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### Archive Warning
Graphic Depictions Of Violence, Rape/Non-Con

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Five Times Jim Kirk Made Scotty Be His Conscience, And The One Time Kirk Let His Conscience Be His Guide

by StellarLibraryLady

Summary

Jim Kirk tries to use highly moral Scotty as a way to gain redemption and absolution for the guilt he feels when crewmen are hurt because of his decisions, but Scotty is torn by what is expected of him. McCoy and Spock discover another side to their own relationship, a relationship which is in sharp contrast to what Kirk and Scotty are experiencing.

Notes

In the comments to "Okay, So It Wasn't Exactly Social Intercourse I Was After, So Sue Me!," Esperata remarked that it would take a lot to shake a Scotsman, and that got me to thinking about what an upright and admirable person that Scotty is.

Problem is, a troubled Jim Kirk started thinking about it, too.

See the end of the work for more notes.
Chapter Summary

Scotty throws a Welcome Home party for his friends, and Kirk relates some sad news that is really bothering him.

Chapter Notes

Title taken from a line in the play "King Henry the Fourth, Part Two" by William Shakespeare.

“Permission to dock Shuttlecraft Armitage aboard the Enterprise,” Spock said solemnly over the radio.

“Permission granted,” Montgomery Scott answered. “Dock bay opening now.” He grinned, although he knew that neither Spock nor anyone else aboard the shuttle could see him. It was just good to have everyone back on board the Enterprise again. Like so many serving on the Starship, Scotty felt like the crew was his family. He was proud of them and was really eager to be able to see their familiar faces again and to hear all that they had to tell. In fact, he was feeling very expansive about the eminent reunion and announced, “Welcome home, Armitage!”

Spock gave the radio a rather dyspeptic look as if it had suddenly gone rogue. “Why, thank you, Mr. Scott,” he said, recovering quickly. “We look forward to be back aboard the Enterprise again ourselves. Armitage, out,” he said decisively and cut communication just in case Scotty wanted to wax poetically again. Sometimes Earthlings could be sentimentally sloppy, and Mr. Scott of Engineering was one of the worst offenders whom Spock knew personally.

The Enterprise loomed before them, and Spock aimed the shuttle toward the opening dock bay.

“Mr. Scott appears to be quite pleased with our return, Captain,” Spock remarked. “I would not be surprised if he has arranged a surprise party for our return, complete with a decorated cake, clever party hats, and even aggravating noise makers that seem to be heard from at the most inappropriate times.”

Behind him, Jim Kirk grinned. “Why, Mr. Spock. You surprise me. I might expect something pessimistic like that from Dr. McCoy, but not from a courtly gentleman such as yourself,” he said with good humor as he turned to the man sitting across from him. “Isn’t that right, Bones?”

“Hey, I’m courtly, too!” McCoy snapped, eyes flashing. “I just don’t go around showing it off all the time like SOME people seem to have to do! My mama raised me better than that! Something good has to come out of all of those birthday parties and teenage dances I was forced to attend! Why, there were times I thought that my whole life was just one regatta or cotillion after another!”

“And just look how it has all paid off,” Kirk agreed with an amiable smile. “You still can cut quite a handsome swath among the fairer sex, I expect.”
“Damn straight!” McCoy muttered. “I can hold my own among the best of them. Women don’t know what hit them when Leonard McCoy appears on the scene. There’s swooning everywhere.”

“Now if we just had a cotillion to attend,” Spock muttered under his breath as he expertly landed the Armitage.

McCoy stiffened with indignation as his eyes blazed at Spock’s back, and he partially raised himself from his seat. “What?! What?! What did you just say, Commander?!”

Spock wisely did not answer the question he had been asked. “Kindly remain seated until I have determined that it is safe for you to roam about at will, Doctor. You may still be injured, and I do not wish for that to happen.”

“Oh, well, thank you, Mr. Spock. That’s mighty considerate of you.”

“On the contrary. I do not wish to deter you whatsoever from your duties.”

“Thank you,” McCoy said suspiciously. “I think.”

Spock turned in the pilot’s chair and gave McCoy an exasperated look. “If anything happens to you that in any way could be construed as my fault, I am most certain that I would never hear the end of it as you would probably remind me of the fact on a daily basis. It is also my fervent belief that I would hear about it ad nauseam for the rest of my days and that you would include the complaint intact as you deliver a stirring elegy over my final resting place.”

“You should live so long, Vulcan!” McCoy snapped.

“Exactly, Doctor,” Spock said haughtily.

“Jim!”

But Jim Kirk was laughing so hard that he could help neither one, not the Earthling who had used an idiom nor the Vulcan who had misunderstood its meaning.

“Gentlemen! Gentlemen!” Kirk begged as he pulled himself to his feet. “Shall we postpone this discussion until later as we gather together for dinner? In the meanwhile, let us go to our separate assigned areas and write our reports. Thank you for going with me,” he said as he stepped out of the shuttle. "I appreciate all of your help and input.”

“For a minute there, I thought you were going to thank us for flying with you,” McCoy quipped. “You know, like you were a stewardess or something. But I guess that should be the Vulcan’s line, shouldn’t it?” He was looking back over his shoulder to make certain that Spock had heard the barb when he slipped.

Spock grabbed McCoy’s arm to steady him. “Be careful please, Doctor. I thought that I had made that abundantly clear a few moments ago.”

“Gee, had it been that long ago?!” McCoy growled. “I guess I had forgotten it already! That’s what happens, you know, when you get OLD!” And with that, he stomped away.

Spock stared after him. “What is his problem, Captain?”

“There’s several theories,” Kirk ruminated philosophically as he stared at McCoy’s departing figure, too.
“Perhaps he is in need of that castor oil which he always is threatening us with,” Spock conjectured.

Kirk gave him his sunniest, tight-lipped smile. “It would be poetic justice if that was the case now, wouldn’t it?

“I do not know how much poetry would be involved in such a scenario, but it would be appropriate if he would get a taste of his own medicine.”

Kirk blinked at what Spock had so innocently said. First he had taken the literal meaning of what Kirk had meant when Kirk had used the catchphrase ‘poetic justice.’ Then Spock had unknowingly used an idiom, ‘get a taste of his own medicine,’ and used it literally.

Kirk knew that McCoy would belabor both mix-ups from Spock, pointing out the errors. The only trouble was that McCoy would be trying to explain to a person who took everything literally. All that McCoy would get for his effort would be a lot of puzzlement from Spock and a lot of frustration for himself. Surely Kirk had learned from what he had seen his friends go through countless times.

And he had.

Kirk slapped Spock’s upper arm and laughed. “You’re a real hoot, Mr. Spock! Did you know that?! A real hoot!”

“I do not understand what you are meaning, Captain.”

“Don’t worry about it, Mr. Spock. You’ll save yourself a lot of confusion if you do. Besides, it’s not that important.”

Spock’s face cleared. “Alright. I will do that, Captain.”

“See you up on the bridge. I have a few things to check and then I will be right up there.”

“Yes, sir.”

Spock seemed pleased as he watched Kirk walk away. Such an intelligent man, Spock thought, and such a good captain. They were indeed lucky to have James T. Kirk on the Enterprise.

The turbolift door opened and Kirk stepped out of it.

“Captain on the bridge!” Chekov announced with a beaming face.

“That is unnecessary, Mr. Chekov,” Kirk remarked, but he was nonetheless pleased. He felt the same way about getting back with the bridge crew. He exchanged smiles with Uhura on his right.

“Welcome home, Captain,” Sulu greeted as he started to get out of the command chair.

“Stay seated, stay seated, Mr. Sulu. I am here on only a short visit at the moment. I’m not settled in, just checking to see that all is shipshape.”

“Steady and on course, Captain,” Sulu reported. “The comm will be ready for you when you make your official return, sir,” he reported with a smile.

“Good, good. I’ll let you get back to it then.”
“Yes, sir.” Sulu turned back to the viewing screen.

Kirk turned to his left and smiled. “Mr. Scott. You do get around, don’t you?”

“Aye, Captain. Just wanted to be up here if you unofficially checked in,” he said with a gentle smile. “I knew that you couldn’t stay away for long.”

Kirk’s grin deepened at his old friend. “You know me so well.”

“Aye, sir, as you know me,” Scotty agreed with the same satisfaction that Kirk was feeling.

“Everything went well while I was away?”

“Aye, sir, all is shipshape.”

“I knew I could count on you, Scotty. You’ve got a good head on your shoulders. I can always depend on you to know what is right.”

“Well, thank you, sir. I try to do my job the best that I am able.”

“I know you do. And how is our lady doing in the engine room?”

Scotty’s eyes sparkled with the same interest that Kirk was showing. “She’s purring right along, Captain. Just as pretty and perfect of a lady as she can be as she skims us along through the universe.”

“I may be down later, just to be nearer so I feel her heartbeat better. I have missed her touch.”

Scotty’s eyes twinkled. “I figured you would have, sir. I will have your spanner ready for you.”

“Spanner. Wrench. Whatever name we use for that magical tool we use to feel her pulse in our hands and thrill to its race up our arms, I can’t wait to have it in my hands again.”

“Aye, sir, you’ve got the heart of an engineer about you. That’s for sure now.”

Scotty was pleased as he watched Kirk move toward the turbolift. He and Kirk shared a love on an elementary level for the engines that drove the Enterprise. And each respected the other man’s unabashed love. Nobody else quite understood or appreciated this common tie between the two men, but it was just one of the many things that they liked about each other.

At dinner, Scotty had invited them to his quarters for a ‘wee drop of the dew’ as a welcome home treat. And they were all prompt at appearing at the appointed time.

“Aye, I haven’t forgotten you, either, Mr. Spock,” Scotty told him after he had served whiskey to Kirk and McCoy. “I brought a carafe of hot chocolate just for you. It has its own handle on the side so you can pour the hot liquid into this ceramic mug. I can be pouring a wee drop of Scottish heaven in your cup for you, also. I know that it won’t affect you, but the flavor would enhance the full-bodied tastiness of the cocoa. And it’ll grow hair on your chest, to be sure.”

“I had never aspired to do that, Mr. Scott, but I do appreciate the fact that you were thinking about me.”
“Hell, Scotty, he’s already got hair sprouting all over his chest! It’s like lichen going crazy in a dark cave!” McCoy informed Scott. “If you stimulated his chest hair anymore, we’ll have to get a teeny, tiny lawn mower in here and spruce him up every couple of weeks or so. Probably have to use a weed eater to trim up the tricky sides, though. Too many curves and planes around his ribs. Maybe we’ll even have to hire some billy goats and turn them loose on him if his chest gets to harboring too dense of a thicket on it.”

“How droll, Doctor,” Spock said with a disdainful sniff. “And I suppose that your own chest is as clear as one belonging to a pubescent boy?”

“Let me drink enough of this whiskey and I just might work up the effort to show you,” McCoy snapped back.

“I believe that I can force myself to forego the pleasure of that display,” Spock replied haughtily. “But if you are so inclined to make a public spectacle of yourself, do not let the voice of reason deter you.”

“That’s what you’d like, isn’t it?! Me prancing around here in the altogether while you criticize every flaw that you find in my body! Well, let me tell you something, Mister! You first!”

“Well, Mr. Scott,” Kirk said with a smile to show that he held no rancor with Scotty, even though he was using his name and not a familiar nickname. “I expect that you had no idea that your nice evening would turn into a session of ‘you show me yours and I’ll show you mine,’ did you?”

Scotty looked nervous. “Are the lads gonna start undressing now? I don’t know if I can condone the likes of that kind of activity in my quarters.”

“Don’t worry about it, Scotty,” Kirk soothed with another smile. “They aren’t about to do anything like that.”

“Wanna bet?!” McCoy blurted out, slammed down his drink, and ripped his tunic and black T-shirt over his head. Or at least he tried, but the shirts got caught at his neck. Then he was fighting to pull his neck free and then his wrists. “There! What do you think about that?!” he dared the room.

Scotty looked befuddled, Kirk looked amused, and Spock simply looked. In fact he seemed to be complacently staring without moving. It passed through Kirk’s mind that if Spock didn’t blink before long, his eyeballs would be drying out, a condition that McCoy was constantly harping about to Spock.

But Kirk could tell that McCoy was not concerned with Spock’s eyeballs at the moment. In fact, he seemed more interested in how his half-naked state was affecting Spock. Kirk couldn’t quite put his finger on what had changed in the room, but something had. And it seemed to deal with Spock and McCoy.

“Oh, put your clothes back on, Bones,” Kirk directed. “Then we can get down to some serious drinking. Oh,” he said, pulling something out of his pocket. “I brought a chocolate bar for you so you could party, too, Mr. Spock.”

Spock’s attention was happily diverted from McCoy as McCoy yanked his shirts back down over his head.

“Thank you, Captain,” Spock said with a smile.

“Well, here’s something for you, too,” McCoy mumbled and handed Spock a small box.
Spock opened it. “Belgian dark chocolate. Thank you so much, Doctor!” His thanks were touchingly sincere.

“Well, I had them just lying around. And I thought that they should get eaten before they got old,” he mumbled. “Besides, I didn’t want you to be left out of the party, either, I suppose.”

Spock was genuinely touched by the thoughtfulness of his friends. “Thank you so much. It is a true bounty to have this much chocolate on hand at any one time. I shall ration it this evening so that I will have some to enjoy in the days ahead.”

“Lad, let me rid you of that false assumption before this evening gets much further,” Scotty said, leaning into Spock. “Now the other three of us are not gonna be giving up on this whiskey until the bottle is empty or we’re all drunk, whichever comes first. And it generally ends in a tossup with a lot of merrymaking from all hands. You donna want to be known as a party-pooper now, do you?”

“I assure you, Mr. Scott, that I do not intend to poop on your party or anywhere else in your quarters if I can so help it.”

“Aye, that’s good, that’s good.”

Behind them, McCoy muttered to Kirk, “He’s just gotta know what he’s saying. I don’t care what he claims. Nobody can be that innocent or that stupid when it comes to American slang. Nobody!”

Kirk got a happy look on his face, but took a sip of his whiskey so he didn’t have to answer.

After Scotty got his guests served and they were all relaxed, he asked what he had been wanting to know. “So what is the news?” For not only was this a social gathering of close friends, but also an unofficial meeting of the four top officers of the Enterprise.

“It was good to get together with Rob Arnold again,” Kirk said as he swirled the whiskey in his glass. “I hadn’t seen him since Academy days.”

“Yeah, me, neither.” McCoy agreed with a look of nostalgia on his face. “Rob was the best, you know? If he couldn’t think of something to do, it wasn’t worth doing.” He chuckled to himself. “Remember when he turned those snakes loose in the women’s dorm? They were harmless, but were ringers for the deadly fire snake from the Delta Quadrant. Rob’s excuse was that the women should be paying more attention in zoology class, and then they’d know that the snakes couldn’t hurt them.”

“Except for scaring them to death.” McCoy’s smile faded and he frowned into his drink. “Too bad what Rob told us about Jakey McMasters, though.”

“Yeah, that was hard,” Kirk agreed, and everyone could tell that it had been working on him ever since he had heard.

“What happened, if I may be so bold?” Scotty asked.

“He was another one of us,” Kirk answered. “Fun loving, cocksure, brilliant, ethical, talented, good-looking....”

“Modest,” McCoy murmured into his drink with a smirk.

