xxxxxx

Technically, the official rechristening for Enterprise would be the next day, but James and Spock felt it prudent to move into their quarters early. Being Captain and first officer meant that they would need to oversee everything required to get the Federation's flagship ready for her five-year voyage. They would not have time to concern themselves with their own belongings or putting up the several drawings that Peter gave the three of them for the sole purpose of making sure that they do not forget about him during their mission.

Since he and Nyota were officially bonded and said bonding was of public record, Nyota would be sharing the first officer’s quarters with him. Which meant at least they had a full-size bed. However, because his bonding to James was not public record and Starfleet wanted to give the appearance that the Captain of Enterprise was not sleeping with his first officer, James had a separate room. However, thanks to some creative planning on Commander Scott’s part, the rooms connect through the shared bathroom.

“I think we should turn the bed in my quarters into a luxury couch and just all sleep in here.” Jim said as he sat down on the bed in Spock’s quarters that was already made. “I am pretty sure all three of us can sleep on here.”

"Barely and only because you’re a hugger." Nyota remarked as she laid down beside him.

"Love that I’m a hugger." Jim also placed his arms around Nyota.

“For sex, this could work because we are all really creative and flexible, but somebody is going to get kicked into the floor at night and it’s not going to be me.”
“Because you’re a kicker.” James joked.

“There’s a logical solution to this. Due to my hybrid physiology, I need less sleep in higher temperatures to feel comfortable. When not engaging in coitus, I can sleep in the other room. I believe there is also sufficient space there to put in a meditation room.”

“We have done okay for the last few months. You always said the cuddling keeps you warm.” James remarked.

“Because you both sleep in the nude, which is not practical on a starship. Our bed at our apartment was also 87% larger.”

“You may have a valid point because red alerts love happening at 3 AM.”

“And the bed really is too small.” Nyota added. “Everyone in engineering likes me so I think I can convince someone to put a larger bed in Jim’s quarters.”

“You’re not the only one who has friends in engineering. I may have played around with the design a little bit to give us one giant suite and sufficient closet space for the three of us. Unfortunately, there are regulations about bed size and this is as big as we’re going to get. Thankfully, we are a very creative bunch that can be flexible with our use of surfaces. We can figure out sleeping arrangements as we go.”

“I’m sure that’s the plan for the oversized couch in your quarters that is probably not regulation.” Nyota remarked.

“It’s for entertaining. The Captain needs to entertain or at least that’s the justification I used to get it accepted.” Jim remarked

“You are only allowed to entertain us.” Nyota responded with a kiss.

"Of course. Do you realize that nobody else’s on the ship right now?" James said picking up a small black makeup bag from the toiletry kit that he laid on the bed earlier. Spock is aware the black bag contains supplies for sexual activities.
"What are you planning?" Spock asked.

"Fantasy 332." Jim responded. The fact that Spock could confirm that the ship was devoid of all other life forms besides the three of them would be the only reason Spock would agree to carry out fantasy 332 outside of their quarters. That is why Spock arranged for the ship to be nearly vacant.

"I’m not giving you a blowjob while you sit in the Captain’s chair.” Nyota folded her hands over her chest. “You couldn’t figure out how to get a larger bed in here so I don’t think you deserve it. I’ve kind of gotten used to sleeping with both of you. Actually sleeping.”

“I work with Scotty so I can intentionally earn that reward. What you described is fantasy 342. Fantasy 332 is where you’re the Captain, I’m your communication officer that you need to punish for being a very bad boy and Spock is your loyal first officer ready to do whatever you command.”

“Is this the reason why you insisted that we move in early?” Nyota asked. She was obviously intrigued.

"No, that was our wonderful, prepare for anything boyfriend." Nyota tilted her head to Spock and he nodded his head in confirmation that he did arrange for this to occur.

"I just decided to take advantage of it. You’ll be surprised how easy it is to get a hold of a regulation female command uniform." James smirked before going to Nyota’s closet and pulling out the uniform that Spock put there earlier.

“So, what are your opinions on fantasy 332?” Nyota asked Spock.

"I am ready to agree with whatever type of punishment you feel fits Lieutenant Kirk’s crimes. I believe handcuffs are in order, Captain.” Nyota responded with a kiss to them both.

"I will go change.” He said, pulling away. “And you should put on something befitting your position, Lieutenant Kirk.” Nyota said as she removed her top.

“Do you have any idea how much I love both of you right now?” ‘More than what is quantifiable.’ Spock thought to himself, but he could feel the love and affection, radiating from both his lovers.
“A lot. Go change, Lieutenant.”

“Yes, ma'am.” Jim saluted.

In that moment, Spock realized that no matter what would happen in the next five years, they could survive it together.

The End.

Chapter End Notes

We have come to the end of the story, but not the end of the series. There will be one more story (maybe more). Since the next story takes place around a slightly AU version of the events of Star Trek Beyond, I decided to mark this story as finished on fanfiction dot net and will post the next part as a brand-new story. I am also doing this because I primarily post now on Archive of Our Own and you can subscribe to a series on that site. That way, those of you interested in the next part can subscribe, so you won’t miss a thing. Also, for those who have been waiting to read this story for four years after I completed it, I want them to know that it’s done.

I would like to take a moment to thank everybody who has been with me for the last four years as I worked on this series. It’s been an incredible journey and I’m happy that you have been along for the ride. Especially since this is a poly story with lots of story and not that much sexual activity (although if anybody wants to write what happened on the bridge, contact me.) I would also like to thank all my wonderful betas who helped me keep this story coherent with a minimal amount of typographical errors.

The working title for the next story in the series is The Idiot's Guide to Work Life Balance. My goal is to start posting in December or January. Of course, I thought I would be starting the sequel to Dear James in six months and it’s been closer to a year. Life gets in the way too often of good writing.

Up next for my loyal Star Trek readers is the third story in the Dear Spock universe. Look for Dear Demora: Epitaphs from Enterprise in September or a little earlier.

End Notes

Just so you all know, I finally joined twitter. I'm now @Misscar2015

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!