“He was just as excited as I was to get a starship,” Kirk explained to Scotty. “He intended to be personally connected to her crew. They were his responsibility and he would take care of them. All good captains feel the same way, otherwise they shouldn’t be captains.” He took a healthy sip of his drink.
“Then things started going wrong,” McCoy said, picking up the narrative of the story. “There were several disasters. An explosion below decks killed several crewmen. A landing party was wiped out by natives. A psychotic ensign went berserk in sickbay and killed a doctor and a couple of other patients.” He frowned. “I took that one personally myself.” He had to take a fortifying swig of his drink.

Kirk picked up the story again. “Jakey took it personally, as if he could’ve done something more to prevent all of those tragedies but didn’t. Some things are just gonna happen, no matter what.”

“Aye,” Scotty muttered. “Experience teaches you that. Plan for the worse and hope for the best. That is still a good motto to live by.”

“But what if you feel guilty about it?” Kirk whispered in a soft voice as he sat forward and stared at Scotty. “What if logic tells you that it isn’t your fault, but you still cannot forgive yourself?”

It was one of those subjects that doesn't get covered in school, because there really isn't an answer that fits everyone. Still, Kirk was seeking an answer. And everyone hoped that Scotty could tell Kirk something wise that would help him.

“Then you need to find a way and means to forgive yourself,” Scotty answered him earnestly. “Because a decent man would not be able to live with guilt like that plaguing him. And if there is one thing I know about you, Captain, it is that you are a decent man. Decent and kind and ethical. And something like this other could eat the heart right out of you.”

"Lay it on the line for me, Scotty, why don't you?" Kirk lisped with a lazy smile, but nonetheless there were hidden barbs in his words.

"Aye, Captain," the nervous Scotty agreed. "I'll not start lying to you now, and never will."

"A man who stands by the courage of his convictions," Kirk declared as he slapped Scotty on the shoulder. "That's what I love about you, you know. Your earnestness."

But Scotty seemed troubled.

"Relax!'" Kirk ordered as he shook Scotty's shoulder. "Now, let's not be neglecting this fine bottle of whiskey any longer!"

Scotty looked relieved. "Aye, Captain, and that would be a shame now."

So the three men filled their glasses again while the fourth nibbled on his chocolate more frequently than he realized. But he trusted the three men with him to take care of him in case he overindulged, just as they trusted him with themselves. And the serious discussion about an old friend's downfall was soon replaced by other news.

But topics that are not solved are not so easily forgotten. They are simply shelved. And that is what happened with this one.
“I don’t know if a hypospray will do your chocolate hangover any good, Mr. Spock, but I’ll give you one,” McCoy said as he prepared the injection.

Spock sat ramrod straight on the examining table. “I realize that Starfleet regulations might not cover the use of hyposprays in this instance. It is highly irregular.”

“That’s okay, Spock,” McCoy said with a grin to himself. “You are highly irregular yourself. So it all works out, doesn’t it?”

“But it would also be irregular if an Earthling was receiving the same treatment. And I do not know if Earthlings have a problem with chocolate.”

“Well, some of them are allergic to it, poor devils. Others just wear the evidence of their over-indulgence on their faces with an outbreak of pimples. Then there are others who crave it constantly and consider it as being a gift from the gods and one of the four basic food groups.”

“I can relate to their cravings and offer them my sympathy. It is a terrible cross to bear.”

“It just makes you a little more human,” McCoy said as he gave Spock the shot on his upper arm through his tunic sleeve.

“But it is highly irregular.”

“You’ve mentioned that before. Starfleet will survive if we bend the regulations a little.” He bent closer in a conspiratorial manner. ”I won’t tell, if you won’t tell. It’ll be our shabby little secret.”

That just made Spock sit up straighter. “But it is not a standard use for a hypospray.”

“Then we’ll just say that I was conducting an experiment on a lab animal, okay?”

“I do not know if I wish to be described as a lab animal.” Spock acted annoyed.

“Why not? I can picture you as such,” McCoy said as he mentally saw Spock with long whiskers and an equally long tail struggling helplessly while a giant hand held him in place and another hand approached him with a hypodermic needle as thick as a tree trunk.

“Why are you smiling like that, Doctor?”

“Hmm?”

“You are smiling with a great deal of satisfaction. And I would like to know why.”

“Oh, just picturing you as a laboratory animal.”
“I knew it! You are picturing me as a rat!”

“But a cute and cuddly white rat. Something nearly as small as a mouse. Nothing the size of rats that live in the city sewers. I've heard that they can get as big as a domestic cat, but that's probably just an urban legend,” he said with his fingers crossed behind his back.

“I would feel better about all of what you are saying if you did not have your hands behind your back.”

“Mr. Spock, you are just being paranoid,” McCoy said as he hustled Spock off the biobed. “Now it’s time to get back to work. No more shirking of duty for you. If the hypospray is going to work at all, you should be feeling better by now.”

Spock looked amazed. “I am. Thank you, Doctor.”

“As for the other, forget it. You know, the business about you being a rat the size of a domestic cat.”

"Oh, yes. Hmm.” Spock grew thoughtful as he remembered.

Chapel entered and spoke to Spock as he left, but he didn't even acknowledge her. “What’s wrong with our Mr. Spock?” she asked McCoy. "He looked a little distracted.”

McCoy chuckled as he crossed his arms. “I’ve got him thinking that he’s a big, ugly lab rat the size of a domestic cat!”

“Dr. McCoy!” she scolded as she shook her head at him. “That’s not nice!”

“Maybe not. But it sure as hell feels good to get ahead of him for a change!”

Jim Kirk did not know of Spock’s use of a hypospray to solve his problems, but he probably would have wished for a simple solution like that for himself. As it was, he could not get Jakey McMasters’ terrible fate out of his mind. The responsibilities of command weigh heavily on the ones in charge, and Kirk was beginning to realize that it is not the days of glory that kill a commander but the sleepless nights of endless worry over inglorious misdeeds.

He had been brought up to realize that the reward for misdeeds was retribution, a swift and sometimes even cruel retribution. An energetic daredevil like Jim Kirk was always getting in trouble, too, and was a source of frustration for his widowed mother. Winona sometimes could not cope with Jim or his older brother who brooded about being stuck in Iowa. Not even the addition of a father-figure helped much when Winona remarried. In fact Frank caused a lot of problems because he believed in corporal punishment and sometimes had to resort to it with Jim.

Frank’s methods were crude, but Jim Kirk understood them. What is learned as juveniles colors the thinking of adults even though more enlightened methods and philosophies may be discovered later on. Physical violence is always lurking in the background, no matter how civilized the thinking of people may become.

And it was definitely lurking in Jim Kirk’s background.

It was probably an off-handed remark from Dr. McCoy that put the idea into Jim Kirk’s head.
“You know, in spite of everything, Scotty is one of the most moral people I know.”

Kirk came out deep within his mental fog. “What? What did you say, Bones?”

McCoy nodded across the mess hall behind Kirk’s back. “Scotty. Being moral in spite of his occasional hard drinking and salty language. He’s generally a courtly gentleman.”

“So’s Mr. Sulu,” Kirk teased as he studied the food on his food again.

“Damn it, Kirk! We’re talking about Mr. Scott here!”

“I believe that the Captain is cognizant of that fact, Doctor,” the haughty Vulcan beside him told McCoy.

“Well, who died and made you king of all you survey, that’s what I want to know!” McCoy snapped back, more flustered than angry.

“At the moment, all I am surveying is you, Doctor. And I doubt that you wish to be answerable to me.”

“Damn straight! Now, there’s something we can agree on! And you can take that to the bank.”

“Since the nearest bank is thousands of light years from here, you will surely understand if I do not act upon your recommendation for me.”

McCoy’s eyes narrowed. “You’re just trying to be obstinate, ain’t ya?!”

“Doctor, may I remind you that you are the one who mentioned that I do my banking in a non-existent facility--”

Kirk smirked as he saw McCoy drawing in breath to lambaste Spock. The children were at it again, he thought as he tuned them out. But then, here he was back to his problems. McCoy’s observation had been only a momentary distraction.

He’d had burdens of command whirling through his mind and hadn’t been paying attention to McCoy. But wasn’t that one of the reasons why Kirk kept McCoy and Spock around? Wasn’t that what they were there to do? Distract Kirk? Ease his mind before it burned out on petty problems? But his buddies couldn’t be doing their jobs if he wasn’t paying attention. After all, he had to bring something to the table. And that something was his attention.

But later, as he walked through the bowels of the Enterprise, there was only one place that was drawing his attention. The engine room. The engine room and all of her myriad nooks and crannies where problems could develop. Or if no problems, just nooks and crannies that could be tinkered with. Where a guy could take a wrench, crawl into some obscure spot, and get himself lost in physical labor.

Montgomery Scott looked up and grinned when Kirk entered.

“Good afternoon, Mr. Scott,” Kirk greeted, feeling calmer already as he felt the heartbeat of the Enterprise surging through him. The throbbing of the engines could always soothe him as nothing else could.

“I saw that you were looking troubled at lunch and thought that it might not be long before you were showing up here,” Scotty said as he eyed his captain levelly.
Kirk grinned with relief. There would be no need for pretensions down here. It just would be him and Scotty and the gracious lady they loved. “You know me so well,” Kirk murmured, knowing that he didn’t even need to be making that excuse.

“Aye, that I do, lad,” Scotty said as he handed Kirk a wrench. “Come on, let’s get to work then. The Enterprise is a grand lady, but she doesn’t like to be kept waiting.”

Kirk breathed deeply as he fell into step behind Scotty.

Just him and Scotty and the grand lady they both loved so well. That was a tough threesome to beat.

And as he put wrench to a bolt and felt the vibration, the essence, the very heartbeat of the Enterprise enter his body through that wrench, Kirk felt peace melting away his cares. True, he still had his cares, but he could meet them head-on when he tackled them again. But first, he got to commune with his ladylove for a little bit longer.

McCoy couldn’t quite put his finger on it, but something was different. Somewhere in the universe, something had changed. Something had undergone a subtle shift, and he had the sneaking hunch that it had happened inside the Enterprise. And inside him.

And he knew that was about the dumbest notion he’d come up with in a coon’s age. He smirked to himself. A coon’s age. Now there was an American expression that would have that Vulcan looking puzzled and wondering why McCoy was using the lifespan of a raccoon to tell time.

McCoy grinned, but it felt sad upon his face. Yes, a lot of things puzzled Spock. But on the whole, McCoy had to admit that Spock was doing pretty well to adjust as well as he did. McCoy did not know if he could adjust as easily as Spock did.

“Adjust as easily as Spock did.” McCoy had to smirk again with the same sad smile on his face as he said the expression over in his mind. There was no way that Vulcan adjusted easily. He went kicking and screaming and foaming at the mouth. Well, not literally. But he might as well be doing those things the way he acted sometime, as if the universe would stand still before he could consent to change.

Still, McCoy had to admit, Spock was predictable. If McCoy was for something, then Spock was generally against it-- seemingly because McCoy was for it.

That was nothing new. Then what was it that was different?

McCoy thought back, and the closest he could come to when things had changed was the night that Scotty had welcomed them back with a nice bottle of whiskey for him and Kirk, and Scotty had intended for them to finish it. There had even been assorted forms of chocolate for Spock to achieve his own special form of drunken stupor. McCoy would’ve never thought it was possible to become intoxicated on chocolate, but he had seen Spock under the influence of that type of drug on several occasions.

And the night of Scotty’s party had found Spock to be particularly susceptible to the charms of the exotic treat. So much so that McCoy decided that Kirk needed help in escorting Spock to their adjoining quarters. But Spock had quickly amended that decision once they had left Scotty’s quarters.
“It is illogical to conduct ourselves in such a fashion, gentlemen.”

“Why, ah, why do you say that, Mr. Spock?” Kirk slurred.

“Why, if Dr. McCoy helps you to escort me to my quarters, that will leave him alone to navigate the vast corridors of this vast ship all by himself. And I, sir, will not stand by and tolerate conditions such as that! They are intolerable, sir! Intolerable!” Spock averred stoutly.

“What the hell has the Vulcan so stirred up?” McCoy wanted to know as he held his head. “He sounds like a banshee bellowing in a huge cave.”

“Let me repeat again, sir, that I protest!” Spock shouted with blazing eyes and forefinger thrusting up into the air. Then he stopped and frowned. “Although at the moment, I cannot remember about what. Captain, do you know?”

“Hmm?” Kirk wanted to know.

Spock apparently thought that Kirk could not hear instead of wanting a repeat of what he had said. So Spock raised his voice to what one would use with the deaf. “What! Was! I! Pro! Test! Ing! A! Bout!?! Sir!”

“Shh,” Kirk tried to shush Spock, but had trouble blowing on his finger without spitting all over it. “Tell you what. Spock, we’ll escort McCoy to his quarters, then we can see each other home. How does that sound?” he asked with a happy grin.

“That sounds like an equi- equi- equi- good plan to me, Captain,” Spock agreed. “Come, Doctor,” he said, grabbing McCoy arm. “We will see you to your rooms.”

“Rooms? I have rooms now?” asked a puzzled McCoy. “There was just one when I left. Amazing! I should have left it quicker!”

“I think he means your quarters, Bones,” Kirk explained. “And we’re going to take you to them now. Your rooms just sounded more elegant, like something out of a Sherlock Holmes story.”

McCoy’s face crumbled. “But I wanted to make sure you guys got home okay!”

“We’ll be just fine, Bones,” Kirk said, patting his face torn by tragedy, but the pats delivered by a drunken guy were more like slaps. “We’ll have each other. And you, you will have nobody!” Then his face clouded up, too.

“Ah, Jimmy!” McCoy lamented as great sorrow broke over his own face. “Jimmy, don’t cry! I’ll be alright! Just so you guys are! That's what I care about! You guys!”

McCoy fumbled backwards and drew Spock into the huddle with him and Kirk. After many pats on the back and expressions of interest for each other, they were able to move out again.

And so the threesome had woven to McCoy’s quarters, but somehow it had become an expedition with Kirk leading the way followed by Spock and McCoy stumbling along with their arms around each other, holding each other up. There was a lot of fumbling of their hands as they tripped over their own feet.

When McCoy was showering the next day, he found darkening bruises all over his body and wondered if Spock had similar hand-shaped markings on his body.

But what got McCoy about those bruises was that he could feel them days later, as if Spock’s hands
had left a memory of himself on him. McCoy wondered if he had left similar memories on Spock’s body.

More importantly, he wondered if Spock ever contemplated his own bruises and relived how he had gotten them.

As for McCoy, he just couldn’t shake the memory of clinging to Spock and of being aware of his body bumping against his in a friendly manner. It had felt great. And McCoy knew one thing for sure. The longer that time passed, the more that McCoy wanted to feel that way again. It hadn’t meant so much at first, but now it seemed to be just at the edge of his awareness.

1.

For awhile the trips to the engine room brought peace to the captain of the mighty Enterprise. Reverting back to a time when man had to work with his hands felt good to Kirk. He felt that he was paying something back, something that had been lost when mankind had started relying primarily on their brains to earn a living. Straining his muscles and bending steel to his will seemed to compensate for the supposed shortcomings he thought that he had.

Then had came the day when the hum and thrust of the engines weren’t enough to soothe Kirk. And like an addict who requires stronger and stronger drugs not only to maintain the needed high but simply to reach it, Kirk realized he needed more, something more from his lady.

I need to feel the thrust more, he decided, but how? Simple, he decided. Apply the wrench to the bolt, then hold it. Simply hold it, and it worked beautifully. The purr and thrust of the engines traveled up through the wrench and into his hand and up and his hand and all through his hungry body. He closed his eyes and lived for the hum of the engines that were making one giant tuning fork of his body. And Kirk was enjoying it.

Enjoying it and about to have an orgasm when a nasal, indignant voice reflecting its owner’s shock and disbelief rocked Kirk back into the cold, cruel world of reality. “What the hell are you doing with that spanner, man?!?”

Kirk’s eyes flew open to the sight of the clearly stressed Scott.

“Either turn the bolt or let it loose before you wear it and the spanner out!”

“They’re both metal, Scotty.” It sounded stupid even to Kirk, but it was all he could think to say.

“Then it will be wearing you out, Captain. Man was not meant to stand there all day with a spanner in his hand waiting to turn it if necessary. You look like one of those statues that used to be at the front door of the plantation houses. You know the statues I’m meaning. It was a little boy with his hand out and the fine gentlemen could tie their horses to the statue. But we’re not needing anything that grand on the Enterprise now.”

“Not many fine gentlemen riding up and needing to tether their horses nowadays so they can saunter into Tara to have afternoon tea with Miss Scarlett?” Kirk asked with an insipid smirk. “I suppose even that rascal Ashley Wilkes has been turning a cold shoulder to our fair Miss O’Hara again.”

Scotty didn’t know if Kirk was being flippant or difficult. Or just plain had gone a little bit crazy. But something told him that Kirk was needing whatever he always came into the engine room to find,
that it was necessary, and that Kirk was not being flippant or difficult or a little bit crazy.

“Supposing I show you how you can feel our lady living in another way?” Scotty didn’t know if he wanted to disclose his secret, but something told him that he could. “Supposing you could feel her in another way?”

Kirk studied him, then solemnly nodded.

Scotty led him to a console. “Put your hands on the controls.”

Kirk did and a look of wonder went over his face. “There she is,” he lisped. “Alive and real as any goddess.”


“This is wonderful, Scotty.” Kirk looked around him. “The whole room’s this way, isn’t it? The walls? The railings on the stairs? So many things in here. They’re all vibrating with the life that is in her heart.”

“Aye. But you can feel it in anything that conducts and intensifies motion. The tubes for the water coolant. The consoles. The thrusters powered by the atomic pile themselves.”

Without warning, Kirk bent at the waist and draped himself over the console.

“Here, lad! What are you doing?!” Scotty demanded, shocked by Kirk’s actions yet concerned for his captain, too.

“Embracing our lady, Scotty,” Kirk murmured with a smile and closed eyes as if he had found the secret to his own personal Shangï-La. “Letting her make love to me.”

Scotty frowned and felt hot and cold all over. Kirk had just said out loud what Scotty had never dared put into words. He did not know if it was right to put a blatant sexual connotation to the way he felt about their Lady. But Kirk hadn’t hesitated. So now it was out there, and nobody could deny its existence anymore.

“And the sex is just wonderful,” Kirk cooed as he embraced the console and undulated over it.

Scotty needed to be taking a part of the ceremony. He stretched out a hand and rubbed it up and down over Kirk’s back. Then waited.

Would he be welcomed or unwanted?


Scotty joined his hand by pressing his chest firmly across Kirk’s back. And Kirk felt complete with Scotty over him and their lady pressing into him. And the orgasm that shot through him rocked him to his very soul, and he felt truly at peace with himself.
Chapter Summary

Kirk's punishment gets harsher and the relationship between McCoy and Spock enters a new phase.

His nurses were tidying up and making patients comfortable in sickbay so Leonard McCoy drew back and tried to consul his tired, yet remorseful captain. Jim Kirk stood back against a wall, taking in the carnage of the ill-fated day as if it was a tragedy on a grand scale. And to Kirk, it was.

“You should try to get some rest, Jim. Everything's under control here. I'll hold your people overnight and they will be monitored.” His eyes flicked over Kirk with sympathy. "They will be okay, Jim. Honest. They just need some rest. So do you."

But Kirk looked haunted as he took in the sight of his injured crewmen. "How can I rest in peace when they have to stay here? Tonight they could be with their friends and relaxing after a hard day's work. Instead, they'll be here! They should be feeling satisfied with their jobs, not, not recuperating because of them!"

McCoy patted Kirk's arm. Kirk was overreacting and was in need of reassurance. "It wasn't your fault, Jim. You gotta believe that. Nobody could've known that geyser was gonna erupt at that time,” McCoy muttered.

McCoy understood Kirk's angst. No matter how philosophical and abstract they tried to discuss the matter, the fact remained that people had been injured, people who Kirk was responsible for. If McCoy had not understood the gravity of the situation before, he did after he and his nurses had worked on several injured Red Shirts and tried to alleviate their suffering. The injured weren't just medical cases to them. The injured were living, breathing people with nerve endings that had been screaming in raw pain when they had been brought in for treatment.

Kirk was looking wild-eyed and remorseful as he held a forgotten hot drink in his hand. His dark blonde hair was unkempt and dirt streaked his handsome face. And he probably stunk to high heaven after being so close to so much live steam stinking of sulfur. “I should’ve realized that there was a possibility of it erupting, Bones. The signs were there. A volatile landscape with the stability of a Yellowstone Park. Steam escaping from vents everywhere. The smell of sulfur permeating the air. Pools of bubbling, boiling water. It was a landscape out of Hell, and I ordered men to go into it.”

“Yeah, but you didn’t tell them to walk through Old Faithful when it decided to blow its stack. A geyser just doesn't erupt. It builds pressure until it can't control it any longer. Your men surely saw that something was gonna happen and soon. There would've been steam rising out of its vent. That should've been the first clue that that geyser was gonna be relieving itself and be real messy about it."

"I don't know--"

"Look, if a teakettle is singing on the burner of a cookstove and steam is bouncing its lid around like a kid with ants in his pants, you should realize that something is reaching critical mass.” McCoy frowned. "Where was these guys common sense?!!"
“I was the one in charge. My common sense should be the only one in question.”

McCoy narrowed his eyes at Kirk. “Drink that herbal tea before I put you in sickbay for dehydration. You’re starting to talk crazy like you’re low on fluids!”

“I’m starting to talk like the one who was in charge! It’s me, Bones! Me! I’m responsible!” Kirk declared, bruising his chest with his jabbing thumb.

“I know you were, Jim,” McCoy said in a tired voice. “But nobody’s gonna hold you accountable, least of all me. I’ll even testify to that fact in a board of inquiry, if it comes to that. But I doubt that it will. It was an accident, Jim. Pure and simple. An accident.”

“But I can’t live with that sort of verdict! I need to be punished!”

“You gonna have to find a way to accept it, because that’s the way it stands. Nobody’s having a problem about it except you.” McCoy looked sympathetic as he touched Kirk’s arm. “Find a way, Jim, before it drives you crazy. I’m here for you, Jim, you know that. As all of your friends are. Just let us know how we can help.”

But there was only one way that was making sense to Kirk, only one way that he understood. But he didn’t know if it would make sense to anybody else.

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2.

Much later, Scotty found Kirk draped over a console in engineering. “Captain?” When he got no response, he got worried. “Captain? Are you asleep?” A moment passed with no answer. “Jim?! What’s wrong?! Answer me, lad!”

With a sigh, Jim Kirk stirred himself and glanced up with a sheepish, out of focus look on his face. “Didn’t mean to frighten you, Scotty. Sorry. I can’t seem to do anything right today. I’m sorry about a whole lot of things that have gone wrong,” he muttered as he straightened himself back onto his feet.

“I heard about the away mission, Captain,” Scotty said so that Kirk wouldn’t have to go through a whole lot of explanations for him. “That could’ve happened to anyone, sir.”

“Yeah, but it happened to me,” Kirk retorted with a smile full of irony and bitterness. "And that's what makes it hellish to bear."

Scotty grimaced, but couldn’t say anything. He knew how guilt worked, and sometimes it was unreasonable. But that's how things worked when someone was feeling responsible for something, even if he couldn't have controlled the outcome.

“Sorry, Scotty. It isn’t you, it’s what you said. ‘That could’ve happened to anyone.’ That’s one of those social niceties that are supposed to be safe to use, isn’t it? Things we say, like, ‘So sorry for your loss’ and ‘Well, at least his pain is over.’ But when is the pain over for doing something stupid, Scotty? Hmm? Can you answer that one for me?” He looked tired to death of the whole affair, but knew that he hadn’t made his atonement yet for his sins. "When is the statute of limitations over for being a horse’s ass?”

“I, I… canna, sir. And that’s the god’s truth,” Scotty admitted earnestly. He didn't quite know what
he could say or do for his troubled captain, and he so wished that he could be of service.

“You’re a good man, Scotty,” Kirk said, patting him on the arm. “And I shouldn’t be putting you on the spot like that.” He gave the console a sad look. “I thought that our lady could help, but I’m afraid it’s going to take more before I’m forgiven this time.” He gave Scotty an earnest look. “I have to make a commitment, but I’ll need help, your help, if you would, please.”

“How can I help you, sir?”

Kirk picked up an object off the console and handed it to Scotty.

It looked like a stick about two feet long, but it quivered when Scotty shook it.

“What the--” Scotty asked with rounding eyes.

“It’s a riding crop. I want you to use it on me.”

Scotty nearly dropped the offending object. “I canna do anything like that!”

“Please, Scotty. I can’t reach myself properly. And I trust you. To do what needs to be done. And to make sure I survive it.”

“Where did you get such a frightful thing like this, anyway?!?” Scotty demanded.

“It was my stepfather’s. Frank used it on me all the time. I understand its authority. It’s what is required for my punishment.”

Scotty swallowed hard. “Don’t ask this of me!”

“Please.” Kirk wet his lips. “Please?”

Scotty wet his lips, too, then finally nodded his head.

Kirk spread himself face down over the console and spread his legs apart slightly. His head hung over the back as he gripped the top firmly.

“Stand to the side, so you can get a good downward arc,” Kirk instructed. “Across the buttocks.”

Scotty grimaced. “How, ah, many strokes, sir?”

“Five. One for each crewman injured by my carelessness. And, Scotty, make them strong blows. Or you’ll have to start over.”

“Y-yes, sir.” Scotty bounced the crop on the upthrust mounds before him. The soft and yielding flesh beneath the Starfleet uniform quivered. Such innocent skin! And soon to be ravaged.

The riding crop whistled through the air and indented the uniform. Kirk gasped and contracted his buttocks as he writhed on the console.

“One,” Kirk counted when he could catch his breath. Sweat had already popped out on his forehead.

“Sir--”

“Four more, Scotty. Please.”

Scotty didn’t know how he could do this horrible thing four more times. He already felt sick to his
stomach and wanted to vomit.

He laid the lashes out uniformly as if he was a pro at something like this. He started at the top of Kirk’s buttocks and marched his way slowly down, making certain that Kirk had time to catch his breath between each blow. And Kirk kept gritting his teeth and counting out the blows as if that was part of the punishment, also.

At last the deed was done and Scotty dropped the crop. Kirk gave into his pain and collapsed against the console and moaned.

“Oh, sir, I must get you to sickbay.”

“No. No sickbay,” Kirk ordered as he rallied. He tried to push himself up. “Help me. Help me up.”

It hurt to see the pale-faced and sweating man struggling, so Scotty grabbed his arm. “Sir. Please.”

Finally he got Kirk to his shaky feet. Kirk was hunched over and he scrabbled to hang onto Scotty’s arm. “I’m going to be sick!” he gasped.

“Sir, I shouldn’t done it!”

“Get me… Get me to the head!”

And Scotty did, right before Kirk emptied the contents of his stomach. Scotty cleaned up the ashen faced man who clung to him for support.

“Now will you let me get you to Sickbay?” Scotty knew that he was going to be ill himself if much more of Kirk’s suffering went on.

“Get me… Get me to my quarters!” Kirk gasped out.

“But, Jim…. I canna manage you on my own! Besides, you’re hurt and needing medical attention!”

“No… Sickbay! Please, Scotty! Promise… me!”

At that moment, two crewmen entered and looked aghast at their injured captain.

“Mr. Scott! What happened?!”

Kirk gave Scotty a wild, pleading look.

“The captain has fallen,” Scotty answered. “Help me to get him to his quarters.”

“But shouldn’t he be taken to Sickbay?” the other crewman questioned.

Kirk’s eyes widened at Scotty.

“He’ll be alright after he’s had some rest,” Scotty reassured Kirk and the two crewman. Now he just needed someone to reassure him.

They got Kirk down onto his side on his bed. The two crewmen shot questioning looks at Scotty, but left when Scotty dismissed them.
“Are you certain that you want to be left alone, Captain?” Scotty asked the quivering man grasping the edge of his bed for support.

“Forget that!” Kirk ordered with all of the vigor that he could muster from his weakened body.

“But--”

“Do I have your forgiveness?”

“My… my, what?” Scotty asked with a puzzled look.

“Your forgiveness. Am I absolved of my sins?”

Scotty’s face was stunned. “My god, man! I’m not a priest!”

“Please, Scotty. I need your absolution.”

Scotty frowned. “Well, you have it, if it’s that important to you. But it’s not worth much.”

“Oh, but it is,” Kirk cooed. “You’re such a good person.”

But other words thundered through Scotty's mind, words that contradicted what Kirk had just said about Scotty, words that Scotty knew to be true. So how could both sets of words be the truth?

‘I just beat my captain’s ass with a riding crop! How the hell does that make me a good person?!’

But, of course, he couldn’t say any of that. Not out loud. Not to Kirk. Not now. Kirk was too fragile. Kirk didn’t want to hear words that were as truthful as he thought his own were. He just needed his own truth. For there was no room in his universe for other truths. And that left Scotty out.

“Will you give me the kiss of absolution?” Kirk was wanting to know, breaking into Scotty's whirling thoughts as Scotty struggled to find a sane balance again in his own universe.

Scotty tried to concentrate on what was being asked of him. More?! Kirk was wanting more, needing... more?! Scotty tried to get his mind around it. “The, ah…?”

“The kiss of absolution.”

What the hell?!

Then a tiredness came over Scotty, and he gave in.

Why the hell not?! If he was going to be struck down anyway by the Finger of God coming down out of a clear, blue sky to highlight his sinful body in a blaze of superheated lightning, it might as well be for this blasphemy, too. There's comes a point when it just doesn't make any difference anymore, and Scotty felt like he was at that point.

Scotty bent and gently kissed Kirk’s forehead, giving Kirk the absolution he sought.

“Am I forgiven?”

The lie rolled off his tongue so easily. “Yes, my son.”

Kirk sighed and went to sleep. Scotty covered him with a light blanket, then tiptoed away from the smiling, forgiven man.
Now Scotty just wished someone would absolve him of his sins.

For a moment he couldn’t really remember why they were down here, roaming around on this exotic planet like they were thinking of buying property on a choice spot and erecting a condo with an ocean view. But it would be spectacular if they did. The rolling mountains behind them were timbered with hardwoods that meandered downhill nearly to the edge of the gentle surf breaking on the sandy beaches. A short ways offshore, a natural breakwater protected the beach and gave the little cove its sense of being securely sheltered. It was perfect here; just perfect! One could live here so easily! Life would be so carefree here! All that was required was for someone to show up and keep breathing! The planet would take care of the rest!

And that’s how the Earthling felt everywhere he turned. The planet had the type of atmosphere that made one forget the original purpose for being here. McCoy could gladly chuck it all, Enterprise, career, friends, and become part of the landscape. It was so relaxing. Nature just seemed to have a way of taking him in and making him feel at home. And he wouldn’t fight it one bit. No, sirree! Not Mrs. McCoy’s little boy from Georgia! Because the peace he was feeling here was so welcoming, he had the notion that he would be happy to stay here forever.

If this wasn’t Paradise, then it was a damn good imitation of it!

Generally Kirk liked to go on these landing parties to new, unexplored planets. It was a perfect set-up for him: lush, pristine scenery, the prospect of adventure around every corner, and a feeling the planet had been untouched (and therefore uncontaminated) by anything human.

But Kirk had been puny today and had preferred to stay on the Enterprise. Indeed, his face was pale and he acted like he was walking on eggs. At least he was back on the bridge, which was a decided improvement. For a couple of days, he’d stayed close to his quarters. He hadn’t even gone to meals and would have gotten malnourished if it hadn’t been for his friends.

McCoy and Spock selected foods for him which Spock delivered and made certain that he ate on the ruse of playing three-dimensional chess with him. McCoy decided not to visit Kirk in fear that Kirk would look on it as a house call and would get upset. Ordinarily, McCoy would have roared in and reminded Kirk that nobody outranked the Chief Medical Officer, not even a captain, when it came to health matters.

Something, though, some instinct, had told McCoy to keep his distance. Not even Spock questioned McCoy’s decision, and McCoy wasn’t about to explain that he was following some sort of gut feeling. That would have the Vulcan snorting for a month and would give him all sorts of new snide remarks to level at McCoy.

McCoy could just hear Spock: "Feelings?! Doctor, really!"

But Kirk staying on the Enterprise had forced McCoy and Spock to explore this planet on their own. It hadn’t been a bad experience so far, though. Finding new wonders was as good as unwrapping shining packages and kept them from arguing. In fact, it was almost pleasant being with Spock, McCoy noted. He was almost having a good time with him. And he never thought that he would be saying that.

“Got enough cuttings for you to study back in the lab?” McCoy inquired as he took a sample of tree bark and sniffed it. “Hmm. Smells like cinnamon. We could find a lot of use for this tree,” he
muttered almost to himself as he stowed the bark in his collecting bag. “Well? What’s your answer?” he said, raising his voice. “Happy with the samples you’ve gathered or not?”

“It is a virtual Garden of Eden here,” Spock said instead of answering McCoy’s question.

McCoy grinned. “Spock, this place is getting to you, isn’t it?”

“Why do you say that, Doctor?”

“Because the answer you gave me did not match the question I asked you. Either that, or you are surely slipping,” McCoy teased, knowing that Spock was still very much in his prime.

“Perhaps you did not understand the shorthand of what I told you.”

“You? Using shorthand to speak?” He tilted his head in interest. “How does that work exactly?”

“You asked if I had enough cuttings for me to study back in the laboratory, correct?”

“By golly, you were listening, after all! It just didn’t soak in so you could give an understandable answer back apparently, though.”

“Oh, but it did ‘soak in,’ as you so quaintly phrased it. I simply elected to imply that I had sufficient samples by remarking on the vast quantity of species available. Therefore, I said that this planet was proving to be a virtual Garden of Eden.”

“By golly, there is a correlation here, after all!” McCoy mocked.

“Yes, but you chose not to understand it.”

“Why didn’t you just answer my question? It would’ve spared us this last five minutes of defining terms.”

“I originally answered the way I did because I thought that it would save us some time. Obviously, I was mistaken on how my words would be utilized, seeing as how we struggled to understand one another,” Spock said with an impatient sniff.

“Well, it’ll give us something to work on in the future, won’t it?” McCoy asked with a patronizing smile.

“Doctor, why are you being so quarrelsome today?”

“Me?!” McCoy answered with righteous indignation and blazing eyes as he pointed to himself. “I’m not the one who started waxing poetic about the Garden of Eden when asked a simple question!”

Spock bit his lips together and took a deep, steadying breath. Sometimes Dr. McCoy could be so illogical and exasperating.

“I simply wanted it noted that it would be difficult to be quarrelsome in such a lovely environment.”

McCoy gave him a sincere smile as he set down his gathering sack. “Why, Mr. Spock, that’s a very nice sentiment to share.” He hoped that Spock would not hear any sarcasm, because McCoy certainly did not wish to express any negativism. He wanted a mellowness and a comradeship to come across to reflect what he was feeling.

Then there was suddenly more and McCoy could scarcely breathe. The planet seemed to press into him with its lushness and its warmth and its cloying sensuality. And it all made him sensitive to the
The nearness of Spock’s body reminded McCoy of the awareness he’d first realized during that drunken journey after Scotty’s party. And now everything that McCoy remembered that night—the bumping together of their bodies as they had stumbled along, the fumbling hands that were inept but nonetheless groping—was back with an overwhelmingly urgency.

“I can be nice on occasion,” Spock answered without any note of challenge to it as he set down his own gathering sack. He seemed to be affected by some sort of change between them, also.

“I know you can be,” McCoy agreed, reciting words in the numbness that held him fast. “And you might not seem that way sometimes, but it might be because I’m not being as nice to you as I could be.”

Spock had stepped closer before McCoy had noticed it. “And maybe I could have been nicer and not baited you,” he said softly and so intimately. "But I just wanted to have your attention for a little while longer," he admitted. "I find my day is more complete with you in it."

"Yeah, me, too," McCoy gulped. He searched the rugged face so close to his and caught his breath as time seemed to stand still around them. Even the wind seemed to pause as did the chirping birds and rustling bushes. “I think the planet is affecting us,” he murmured in a feeble effort to gain some control over what was happening to them.

“I think that you are affecting me,” Spock murmured back, then wrapped his arms around McCoy and drew him into a very thorough kiss.

Then two pairs of hands were brushing their way over yielding bodies and leaving bruises of hand prints that would darken in the days ahead, just as they had that night after Scotty’s party.

McCoy finally drew back. “I, ah, don’t care what’s affecting us, I’m happy it is!” Then he clutched at Spock and introduced the Vulcan to some of the many pleasures of holding a little pepper pot in his arms.

Very happily, the Vulcan seemed eager to learn.

“Enterprise to Mr. Spock,” crackled Montgomery Scott’s voice.

McCoy and Spock broke apart reluctantly. “Mr. Spock here, Mr. Scott.”

“Are you lads ready to beam aboard the ship now?”

Spock glanced at McCoy. They were both thinking the same thing.

“We are ready to beam up now.” He sounded businesslike.

But McCoy knew how Spock really felt.

Because he was feeling the same way, too.
McCoy gets up close and personal

Chapter Summary

McCoy corners Kirk and wants some answers, then has a heart to heart discussion with Spock.

McCoy took a look around, saw that the corridor was empty except for him and Kirk, grabbed Kirk in his arms, and forced him gently but firmly against the wall. Even at that, Jim Kirk gasped, turned sweaty and pale, and his eyes fluttered.

“Sorry about that, but I had to see if what I’ve been suspecting is true. You macho types can deny that anything’s wrong even with a javelin piercing through your neck and blood running down your body, can’t you?”

“Learn what you wanted to know?” Kirk asked weakly, then tried but couldn’t shove out of McCoy’s arms.

“Damn it, Jim! I wanna know how come you’re walking around like you’ve got a couple of raw eggs caught up between your butt cheeks and you're trying your damndest not to break them!”

“You Southern boys can get downright vulgar at times, can’t you?” Kirk snipped to show his displeasure. He pushed at McCoy’s hands, and this time McCoy released him. But McCoy wasn’t worried. Kirk wasn’t going anywhere fast the shape that he was in. The tortoise would be a surefire winner if Kirk challenged him now. McCoy knew it, and Kirk knew it, too. Kirk wasn't getting away until McCoy was satisfied.

Even if Kirk hated to admit it, he didn’t have to act pleased about it, though. “I thought you were always so full of charm and graciousness.”

“Not when I’m trying to learn if a friend and PATIENT of mine is needing medical attention. And, Kirk, you’re a prime candidate for some major sickbay time. Something’s got your ass in a sling, virtually, and I’m gonna find out what!”

Kirk gave him an earnest look and softened his stance. “No, Bones. Please. I’ll be okay. Honest.”

“What happened anyway?” McCoy asked in a conspiratorial voice, leaning in close. “At least tell me that much. I know you like sex and often. And kinky sex. And often. But maiming yourself? Deliberately?! Doesn’t make sense. I know about your huge appetites, both at the table and in the bedroom. But you don’t act like you were having any kind of fun at all when this happened to you. In fact, your present condition would be a good argument for leading a chaste and sheltered lifestyle.”

“It wasn’t sex and it wasn’t done for fun.”

McCoy looked surprised. “Not sex? Not for fun? What else is there?” Then another possibility clicked into place in his brain, and he looked horrified. “You were attacked and molested?! Here?! On the Enterprise?! The captain! But, Jim! That’s… that’s terrible! The culprit must be brought to justice! Why are you protecting whoever it was?!’” he demanded when he saw Kirk shaking his
“No. Bones, I wasn’t attacked. It was consensual. In fact, I asked for it. No, I demanded it.”

It was McCoy’s turn to look pale. “So it wasn’t rape.”

“No, no rape. There was no penetration. No stimulation. No sexual release. Nothing like any of that at all.”

McCoy was aghast, trying to imagine what it could’ve been. “Then, then what? What could cause you to be half crippled afterwards?”

“I was beaten,” Kirk admitted with a tired, singsong voice. “With a riding crop.”

McCoy paled as he pictured a riding crop, frowned as shivers coursed through him, tried to lick his lips, couldn’t accept the concept of any of that. “How… how was there even anything like that on this ship?”

“Family souvenir. My loving step-daddy used it on me, until the night I took it away and used it on him. That’s the last time he got to beat my ass bloody.”

McCoy grimaced and couldn’t control tiny jerks to his body. “Sweet mother of-- But why? Why would you let someone beat you with that thing now?”

“Redemption, Bones. Redemption and absolution.” His face was shiny with victory.

McCoy realized with a shudder that Kirk was proud of what had happened to him, and that bothered McCoy, perhaps more than the beating that his friend had endured.

“Why? How?” McCoy wanted an explanation because he needed something to make his world sane again. It had tipped sideways a few moments ago, and he needed it right-side up again. He wanted an explanation bad.

But Kirk thought that McCoy wanted details. “Five strokes. That’s what I received across my unprotected buttocks. That’s where it would impress me the most. The flesh is so tender there and I couldn’t ignore its abuse. One stroke each for the five crewmen scalded by live steam from a geyser.”

“Oh, hell. Oh, Jim. I told you to find someway to deal with your guilt.”

“I did. I lost some hide, the same as my crewmen did.”

“But I healed those guys! And you’ve, you’ve let this condition go without being treated!” he said as he studied what he could see of Kirk’s clothed buttocks. “How bad is it?”

“Healing.” He managed a grin at his friend’s horror and indignation. “I’ll be okay. In fact, I’m great now. The guilt is gone.”

“You’re a sick bastard,” McCoy muttered in disgust. “There’s something wrong with your thinking, but I don’t know what yet.” McCoy frowned. “Does this have anything to do with that weird rumor about you falling on your ass in Engineering and not seeking medical aid?”

Kirk gave him a tiny grin full of secrets. “Maybe. I’ll just say that it wasn’t a rumor.”

“I hope you know what you’re doing.”
“It’s worked so far.”

“And what happens if a decision of yours inadvertently causes someone’s death? Is that when your obliging abuser is gonna have to kill you to make up for it?” And just by saying it, McCoy realized that he had hit upon what was wrong with Kirk’s reasoning.

McCoy looked horrified. “You wouldn’t order something that stupid, would you?!?”

“I hope it doesn’t come to that; no,” Kirk said reasonably with an affable smile. “It would be like killing the cow for kicking over the milk bucket, wouldn’t it? That would be overkill, like chopping down the tree for dripping sap on the family car. Or--”

“I get the idea.” He studied Kirk’s placid face. “And who in hell are you getting to go along with you with this craziness?! It has to be someone you trust, someone who is honorable, someone who is basically good. Otherwise, he’d take advantage of you and kill you.”

“Yes, he’s all that, and more.”

“But what is this doing to him?”

“Hmm?”

“He’s a good friend to you, that’s obvious. He’d have to be if he’s going along with you on all of this,” McCoy muttered to himself, still not believing what he’d been told. Then he gave Kirk a hard look. “But are you being a good friend to him?”

“Good point. I can see I’m gonna have to change a few things.”

“How about quitting this whole crazy thing?!”

“Can’t do that. I need release. It’s true what they say. It’s lonely at the top. Nobody really understands what it’s like to be in charge until you’re the one at the helm. It’s a helluva responsibility.”

“Then go to a real man of the cloth, someone who’s trained in religious problems. Or consult a psychiatrist, since it’s a mental issue.”

“No man of the cloth. No psychiatrist.”

“Damn it, Jim!” McCoy lashed out in frustration. “You’re being damnation difficult!”

“I know,” Kirk said with a soft smile because he knew just how difficult that he was being. But he also knew that McCoy would not give up on trying to help him. McCoy was just that kind of a guy and that kind of a friend. Frustrated, but loyal. And Kirk loved him for it. But McCoy couldn’t help him now. Not the way that Montgomery Scott could.

“Damn it, Jim, I wish that you’d give this all up before you get seriously injured.”

“I can’t, not until I can find something to take its place.”

“Oh, holy hell! Then, be careful, will you? Please? For the sake of a nervous old man? And for a guy who doesn’t want to lose a good friend?” he added softly.

“For you, Bones, anything,” Kirk said as he patted McCoy’s arm. “Except, ah, well, you know.”

“Yeah, I know.” McCoy fumed. “One thing I’m asking of you, though. Don’t say anything about
this to Spock. His head would explode. And I don’t need two of you crazy at the same time. Thank goodness that the fourth in command will be above all of this mess, too. Scotty’s got a level head on his shoulders. I think I’m gonna need all the help I can get on this one. And he’s about as good as they come.”

“Scotty, you say?”

“Yeah. You got a problem with him?”

Kirk gave him a level, unblinking stare. Then a half-assed, lopsided grin slowly spread across his face, a grin that had no basis in humor.

“What the f…! Was that reaction supposed to mean something?!” McCoy demanded.

Kirk did nothing without a reason. So surely that stupid look on his face meant something.

And that started the wheels turning in McCoy’s brain. Kirk seemed to be enjoying the show as McCoy tried to work it all out. But the wheels kept turning slower as certain things fell into place for McCoy. And he didn’t like where those wheels finally stopped. And his horrified face reflected it.

“Scotty?!?” McCoy sputtered. “You sucked him down into this mess with you?! Kind, trusting, what-you-see-is-what-you-get-Scotty?! Why him?! Why Scotty?! He’s one of the sweetest guys I know! Why get him all dirty with you?!”

“I was needing something pure to help me. You gave me the idea yourself, Bones.”

McCoy exploded. “How in blue blazin’ hell did I ever do that?! I’m not a debaucher of innocents! The next thing I know, you’ll be saying I’m responsible for you making a love slave outa Chekov! Messing with Scotty is bad enough! But I still don’t know why in the hell you’re doing it!”

“You said he was the most moral person you knew.”

“And you decided to change that?!”

“I decided to use it. To help me. I thought that if Scotty could punish me and then forgive me, I might be able to convince myself that I’m worth saving.”

(Of course you’re worth saving! If your conscience wasn’t bothering you, you’d be so far gone that nobody would have any influence on you.” He shook his head. “But don’t you know what a toll this must be taking on Scotty?”

“I know. That’s why I’m going to be changing the paradigms of what’s going on.”

“Well, at least you’ve got some shred of decency left!”

“Not a word to anyone.”

“You know I couldn’t, even if I wanted to! As your doctor, I’m as duty bound to silence just as much as that man of the cloth or that psychiatrist you won’t consult!” He grimaced. “And as your friend, I’m asking, pleading, begging you to get this all straightened out before someone gets hurt, permanently.”

Kirk slapped his arm and grinned. “There you go!”

“I suppose I should be happy that you didn’t pick me to ease your conscience,” McCoy muttered.
“You would’ve given me more static.”

“I would’ve fanned your ass or screwed your eyeballs outa your head! Either way, you would’ve
known for damn sure that I loved you when I got finished with you! There would’ve been no
misunderstanding about any of that, either!”

McCoy didn’t know it, but he’d just given Kirk more ideas.

McCoy avoided Spock when they got back to the Enterprise. At first that was easy, because Kirk
was still not venturing from his quarters too much. And a lot of their social activities revolved around
Jim Kirk. A lot of their work situations, too, McCoy had to admit. He just avoided the bridge and
hoped that Spock wouldn’t get ill or injured and need to visit sickbay.

Then McCoy noticed that he was having a fairly easy time of it trying to avoid Spock. Then McCoy
decided that Spock was trying to avoid him!

Of all the--

Then McCoy made himself calm down. Spock was probably avoiding him for the same reason that
McCoy was avoiding Spock. He probably had doubts and questions about McCoy, too.

Then McCoy tried to observe Spock the few times that they were thrown together. How handsome
he was! And so unique! There was no one quite Spock in the whole universe! A hybrid combining
the bloodlines of Vulcan and Terran. And Leonard McCoy had kissed him!

And that unique Vulcan/Terran hybrid had kissed him back. Terran style. No rubbing fingers, but a
genuine, down-to-earth, smackeroo on the lips. And once with opened lips. McCoy grinned,
remembering.

What did he possibly have that he could possibly offer to someone like Spock?!

And then he noticed that Spock was secretly watching him. Was Spock also longing for him with
yearning eyes? Was Spock wondering what he possessed that he could possibly offer to someone
like Leonard McCoy?

McCoy could think of several things right off, he decided with a wry smile. And none of them were
visible if Spock was dressed.

McCoy saw Spock look startled and then he understood why. McCoy had probably worn a sad,
morose face, then it had quickly changed to a knowing grin when McCoy had thought about
Spock’s hidden assets. Spock’s natural curiosity had probably been stirred, wondering what had
caused such a change in McCoy.

McCoy couldn’t sleep that night. Those kisses he’d shared with Spock on that exotic planet were
plaguing him. Had it been just the influence of that planet that had made those kisses so special, or
was there something special going on between him and Spock, something that they were missing out
on by staying apart?

So McCoy roamed the corridors of the sleeping starship. He knew that not everyone slept. On the
bridge was a skeleton crew. Sickbay workers had the graveyard shift, and even someone kept an eye on the engines deep in the bowels of the Enterprise. And he supposed that night owl Spock was awake back in his quarters.

McCoy finally looked up and found himself at the aft viewing screen. The stars were out there alright, just as they always had been and just as they always would be long after anybody who had ever heard of the Enterprise and her crew would be long gone. That should make him sad, but he thought instead of the eternalness of the stars. And that gave him comfort.

Then he happened to look back the way he had come and saw Spock standing off to the side and watching him. Instead of panicking about finally facing Spock and acknowledging what had transpired between them, McCoy felt strangely calm. In fact, calmer than since they had traded their sweet kisses.

He gave Spock a tired smile. “Couldn’t sleep, either, huh?”

“How could I? I felt your restlessness,” Spock said as he stepped closer.

McCoy tilted his head. “Really? You could feel that? How? Do we have a link now?”

“Something like that.” Spock stopped, uncertain.

McCoy wondered if Spock feared that McCoy would bolt. He decided to reassure him. “Look, I, ah, think there’s something going on between us.”

Spock didn’t change his demeanor, but McCoy felt him relax. “I do, too, Doctor.”

“Make me feel the way I felt on that planet,” McCoy whispered as he leaned toward Spock. "Hold me so I will feel secure again."

Spock’s arms shot around McCoy who sighed within their sheltering embrace.

“Where have you been all this time?” he whispered from deep within Spock’s embrace.

“Right here,” Spock whispered back. “And I am not going anywhere.”

McCoy sighed deeply as he turned in Spock’s arms to watch the eternal stars moving around them in their special corner of the universe. He lay his head back against Spock’s shoulder. "So beautiful,” he murmured in complete peace.

"Yes, you are."

McCoy grinned at Spock. "Not me, silly. But I'll accept the sentiment." Then he turned and leaned into the kiss that was waiting for him.

Nyota Uhura’s eyes widened with surprise and she set her soup spoon down into her bowl of clam chowder before her suddenly lax fingers let the heavy spoon drop into her lunch. “Oh! My! I do NOT believe what I just saw!”

Christine Chapel sat with her back to the mess hall. “What?” she asked as she started to turn.

“Don't look now! They’ll see you! Oh-h-h! He’s coming this way! Act natural!” she hissed as she
lowered her head and started scooping soup into her mouth at an alarming rate of speed.

Chapel was treated to a few seconds of frantic action until Uhura forced herself to slow her frenzied motions. For one thing, she was bound to draw attention to herself. For another, she would splash herself full of her lunch. And the chowder really was quite good.

Chapel was about to ask for an explanation of what Uhura had seen when she felt a breeze blowing past her and looked up to see a grim-faced Pavel Chekov hurrying toward the door. Chapel had seen Chekov earnest many times and she had seen him blushing and awkward at other times, but she had never seen him angry before.

“What happened?” Chapel hissed at Uhura.

“I don’t know,” Uhura murmured back. “But Mr. Sulu looks lost, utterly lost, like he’s been royally broadsided. Which he probably has been.” She leaned forward to share a secret thought. Uhura raised her drinking glass up partway and hid her lips as she sipped water. "He's never known Pavel to contradict him." Then an eyebrow went up reminiscent of Spock. “Or to deny him.”

Chapel looked shocked. “Do you suppose that Pavel doesn’t always surrender to Mr. Sulu’s needs?”

That sounded so quaint to Uhura, but she could not imagine Chapel saying “put out,” either.

“Looks it,” Uhura answered as she stirred her chowder. Then she looked up. “Have you noticed how all of the guys we’re closest to on this flying tin can are suddenly acting crazy?”

“What do you mean, Nyota?”

“Well, there’s Scotty. He seems to have something weighing heavily on his mind, and I can’t seem to hold his attention for longer than a few seconds.”

“I have seen him acting awfully nervous when Captain Kirk comes around,” Chapel remarked. “Other times he looks at Kirk as if he has great pity for him.”

“Exactly! And why?! Why pity and nervousness?!”

Chapel shrugged, completely clueless.

“And speaking of Kirk,” Uhura continued. “What is his problem, anyway?” Then she answered her own question without giving Chapel an opportunity to respond. “First he’s mysteriously incapacitated for several days in his quarters. Then when he finally shows up, he acts like he’s been sitting on a hot stove lid and it’s still burning him. He looks so awfully pale. Until his butt touches something solid, and then he gets paler yet.”

“You’ve done quite a study of him,” Chapel remarked, not knowing what else to say.

“It’s kind of hard to miss there on the bridge. It’s like a soap opera opening up for all to see. And men think that women are so melodramatic! It’s kind of like your situation,” she said as she scooped up some clams.

“What situation is that?” Chapel wanted to know.

“There in sickbay. With Dr. McCoy.”

Chapel looked off into space. “He rants a lot, but he’s a good doctor and kind-hearted.”

“But have you noticed him ranting lately? Especially around Spock?”
“Well, no.” She thought back. “In fact, they have been very cozy lately.”

“Uh huh, just as I thought.”

“What do you mean?”

“Have you noticed that they aren’t having their usual bickering matches? Spock isn’t baiting McCoy at all, is he?”

“Well, no,” Chapel admitted. “And I have seen Dr. McCoy begin to lose his temper at Mr. Spock and then radically calm down as if a gathering thunderstorm suddenly dissipated. Then he just gives Mr. Spock a smile.” She frowned. “A sweet smile.” She looked up at Uhura. “Now that I think about it, none of that is normal.”

“Exactly. Just like I said,” she said as she shook salt on soup that didn’t need it. “They’ve all gone crazy, and it isn’t even Spring!”

Chapel arched an eyebrow with a crooked smile. “Do they ever need an excuse?”

Uhura gave her a look of new appreciation. “Girl, you’ve got that one right!”
A Strange Use For Good Scotch

Chapter Summary

Kirk seeks more punishment from a reluctant Scotty, and Spock and McCoy spend their first night together.

3.

Montgomery Scott answered the ping at his door, but paled when he saw who it was and turned his head aside with sad acceptance.

“Well, is that any way to greet a guest?” Jim Kirk asked with a tightness to his thin smile.

Scotty pursed his lips before answering. “No, sir, Captain Kirk, it is not.”

The ‘Captain Kirk’ had stung, as Scotty had intended it would. He might not be Kirk’s equal in rank, but he did not have to like the stigma of servitude imposed on him, either.

“Well, are you going to ask me in?” Kirk asked after a silent moment with just an edge to his voice. “Or are you just gonna leave me out here cooling my heels?”

Scotty looked up with hollow, haunted eyes. “To be sure, Captain, I canna deny you access to anywhere on this ship. You are, after all, the captain. Even if I did not answer your ping, you have an override key and can enter wherever you so choose.”

Kirk understood Scotty’s position then. No wonder Scotty felt invaded. Kirk felt angry for him. “A man’s home is his castle.”

“Not to that man’s superior officer.”

Kirk flinched and Scotty knew he had hit a vulnerable spot.

“Do you think I’m that much of a jerk?”

Scotty acted flustered. “I don’t know what to think anymore.”

“Sorry.”

“I know you are. So am I. After all, I still consider you to be my friend.”

“Would you consider inviting your friend in?” Kirk knew it was petty of him to have used the existence of their friendship to gain admittance. To be fair to Kirk, there was a place inside him that was concerned about Scotty and his pride. But Kirk was still primarily interested in what had brought him to Scotty’s door.

Scotty lowered his eyes again, then stepped aside.

Kirk entered and the door closed the world outside away. It was just the two of them. And this thing that had grown between them. This thing that Kirk needed and that Scotty feared he needed.
“Thanks for letting me inside.” Kirk was sincere about that much and his smile was truly genuine.

“I’ll not be taking a switch to your backside, though! I’ll be telling you that much right now! I don’t care how much you think that you’re needing it! I’m not beating your arse raw and bloody just so you’ll be feeling better about yourself!” There were tears standing in Scotty’s eyes by the time he finished.

“Well, I suppose I should thank you for waiting for the door to close to say that. That would’ve been a helluva thing to have echoing down the corridors.”

“Aye, it would,” Scotty agreed with a sheepish look. “But I wanted you understanding how things stood before you got your hopes up too much. I can see that you have something in your hand. And I’m hoping it isn’t that damn thing you had me use on you last time!”

Kirk held up the hand that had been hidden by his side and displayed a beautiful bottle of aged Scotch.

“Saints preserve us!” Scotty said in awe. “How did you happen to come about something like that now, Captain? A thing of beauty like that must surely be in need of a home.”

“That it does,” Kirk said with a smile. “A friend of a friend paid up a bet, and the forfeit arrived by post for me today.”

“And you’re sharing it with me? What about Dr. McCoy? He’d be appreciating a nip of the brew from the old sod, too.”

“Maybe later. I don’t have to apologize to Dr. McCoy the way I do to you.”

Scotty pursed his lips together and turned aside.

“I mean it, Scotty. I shouldn’t have taken advantage of you like that. Hell, unless you’re kinky as hell, you didn’t get one taste of pleasure from putting those stripes across my ass the way you had to do.”

“I have had more pleasant experiences, and that’s the god’s gospel,” Scotty had to admit.

“Well, how about let’s just try to mend some fences, okay?”

Scotty sighed with relief. “I’ll get some glasses, sir.”

“Jim,” Kirk corrected.


Soon they were enjoying the fine liquor and getting pretty mellow, especially Scotty. The liquor had hit him particularly hard, maybe because he was so relieved that the tension between him and Kirk had dissolved. He genuinely liked Kirk and hated to have bad feelings between them.

He had even let Kirk have his easy chair while he sat on his small sofa. They didn’t have that far to stretch to reach the small table where the bottle of Scotch sat between them.

“You know, I was afraid you were wanting a repeat of when I punished you for the crewmen getting
scalded by the geyser. I heard what happened down on the loading dock today when part of the incoming supplies got away from the handlers and a couple of guys got hurt enough to be spending tonight in sickbay. But I figure, hell, you were nowhere close to there. You shouldn’t be feeling responsible, should you? It wasn’t your fault.”

“You’d think not,” Kirk murmured into his glass of whiskey as he raised it and took a small sip. Something about Kirk’s reply didn’t ring quite true for Scotty, even as tipsy as he was. And he got suspicious.

He stared at Kirk. “You’re not here just to be sharing some mighty fine drinking whiskey with me, are you?”

“My, you’re suspicious.”

Scotty felt relief and tipped his glass back up to his lips.

“Suspicious. And also correct,” Kirk added.

Scotty slowly lowered the glass and frowned. He wished he’d gone stone-cold sober, but he knew he was still a little woozy. Perhaps it would help. Because what lay ahead of him was bound to be traumatic, just like last time.

“Relax, Mr. Scott. Stop looking like I just ordered you to be shot at sunrise. I’m the one who’s gonna come outa this evening banged up, not you.”

A bullet at sunrise might be preferable to this lousy, queasy feeling rising in him, Scotty decided. Maybe he just needed something to eat to counteract the alcohol in his stomach, but Scotty doubted it.

“What, what may you be having me do to you, sir?”

“Stop talking as though you’ve got ashes in your mouth. You sound more like you’re inquiring about funeral services for the recently deceased than about an evening of fun for yourself.”

“Begging your pardon, sir, but it canna be fun for me.”

“What do you mean? No fun for you? Your ass isn’t gonna be the one on the line like mine is.”

“Beating on your bum is not my idea of fun.”

“How about stroking it and pinching it and messing with it to your heart’s content?” Kirk asked softly, soothingly, as if he was quieting a skittish mare.

Scotty’s eyes enlarged.

Kirk’s voice got hypnotic. “And slapping my naked flesh bare-handed and watching a perfect copy of your hand print slowly pinking up right before your eyes? And sprinkling moisture on the redness and watching the water practically beading up because the flesh is roughed up already. And that water’s gonna be trying to evaporate, but you won’t give it a chance to do that. Because you’re gonna slap down on that water with your open hand. And it’s gonna sting me so much worse because that water’s gonna sizzle and pop just like it was hitting a hot stove lid. But it won’t be a hot stove lid, it will be me. And I am going to be in such sweet agony.” Kirk paused for it to soak in, then he continued in a low, enticing voice. “But it will be alright because I will be so much better when it is all over.”
Scotty tried to wet his lips, but he was concentrating too hard on the images that Kirk had been painting for him.

Kirk slowly stood so as not to startle Scotty out of his reverie. He took a couple of steps so that he was standing by Scotty’s right knee.

Scotty stared up at him, bewildered.

“Let’s try it, Scotty, so you’ll see how wonderful it can be.”

Scotty seemed mesmerized by Kirk’s words. His eyes lowered to Kirk’s trunk, and he stared hard at Kirk’s buttocks. But all he could see was Kirk’s uniform.

Kirk reached back, hooked his thumbs in the back of his trousers, and drew down his pants until a broad band of white skin appeared between the top of the trousers and the bottom of his gold tunic.

“I’ll let you pull them down the rest of the way, and you can watch the rest of my naked, white flesh appear.”

Scotty kept staring at all of that whiteness, and he swallowed hard as a line of perspiration popped across his forehead. That’s when Kirk knew he had him and began lowering himself across Scotty’s lap.

Scotty woke up and took a hold of Kirk’s arm to guide him down so he wouldn’t fall. Only when Kirk was settled with his hands bracing himself on the floor on one side and the toes of his boots barely touching on the other did everything fully register to Scotty. And that was because an upthrust, mounded rump was staring him in the face.

Whatever was he supposed to do with that?! Oh, he knew what Captain Kirk had instructed him to do, but still--

“Just pull my trousers down… past my buttocks. And punish me.”

More sweat popped out on Scotty’s face. Oh, Holy Hell, what had he gotten himself into now?! He wasn’t drunk enough to do this! There wasn’t enough fine drinking whiskey to do this! Not even in Scotland!

“Starting it will be the hard part. Just start it, Scotty,” Kirk coached. “Start it, and then it will be okay.”

Scotty licked his dry lips and swallowed. Didn’t do any good. Maybe what the captain said was true. It’d be better after he started.

Scotty gingerly hooked his fingers in the trousers and started inching them down.

First shock. Kirk wasn’t wearing underpants.

Inching the trousers down some more.

Second shock. The cleft dividing Kirk’s butt cheeks appeared. Scotty knew Kirk had one, but still… But to actually see that division and the start of those fleshy mounds seemed obscene. A man’s ass shouldn’t be exposed this way. Even to a friend he trusted.

“Almost there, Scotty,” Kirk warbled. “Just a little further. I can feel the cool air. I want to feel the chill swirling all around that part of me. And then I want you to warm me up with your punishing
hands as only you can do. Warm me up, Scotty. I want this so much. I want you to see me, Scotty, and I want your hands on me. Only you, Scotty,” he murmured. “Only you.”

Third shock. Scotty felt a perverse thrill for what he was about to do. He hoped it was Kirk’s words beckoning him and not some latent yearning for wanton pleasures. He’d never had the desire to beat on a man before, but now since it was this man who was surrendering himself so willingly, Scotty felt strange fires licking at him. There was an air of expectancy, of anticipation, that he'd never felt before.

Scotty had to lift the material up so he could clear the meatiest part of Kirk’s buttocks. After that, the tugging down got easier. But then all of that naked white meatiness was staring Scotty in the face, and trousers were forgotten.

“Push my tunic up so nothing will be in your way.”

Oh, hell, he’d like for something to be in the way. Anything.

At last the tunic was draped over Kirk’s head and arms. His trousers were drawn almost to the knees. In other words, Kirk’s trunk was completely exposed and awaiting Scotty’s tending.

“Now do your duty,” came Kirk’s muffled voice. “Do your duty and correct me.”

The first halfhearted slaps bounced off the bunched up fat and left barely a trace.

“Not feeling it,” Kirk complained.

So Scotty slapped down harder. Kirk grunted and the first red handprint appeared on the stark white flesh. After that, it got easier for Scotty. In fact he had built up quite a rhythm before he realized how hot his hand was getting.

He also realized that Kirk’s inflamed butt cheeks were spread slightly, but he couldn’t quite make out the secret opening to Kirk’s body that had to be nestled deep inside that dark cleft.

Scotty remembered Kirk saying water would really sizzle on reddened buttocks. He tried spitting, but soon ran out of saliva. That left the Scotch.

What a waste of fine liquor, Scotty lamented as he poured some on the buttocks and got an unexpected result. Some of the alcohol ran into Kirk’s crack. The next moment Kirk grunted.

“That burns,” he complained.

And that objection inspired Scotty. He pulled a butt cheek aside and rested an alcohol soaked finger against Kirk’s anus. Kirk squirmed at the acrid bite on tender flesh.

Scotty answered by driving his finger slowly, but steadily inside Kirk’s anus.

Kirk sucked his breath in sharply, then bucked like an animal desperate to get away.

Scotty drove the finger deeper.

“Holy shit, Scotty!”

Scotty’s only answer was to drive two more fingers inside and then to hold on tight.

Kirk squirmed and cussed, but could not get away.
Scotty grabbed Kirk’s further hip and yanked it toward him so that his fiery hand burned Kirk inside and out.

Kirk screamed and fainted.

At the same moment, he ejaculated. Scotty had been aware of a growing pressure on his leg, but did not realize that it was Kirk’s tumescent penis until his leg was sprayed with Kirk’s cum.

Scotty gently withdrew his fingers and laid the unconscious Kirk on the sofa. He cleaned him up as best he could, covered him with a blanket, took a shower to clean himself up, and went to sleep in his own bed. When he awoke the next morning, Kirk was gone.

Surely that was the end of it. Surely Kirk had been humiliated enough to pay for all sorts of supposed crimes. Surely Scotty could go on with his life and try to forget what he had had to do for a friend who had needed a special favor and a superior officer who had demanded what he wanted.

Only Time could tell if their friendship could survive such a test. Scotty wasn’t even certain if he really cared anymore about it, anyway.

Leonard McCoy answered the ping at his door, then allowed the happy smile that he was feeling to drift slowly across his face as he accepted that this was really going to happen. He breathed deeply and felt his nostrils flare when he expelled the tainted air. He was nervous, but it was a good kind of nervous. For this was the night that he was going to give himself to Spock, and Spock was going to give himself to McCoy.

“Hi,” McCoy greeted softly, and it was a wonder he could get that much past his lips with that silly grin of his still tickling.

“Doctor,” Spock said crisply without quite looking at McCoy. He stood with his hands welded behind his back and looked more like he was facing a firing squad than a night of passion.

“You’re prompt.”

“I believe that it is the agreed upon time, is it not?”

“Yes, yes, of course, it is.”

“When you have quite gotten your fill of observing me in your doorway, then perhaps you will be ready to give me access to your quarters,” Spock declared.

Yes, there was the whine of sarcasm about his words and the way he had said them, but they also betrayed a nervousness that endeared him to McCoy and made McCoy want to grab him and reassure him with hugs and kisses and….

But McCoy knew he could not do that. Not out here in the hallway where they could be observed locked in a tight clinch. Better get an impersonal door between them and the rest of the universe before they tried to ease the sexual tension in each other. And they were both definitely in need of having their tensions eased.

“Of course, of course,” McCoy muttered as he stepped aside so that Spock could enter.
“Your quarters look inviting and hospitable this evening,” Spock remarked, looking around.

Just the same as always, McCoy wanted to say. He had made an effort to have the place picked up since nitpicking Spock was arriving. But McCoy was hoping that he could distract the finicky Vulcan so completely that Spock wouldn’t notice a herd of elephants with diarrhea in residence.

“Thank you, Mr. Spock,” McCoy said graciously instead. “Won’t you be seated?” he offered.

“Thank you.”

“A drink?” He looked impish. “Or chocolate?”

Spock turned to him. He hadn’t even sat down yet. “Will I be requiring it?”

“Hopefully, I will be the only stimulant you will be needing,” McCoy murmured as he walked toward Spock and the arms that were waiting for him.

After that, it got a whole lot easier.

“I never thought it could be this way, with us,” McCoy murmured as he lay in Spock’s arms. It had been a time of magic for both of them, and the glow of their lovemaking was still surrounding them with its awe and mystery.

“I had hoped,” Spock admitted as his hand gently stroked McCoy’s bare arm. “And it was all that I had hoped for. And more.”

McCoy scooted around so that he was giving Spock a shy look. “Really?”

Spock looked down at the beloved being nestled in his arms. “Yes, Leonard. Really.”

With a happy smile, McCoy snuggled down against Spock’s chest again. “I’m glad.” He turned his head and kissed whatever green skin was closest to his lips. He really hadn’t planned for his kiss to land on Spock’s nipple, but it did.

Spock tensed and grunted.

McCoy glanced up, grinning. “Registered with you, did it?”

“Yes, and I highly recommend that if you do not want a repeat of our recent activities to occur any time soon in the near future, that you do not cause any further stimulation of my mammary gland—”

McCoy ran a spit-laden tongue over the nipple in question, then gave Spock another impish look with a wide expanse of teeth to go with it.

“Leonard—”

McCoy’s mouth pounced on that unlucky/lucky nipple and gave it quite a lathering. But when he drew it into his mouth and tried to suckle it, Spock came unhinged.

There was a sudden flurry of bedding, limbs, and bodies. And when the action stopped, McCoy was lying under Spock and looking playfully up at him.
“Hi,” he murmured. “Wanna come over to my house? See all my treasures? Find out how warm I can get?” His eyes got all smoky. “Play ‘Hide the Sausage?’”

That was the last coherent words that either one of them said for awhile. But neither minded. It was a universal language understood by all lovers.

“I did not intend to weep, Doctor,” Spock apologized.

“Why? Do you know how wonderful that makes me feel? I always wanted you to be able to express your emotions, but this, this what you just did! It’s, it’s mind boggling! To think that you trusted me enough to expose yourself like that.” His eyes flicked over the tear-stained face beside his on the pillow. “This is such a special present that you have given me.”

“And you have given me such a special present. Yourself.”

“It’s all that I really have to give to you. And I give it to you gladly, along with my heart and all of my love.”

And then followed the second time that Spock wept in McCoy’s arms. And McCoy loved him all the more for it.
Chapter Summary

Scotty and Kirk get more creative as their interests demand more and more variety. Meanwhile, McCoy and Spock are enjoying their expanding universe together.

4.

“No!”

“But you haven’t even heard what I’m gonna say!” Kirk pleaded with upraised hand as he followed Scotty around the engine room, trying not to pique the interest of the other crewmen.

Scotty stopped. “Look, if you wanna tinker with the engine, tighten some bolts that are loose, get some grease on your hands and clothing, you’re more than welcome. You can’t do much harm; I won’t let you. But this other. It’s over. Finished. Done.”

“Now, how can you make a blanket denial like that?” Kirk frowned. “And what do you mean, I can’t do much harm around the engine? I always thought that I was helping.”

“Sometimes you were. Sometimes it was just therapy for you.”

“You were in there turning bolts the same as I was!”

“Aye. You aren’t the only one needing therapy now, are you?”

“Well, okay, granted that you’re allowed, too, I suppose.”

“Aye. Good that you admit that now.”

“Well, you are my passport in here. I suppose not just anyone can come in here and tinker around.”

“That’s true. You gotta have special permission from the Chief Engineer. But that’s it. It’s not a blanket permission for other activities,” Scotty clarified as he busied himself with something, anything, just so Kirk would get the idea that this discussion was over and he should be on his way.

“Look, ah….” Kirk glanced around, saw the curious glimpses of the other crewmen in engineering, and spoke in a low voice as he leaned toward Scotty. “Can we continue this discussion back in your quarters?”

Deep worry lines appeared between Scotty’s brows. “I know what these ‘discussions’ of yours can turn into!”

“Look, I really gotta see you,” Kirk hissed.

“And surely I know the reason why now, don’t I?” Scotty demanded with blazing eyes. “Crewmen got hurt today! And it really was your fault! You shouldn’t have sent them into that building until you knew what was inside. It was only by the grace of our maker that they survived that attack.”

“I know,” the guilt-driven Kirk agreed, his beautiful eyes sorrowing.
“Jim….” Scotty looked around at his crew wondering about his anger at a captain who was taking it without comment. “Jim,” he said in a softer, lower voice. “You really gotta get your priorities straight. Are you endangering people because there might be a perverse reward for you at the end? Now, hear me out,” he said to a Kirk who had started to object. “You might not realize what’s actually going on here. Is this no longer a means of punishment? Or have you developed a thirst for it? For what, ah, goes on between us?” Scotty drew back with commitment on his face. “If so, I’m through with it. And I mean it. I’ll not be part of your self-abuse anymore. I’ve got my own soul to look out after, too, you know. I’m not a godless creature, even if you’re trying to make me think I am.”

“What if we change the emphasis of what goes on?”

“The…”

“The meaning of it? Ah, what goes on… between us.”

And Kirk had such a pleasing look on his face that Scotty agreed. After all, he loved the man. They were friends. What kind of person would turn away from helping a friend in need?

Scotty was also a man who was starting to get a taste for the unholy things that went on between them, too, that’s what he was. Scotty hadn’t wanted to admit that weakness until now. But truth be told, he had relived those previous sessions with Kirk. Relived them and relished them until he was masturbating with their memories hot on his mind.

And those emissions had felt like they were being wrenched from deep within him somewhere.

And they left him spent and shaken and trying to catch his hitching breath.

And counting the moments until he could remember the sight of Kirk’s bare, pristine white buttocks reddening under his hands and feeling Kirk undulating over his lap with his hardened penis shoved against Scotty’s leg.

Moments until Scotty could remember Kirk writhing around Scotty’s fingers skewered deep inside Kirk’s living body. Kirk trying to get away from the alcohol burning the length of his anus, and Scotty getting a perverse pleasure from Kirk’s discomfort and pain.

Scant moments when Scotty could envision that golden body sprawled naked across his lap and awaiting further abuse from Scotty’s hands.

Seconds away from when Scotty could abuse himself again.

“Are you alright, Mr. Scott?”

“W-what?” Scotty looked around. Kirk was nowhere in sight. There was just this young yeoman on her first assignment, eager to please, but puzzled by this officer’s obvious distraction.

“Are you alright, sir?” she asked again.

Scotty realized that he was sweaty, gasping, getting hard, and not alone. And being stared at by a winsome yeoman with wide, concerned eyes.

“I need a moment,” he muttered and disappeared into the head.

Damn it, now that winsome young yeoman would think that she had caused his protruding erection.
“I thought that my quarters would be better for our purposes than yours,” Kirk explained as he admitted Scotty.

“What about that human radar of a suite-mate you’ve got living next to you? Won’t the Vulcan wonder what’s going on over here and investigate? Wouldn’t certain sights cause a permanent curl in that black fringe he’s got lying across his forehead?”

“He’s in McCoy’s quarters. I think that there’s something going on between them.”

“I just hope that one of them isn’t feeling guilty about something,” Scotty muttered under his breath.

“Hmm?” Kirk asked.

“Nothing. Well, where do you want me during this charade?”

“Scotty. Please. A little more enthusiasm. This evening is gonna be for your benefit.”

“Funny, I was thinking that it was for yours.”

“Well, yeah, but for your pleasure then.”

“We’ll see.”

“Sit over here on my sofa.”

Scotty complied, then watched as Kirk scurried around, humming under his breath. For someone repentant, Kirk didn’t seem very sober. And for someone who was about to face some form of humiliation, he didn’t seem very apprehensive, either. In fact, he seemed to be almost… enjoying himself. Anticipating, even.

What the hell, Scotty thought. If it gets too kinky, I’ll just get up and leave, Scotty decided. Kirk wouldn’t follow. He wouldn’t dare. Scotty figured by that time Kirk would be undressed and not able to follow for a few moments. And in that time, Scotty could make his escape.

It was nice in Kirk’s quarters, the sofa was comfortable, and Scotty had had a rewarding, but full day. He was ready to relax, not cater to a captain with guilt issues. Be that as it may, though, here he was, waiting to see what pleasure awaited him.

As he waited, Scotty might’ve even let his eyelids flutter shut, but only for a moment. He jerked awake because a whisper of material had disturbed the air, and he looked around to find what had disturbed him. He didn’t have to look far. Just up.

For Kirk stood before him, his golden skin aglow, his perfect body naked except for a gauzy black bow draped low over his stomach, its many loops cascading over his hidden manhood.

“What the hell--”

“I wanted to see your face when you saw the whole package.”

Kirk sounded like he was having trouble speaking, like he was having trouble breathing. Scotty could relate. He was suddenly having trouble breathing, also.
As appalled as he was by Kirk’s crazy notions and crazier requests of him, Scotty would be a fool to deny that he wasn’t appreciative of what was being offered to him. Jim Kirk was a helluva good looking guy. Anybody with normal impulses would be stimulated by the sight of that golden body that was being offered so freely to him.

Scotty just wished that it was being offered because Kirk actually wanted Scotty’s love and not because Scotty had become some sort of Father Confessor to him. Scotty knew he was not in the same league as Kirk, and he ached because he never would be. He ached because nothing could ever be normal between them.

“Well?” Kirk urged, not usually used to being kept waiting for responses, especially sexual ones.

“I can see everything but your package,” Scotty blurted out, probably sounding unappreciative of Kirk’s efforts.

Kirk reached down and lifted a ribbon loop between his thumb and index finger as if he was going to unravel the intricate bow. Scotty caught a glimpse of wiry hair and flesh where the loop had lain. But then Kirk stopped and reconsidered.

“No, I can’t do this. This is your present. You have to undo it.”

“I have to--”

“Undo it.” Then he acted as if he remembered. “But I can tell that you’re not in the mood to be receiving this type of present, so I’ll have to stimulate your interest.”

Scotty wondered idly how Kirk planned to do that. A strip tease might’ve occurred at this moment, but Kirk was about as nude as he could get without blatantly displaying the family jewels in Woolworth’s window.

Kirk took several steps until he was standing in front of the seated Scotty. His scrotum was just a few inches from Scotty’s face. Scotty wondered if having some guy’s private parts shoved at his mouth was supposed to stimulate him. He figured that it would stimulate the other guy more.

Then Kirk solved that mystery by shoving Scotty’s knees apart and kneeling down between them.

“What the--” questioned the startled Scotty. Because he now realized that the situation had just reversed itself and that his scrotum was level with the other guy’s face. Thankfully, Scotty was fully clothed so it was just a kinky guy being overly flamboyant. That was all, Scotty reminded himself.

Kirk handed him something. A hairbrush. Scotty felt a cold chill as the heavy brush landed in his hand.

“Use that on me if I’m not doing things to please you. Blister my butt if you have to.”

So we’re back to the ass beating, and Kirk had promised that things would be different.

“But--” Scotty protested.

“What?”

“This isn’t long enough. I won’t be able to reach your, ah--”

Kirk grinned. “Trust me. It’ll work just fine.” And saying that, he bent down, gripped Scotty’s zipper between his teeth, and began trying to open Scotty’s fly.
Scotty went hot and cold. He caught Kirk’s shoulder with his hand. “Here. Captain. You canna be doing that. It’s not dignified of you.” And Kirk’s mouth and teeth raking his penis was clumsy but succeeding in bringing that organ to life for Scotty, but Scotty didn’t mention any of that.

“You ain’t seen nothing yet,” Kirk muttered as his hand gripped the zipper, yanked it down, reached inside, pulled out Scotty’s awakening penis, and cradled it as if it was a fledgling bird in its nest.

“Captain. No--”

Then Kirk’s spear of a tongue tip whipped out like a frog after its dinner and touched the tiny pee hole on the point of Scotty’s penis.

Scotty’s legs stiffened and he screamed.

Then Kirk’s tongue stabbed at Scotty’s hardening penis.

“Ca-- Ca--”

Kirk looked up. “Yes?”

Scotty looked dazed and couldn’t form words.

Kirk grinned and lowered his head again.

Scotty made a strangled sound. He decided he was lucky that he was still breathing.

Then his eyes rolled around in his head.

For Kirk had closed his mouth over Scotty’s stretching member, and Scotty was beside himself with sensation and joy. That moist mouth went away much too soon, but Scotty had no time to protest as Kirk’s hands were stretching him out to his full length and massaging that length into its full width.

Then Scotty whimpered and broke out into a sweat as he both watched and felt as Kirk’s mouth began to devour that engorged penis that was stretching Kirk’s mouth and making that handsome face look grotesque. But to Scotty’s way of thinking, he had never seen anything so beautiful as his penis fucking Jim Kirk’s defenseless face.

As Kirk’s milking lips neared the bottom of Scotty’s shaft, Scotty leaned far over Kirk’s naked back. He could see the band of ribbon across the top of Kirk’s buttocks and the hips that were parted so Kirk could keep his balance.

Scotty also found the hairbrush in his hand, and he brought it down heavily on Kirk’s buttocks. Kirk sucked harder and firmer and faster, and Scotty saw stars.

Then his eyes returned to that slit between Kirk’s legs. Scotty reached down with his free hand and tunneled inside that dark cleft until his index finger struck that hidden opening that he knew nestled inside there. Kirk grunted as Scotty’s index finger gently burrowed down inside the hottest fire Scotty had ever felt on a human.

This is just what Scotty was needing and hadn’t known it. As far as he was concerned, he would gladly keep working away at their assigned tasks until Scotty blew his full load down Kirk’s marvelously contracting throat. He knew he couldn’t be too far from exploding. And if Kirk was lucky, Scotty’s insistent finger would be able to give Kirk a rectal orgasm that would set off fireworks behind his eyelids.
But Kirk suddenly pulled back, opened his mouth, and dropped Scotty’s rooting organ. It pointed straight out at Kirk and quivered in need as Scotty grunted his protest.

“Never you fear, my sweet friend,” Kirk murmured. “I won’t be cheating either one of us out of this finale. I intend to give you a Full Monty.”

Scotty opened his feverish eyes and tried to focus on Kirk. “You eejit! You’re already doing the Full Monty, as soon as I get that damn bow off your butt. Or what do you want? Me running around butt naked, too?”

“It’s my special kind of spin on the Full Monty,” Kirk purred. “Because I want you to experience all of me.” With that, he stood and pulled Scotty to his feet.

Scotty was bent and awkward with his need to be coupled with Kirk’s body somehow again. All that he was aware of was his throbbing penis and that golden body that wouldn’t stand still long enough to be skewered by the quivering man.

Kirk quickly draped himself over some pillows on his bed, then looked over his shoulder.

“There’s lube on the nightstand. Grease up good, get behind me, and line up with that target in the middle of my ass. I think you can take it from there.”

The lubricant felt good to Scotty’s fevered hands and penis. He didn’t stroke himself too much for fear of stimulating himself too much.

He knew he was ready then, but paused as he looked down at that wrinkled, pink anus twinkling up at him, so innocent, so naive, so trusting. And soon he would plunge into it and deflower it and rob it of its innocence. But he would make it burst into a new maturity.

“What are you doing back there? Ogling the scenery?”

Kirk sounded eager, yet hesitant with a little fear of the unknown, too. He needed reassurance.

Scotty lowered his head and touched that sweet little anal flower with the tip of his tongue.

He didn’t know which one of them sobbed. Perhaps they both did.

Then while the anus was relaxed and Scotty’s slobberers were glistening in its wrinkles, Scotty gently pressed his eager bulk against that citadel. And that citadel swung open its gates to him.

Scotty gently, but steadily plowed deeper into Kirk’s volcanic heat and felt his own temperature go up several degrees at least.

Kirk slowly raised and lowered a roaming leg on the bed, then across it. “Sc… Sc… Oh, Sco…. So good. Hmmm! So-o-o g-g-good….” Kirk sang as his hands twisted the sheets beneath him.

Try as he might, Scotty knew that it wouldn’t last very long, so he buried himself as fully as he could before he lost it. And when he came off, he reached between Kirk’s legs and gently squeezed that stiffened part of him until Kirk fell flat on the bed in a swoon.

Scotty crawled up and managed to pull bedding around him and Kirk, then crushed Kirk into his arms before the golden sleep claimed him completely.

Kirk revived for a moment. “...was good,” he murmured. “...so good….”

“Shh,” Scotty crooned as he kissed Kirk’s temple. “Sleep. You deserve it.”
Kirk smiled as Scotty’s lips touched his face. “Fucked so hard and no kiss to soften it,” he slurred. “I’ll think you don’t love me.”

“Can’t have that now, can we?” Scotty said with a smile as his eyes flicked over Kirk’s tired face. Then Scotty bent to give Kirk a chaste kiss on the lips.

“That was no lover’s kiss,” Kirk complained, yet he was fighting sleep the whole while.

“It’s all you’re getting now,” Scotty reprimanded him. “We’re both too tired for anything else.”

“See you in the morning….” Kirk’s voice dropped away completely.

Scotty lay cradling the sleeping Kirk for a little while. Why couldn't it always be like this between them? Some gentle sex and then some cuddle time? Scotty thought that he would love to have Kirk just clinging to him. Nothing else, just clinging. And happy. And satisfied. But satisfied with love and not with lust or punishment. Just loving. Was that so much to ask? Just to be able to love Jim Kirk the way he wanted? And have Kirk love him back the same way? And using playful slaps to stimulate, but nothing to punish. And most assuredly, nothing to hurt.

"I don't want to hurt you anymore, Jim! Please don't make me hurt you anymore!"

But Scotty was gone by the time Kirk awoke the next day. It was the way they seemed to do things.

When Leonard McCoy awoke the next morning, it was to the sweet knowledge that he was being cradled securely in the arms of the man whom he loved.

“Hmm,” he moaned in pleasure while a happy smile wreathed his face.

“Why are you moaning, Leonard? Are you in pain?” Spock sounded worried.

“My pain wasn’t concerning you a whole lot last night when you were busy stretching my insides to the max they could go,” McCoy reminded him.

“I know. And I sincerely apologize for acting like such an animal. I do not know what came over me. I saw a blaze of red and I had to have you. Then. Completely. Sobbing, if need be. But mine, and mine alone.”

“I’m yours alone,” McCoy muttered as he moved his legs up and down. Yep, still tender. How long, he wondered, would it be until the Vulcan stopped making him hurt deep inside.

McCoy grinned to himself.

Never, he hoped.

“Do you know how much I cherish and respect you?” Spock murmured in his ear.

“I’m starting to get a hint of it,” McCoy teased, but Spock couldn’t see his grin. “I know how urgent and passionate you can get. I’ve had ample proof of that.”

“I want you to please realize that it is with the most caring I can muster that I take you for mine. When I enter you, it is as if the whole universe is opening up for me, and I am finding everything I ever wanted deep inside you.”
“Imagine me, with the universe in my ass. Who woulda thought?”

“Now you are teasing me,” Spock grumbled.

He shouldn’t have said that, as he soon found out.

“Wanna bet?” McCoy demanded as he sat up.

“Oh, Leonard, lie down. Let us lie in each others’ arms as long as possible.”

“No, I wanna let you experience the universe in my ass again.”

“Oh, Leonard. Save your strength. You will need it today while you are at work.”

He might as well have shut up, because the next thing he said was, “Oof!” as McCoy shoved him flat onto his back and straddled him.

“Leonard! What are you doing?!” he demanded as McCoy started messing with his sexual organs.

“Taking you on a tour of my universe!” McCoy announced as he introduced Spock’s hardening penis into his rectum and started riding him.

Spock had never known that that many shooting stars could fill the sky at one time.

But they can.
In The Little Shirt My Mother Made For Me

Chapter Summary

Kirk finally accepts that he does not have to be personally punished when something goes wrong, but that is the very thing that convinces Scotty that Kirk has become insensitive and needs to punished. But it crushes Scotty to do so.

Chapter Notes

Title from an old song title.

This is a very rough chapter. If you so wish, stop reading after Kirk talks to McCoy. A note at the end will relate pertinent information.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

When had he ever consented to be Jim Kirk’s conscience?!

That’s what he’d like to know, Scotty wondered as he bit his lips together in disgust and rolled his eyes. Just when in the hell had he ever agreed to absolve Jim Kirk’s supposed crimes against his crew by humiliating him with various forms of physical abuse?!

But now it had escalated into something different, something that was decidedly sexual!

Well, of course, if Scotty was honest with himself, it had always been about something sexual and personal between them. There nearly always is some sexual tension between people who are physically good looking, noble acting, intelligent, and stalwart. Those who stand out from their peers naturally seem to gravitate towards each other as if they recognize that there is something about themselves that makes them special.

But it had only been recently that their relationship had become blatantly sexual. Part of it was that they were performing unique sexual activities, and part of it was that they were relating only to each other. Scotty had never been as aware of Kirk physically as what Kirk was now becoming to him, and he felt that Kirk was attuned to him the same way.

And the sexual activities between them were defining their present relationship nicely. But it was becoming a guilty pleasure for Scotty.

Scotty couldn’t be denying that he caught himself going with the flow of the moment when Kirk was in the mood and needing some of Scotty’s specialized attention. In fact Scotty was finding lately that he was downright enjoying himself when Kirk was naked and allowing, hell, demanding, whippings and finger fucks and all sorts of perversions involving Kirk’s anus and penis. It was like Scotty had been introduced to a new hobby and was enjoying every new twist and turn he learned.

Scotty never had considered sinking his man-meat into Kirk’s bunghole before, but Scotty gradually realized that he might as well be having some free fun instead of someone else. Who the hell
wouldn’t, he wanted to know! Who the hell would turn a good looking piece of ass like Kirk away from his door and his bed? A lot stronger and/or dumber man than Montgomery Scott was, that was for damn sure!

One thing for sure, Scotty was feeling better about his whole relationship with Kirk since it involved more than just punishing someone who was feeling guilty. Casual sex, Scotty understood. But this kinky sex! Well, he was a bit old-fashioned, after all, he supposed, despite what popular beliefs had sprung up about the freewheeling lives of Starfleet crewmen in space. When it came down to it, Scotty was probably as unimaginative and as strait-laced as any Victorian spinster. But until something came along to change the paradigms of their relationship, Scotty was just going to purr along as usual, enjoying whatever sexual tidbits he was able to salvage from Jim Kirk.

5.

Then came the day that the away mission ran into trouble, terrible trouble, and Scotty was aghast as he transported load after load of wounded, exhausted, dirty, and defeated crewmen back on board the Enterprise. With each load, Scotty got more and more horrified and upset. Where was Kirk? Had he been killed in the confusion of evacuating? Or was he playing Sir Galahad by trying to rescue everyone?

When the last men appeared, including a wild-eyed and disoriented Kirk, Scotty was beside himself with worry and angst. Kirk's uniform jacket was unbuttoned and smoldering, so Scotty knew that his worst fears had been realized. Kirk had been taking unnecessary chances again.

“Get those men to sickbay!” Kirk directed and the room was quickly clearing.

“Is that everyone?” Scotty demanded.

Kirk looked around, just be sure. “Yeah.” He let out a huge breath of relief. “Yeah, I think so.”

“What happened down there?”

“Earthquake. Then that earthquake touched off a volcano. Suddenly we didn’t know where 'safe' was. Solid ground turned to rivers of mud. And boulders exploded in front of us and rained down like huge bullets. Trees, trees disappeared like firecrackers going off. One moment there’s a tree. The next, a pile of tiny splinters. It was hell, Scotty.” He gasped for air. “Hell.”

“And yet you went down there.”

“I didn’t know it would be that way--”

“Mr. Spock warned you that something like that could happen. He said that there was the potential for the terrain to be very volatile.”

“Well, yeah. And it might not have been, either.”

Scotty’s eyes narrowed. “He warned you, and still you took men down there to endanger them.”

“I have my orders.”

“Yes, to seek out and discover new worlds. Not to endanger people’s lives needlessly.”
“We’ll never learn anything if we stay in the ship all the time.”

“I’m just saying that you should have waited for more evidence, especially if there was a question about the stability of an area.”

“I can’t stay around here and argue the ends and outs of this right now. I’ve got to get to sickbay and see how my men are.”

“Aye, so many injured, and not a scratch on you.”

“You just might not see the wounds on me. Now, I’ve got to go.”

As Kirk ran out of the transporter room, Scotty muttered. “No, I might not see the wounds on you right now. But I will. Mark my words, my high and mighty Captain James T. Kirk, I will. And that's a promise I'm making to myself right now.”

McCoy and his staff worked on bruises and burns and scratches. Everyone seemed to have them, and sickbay had people stacked everywhere.

“It takes a real genius to get hurt so many different ways. Were you trying for some sort of new record? Or was this simply, ‘Try To Stump McCoy’ day?” McCoy grumbled to Kirk. It wasn’t that McCoy was angry with the away crew for getting injured. He just didn’t want them to get hurt in the first place and hid his tender emotions and empathy behind grumbling.

“Try flaming sharp rocks shooting out of a volcano and liquid earth beneath your feet. Which would you choose? And what direction would you take?”

“Sounds like Hobson’s Choice to me,” McCoy muttered.

“Pretty much,” Kirk agreed. “It looked like there were a whole lot of choices, and yet there was only one: to get hurt.”

“And yet you didn’t. Except for some minor damage that I’ve healed. Do you feel responsible for any of what went wrong?”

“Nope. I’ve realized that I can’t control a situation just because I’m captain.”

“And the fact that you weren’t hurt very badly?”

“I’ve always been luckier than most people.”

“That you have,” McCoy agreed as he slapped Kirk’s arm. “Sounds like you’re cured. Have you told Scotty yet?”

“I’m gonna do that tonight. When we have more time,” Kirk answered with a grin. "He's seen me through a lot, but we can put that all behind us now. He's a great guy, Bones, and I intend to show him just how much I appreciate him. IF you know what I mean.”

McCoy slapped him on the shoulder. "It's time you treated each other right. Now get outa here so I can work on someone who's needing my help."

"Yes, sir! On my way! Sir!” He looked like his big grin could split his face.
“Yep, you’re lucky alright,” McCoy thought as he watched an excited Kirk exiting sickbay. “You’re getting Scotty.” Then McCoy thought that he needed to be watching his tongue. Hard telling where that Vulcan with his supersonic hearing might be lurking around. All he needed was to get that idiot in a jealous snit. Spock could be so pissy when he wanted to be! Snide AND haughty, too.

Scotty heard about how busy sickbay had been and how upset the generally unruffled McCoy had been with the crew injuries. Scotty drew Spock aside, handed him a bottle of whiskey, and sent him to take care of McCoy and to soothe him. At any other time, Scotty would have been amazed at how quickly Spock had taken the bottle and agreed to Scotty's plan. Scotty would have wondered if Spock and McCoy's relationship had changed. But the only thing on Scotty's mind was having Spock out of the way so that he could deal with Kirk and what had to be done.

Kirk was feeling pretty good about himself. He felt like he’d come through a dark tunnel, and he’d done it with the help of McCoy and Scotty. Well, mainly Scotty, with McCoy offering helpful hints in the background. Kirk was eager to tell Scotty that the nightmare was over for both of them. One good thing to come out of this whole mess was that he and Scotty now had the basis of a pretty good relationship working for them. Who would’ve considered Scotty? Loyal, brave, big-hearted, uncomplicated, salt of the earth, Scotty. He’d been right in front of Kirk the whole time, and Kirk just hadn’t seen him. Well, Kirk was seeing him now.

Kirk was beaming with pride when Scotty walked into his quarters. “Hey! Glad you’re here!” he greeted.

“Are you now?” Scotty asked with a scowl. “I expect that’s how all of the away team are feeling, too. Glad they’re here. And they’ve got a good reason to be feeling that way!”

Kirk tilted his head. “Is there a problem?” he asked, a lot of his happiness draining away.

“You can ask me that?! You were the one who led men into a death trap!”

“It worked out okay,” Kirk said as he turned away to take a sip of the congratulatory whiskey he’d gotten for them. “Don’t be such a drama queen.”

“Don’t turn away from me like that!” Scotty demanded as he slapped the glass out of Kirk’s hand. They both watched the glass explode against the opposite wall.

“Mr. Scott, may I remind you that you are talking to your superior officer?”

“Anywhere but in here! Or in my quarters!”

“Or the Engine Room?” Kirk asked softly as he turned to get another drink.

“You need to be paying more attention to me,” Scotty said lowly.

Kirk gave him a smirk. “And why should I be doing that?”

“Because I’ve got what you’re desiring.”

Kirk frowned and turned away.

“I’ve got what you like,” Scotty crooned. “I know how to treat you just right. I know what you like
so you will feel better about yourself.”

“That was before.”

“That is now!”

“I don’t need the chastisement anymore. I just need you to make love to me.”

Scotty looked startled. How could Kirk be saying something like this? What Kirk was proposing now would make them equals, and that didn’t make sense on any level. Not in the bedroom and not of the bridge of the Enterprise.

Kirk saw the look of disbelief on Scotty's face. Yet there was interest there, too, and even hope. Kirk knew he could talk Scotty into this new facet to their relationship if Scotty would only listen to him for a minute. So Kirk kept his voice soft and coaxing as he approached him slowly. "Let me respond to you the way I want to now, and I'll show you how good it can really be between us. We'll have us a new start, you and I, and it'll be so good. I promise.”

"Ha!”

"Ha?” Kirk echoed, puzzled, as he stopped in his tracks.

“A grand fellow like yourself needing the likes of me? You, who could have anyone he wanted? You, saying you choose me?!”

“That’s what I’m saying.”

“And I’m saying that I don’t believe one word you’re saying!”

“I’ll prove it.”

“And I’m saying that you need the chastisement more than you ever did! Because now you’re thinking that you don’t need it anymore! Now you have gone over to the Dark Side and don’t know it!”


To Scotty, Kirk had sounded mocking. And Kirk probably had meant to be mocking, because Scotty had sounded weak to Kirk. And Kirk had been in too many showdowns with posturing opponents to show any weakness himself. He forgot that the important thing was to sweet talk Scotty. Kirk was facing an adversary, not a potential lover.

And Scotty knew that Kirk was being superior and mocking. Instead of being the impressed opponent by Kirk's sass, Scotty was angered. “I'll show you melodramatic! You need correcting and you need it now!” Spittle flew from his mouth and he wiped it away impatiently.

Kirk frowned at the angry man who was practically foaming at the mouth. His frown deepened as he realized that he didn’t know this man anymore.

“You’re too angry. Chastisement would be revenge now and not something you would be doing to help me. You wouldn’t be a loving friend anymore.”

“This isn’t about you, anymore. It’s about those crewmen that you endangered today.”

“You think that I did that on purpose?”
“I think that you sometimes are foolhardy and do not consider the best interests of the people you’re leading.”

“That’s the responsibility of being a leader. The group has to work for a common goal. There’s always the danger that someone might not make it.”

Kirk could see the battle in Scotty’s eyes. Scotty wanted to believe Kirk, but he couldn’t dispute the other evidence, either. “Enough arguing! You are going to pay with skin for endangering your men!”

“You know you hold no real authority, don’t you? I can walk out of here and it will be over.”


Kirk slowly nodded. “What do you want me to do?”

“Disrobe.”

Kirk looked around. “Just, just take off my clothes?”

“Yes! No strip tease. Just get rid of the blasted clothing!”

Kirk did as ordered, then turned to face Scotty who was sitting on the sofa.

“Now what?”

“Bring me your stepfather’s riding crop.”

Kirk paled, but obeyed and handed the switch to Scotty. A pulse was working in Kirk’s neck.

“Now put on your captain’s jacket.”

Kirk looked confused.

“The blue one with the gold bars on the shoulders. The one that fits you so snug and tight and shows off your body so well.”

Kirk dug the required garment out, slipped it on, and started to zip it up.

“No. Just leave it open. Wide open. And come here.”

Kirk lifted the corners of the jacket and let them drop so they flared away from his body, then he approached Scotty and the riding crop he held in his hand. Kirk’s neck was throbbing, but he tried to keep his breathing even and his face calm.

Scotty looked up at the golden god before him, at the jacket that was a symbol of Kirk’s authority, and at his penis lying half-hidden in its nest of wiry hair.

“Come closer,” Scotty purred.

Kirk complied until he was a few inches away.

“Turn around.”

Kirk did as he was told and Scotty quickly taped Kirk’s wrists together.
“Now face me.”

Kirk did, and his taped together hands forced the jacket more away from the front of his body.

Scotty dug the end of the riding crop under Kirk’s penis and delicately coaxed it forward. The flaccid little thing bounced joyfully on the end of the crop. Kirk closed his eyes and could not stop the jagged hitch in his breathing.

Scotty stood up and wrapped tape across Kirk’s mouth, then forced him face down on the sofa. Scotty ripped the jacket off Kirk’s shoulders so that his arms were pinned even tighter.

Scotty leaned close and spoke in a stage whisper in Kirk’s ear. “Now I’m gonna give you the whipping I neglected the first time.” And with that, he brought the riding crop down hard across Kirk’s buttocks.

Kirk contracted his hips with a jerk, grunted, and his fingers spasmed all in one motion. Spots of blood suddenly dotted a broad stripe at the top of his butt cheeks.

Scotty laid down another stripe and another. He was not so angry that he was careless or brutal. He might’ve been vengeful when he struck the first stripe. But as the angry, bloody welts appeared on Kirk, Scotty’s anger became tinged with a feeling of sickness to his belly. He was finding he had no stomach for this, after all. But he applied five stripes across Kirk’s buttocks with a separating white stripe between them.

At last he tossed the riding crop aside. A sadist would’ve gone back and changed the white stripes to red ones so Kirk’s whole backside would’ve been raw. But Scotty was discovering that he was no sadist, despite how angry and disgusted he had been.

Then Scotty watched as Kirk moaned and undulated his body across the sofa by moving his legs up and down. A damp spot beneath him showed that he must’ve lost control of his bladder at one point. Scotty felt perspiration pop out on his forehead in sympathy for Kirk’s humiliation.

At one point Kirk’s outer leg slid partway off the sofa, exposing the dark place where Kirk’s anus resided. Scotty couldn’t take his eyes off that little pink opening twinkling up at him as Kirk slowly moved his hips sideways from hip to hip as he tried to find a spot that didn’t burn.

With bated breath, opened mouth, and glassy eyes, Scotty stepped closed and watched that teasing opening to Kirk’s body enticing him. And he knew that he had to possess it.

Scotty pulled Kirk’s legs further apart and Kirk grunted in protest. Then Kirk looked over his shoulder and tried to yell his protest through the tape across his mouth. His eyes widened as he saw the erection that Scotty was aiming at him, but his protests did no good.

Scotty at least took the time to smear lubrication on himself and Kirk’s anus. And then he drilled steadily into Kirk while Kirk screamed through his gag and tried to scoot away from him. Scotty slapped Kirk’s one damaged hip and Kirk got the message. He immediately stopped trying to move.

Then Scotty could penetrate Kirk as much as he wanted, as hard as he wanted, as rough as he wanted, and as often as he wanted. And Kirk had to lie there and take it.

Over and over, Scotty rammed himself as hard and as fast as he could through Kirk’s anal canal. Then he would pull himself nearly out, lightly message Kirk’s bloody and bruised hips until Kirk was quivering, and then Scotty would rear up and send his driving block down through Kirk again as Kirk tensed for the next assault on his ravaged body. Over and over and over again, until Kirk got the idea that there was nothing pretty and loving about what was going on.
Scotty held off his orgasm as long as possible. When he could hold it no longer, he pulled out and sprayed his emissions all over Kirk’s sore hips. The acids inside the cum bit into Kirk’s raw stripes and made him quiver and try to get away from the biting nips all over his buttocks. At last he lay still, exhausted and drained and spent. He still quivered slightly, but at least he wasn’t in as much pain as he’d been during the rape.

Scotty stood looking down at him and fighting down the rising gall in his stomach. He could see the tears glistening on Kirk’s closed eyelids. He hoped that Kirk was passed out.

Scotty cut the tape holding Kirk’s hands together. The hands parted slightly, but stayed crossed over Kirk’s back. Scotty then leaned forward and took the tape off Kirk’s mouth so he wouldn’t choke.

“I’m sorry,” he whispered, then gently kissed Kirk’s brow. He pressed his chest against Kirk’s shoulders for a moment. "I wish we could’ve had something different, lad. I could’ve treated you so much better, if you'd only wanted it." His lip quivered. "But I know that you don't want me and my loving. But I so wanted yours. But that will just be my little secret now, won’t it?" he whispered hoarsely as he lips touched a spot on Kirk's hair. Then Scotty gently pulled himself off Kirk and stumbled out of Kirk’s quarters and toward his own quarters before he was ill.

He hadn’t meant anything to Kirk, not really. Kirk had been using him to alleviate his own guilt and then he didn’t need him anymore. So it didn’t make any difference what Scotty did to Kirk because he was nothing to Kirk, just a means to an end.

But it had made a difference to Scotty. He had gotten to think that there was some decent feelings between him and Kirk. Something that would be the basis of a future for them. But there was nothing. Nothing.

And the sad truth was that Kirk was through with him, and Scotty was heartbroken. He cried and cried. Then he emptied the contents of his stomach until only bitter bile remained. Then he cried some more until there were no more tears left. And then he slept.

Because it was done. It had been bright and beautiful and a thing of wonder.

And then it just wasn’t anything anymore.

Chapter End Notes

Scotty forces Kirk to receive his punishment in a demeaning way--while wearing only his dress jacket, the proud symbol of his achievements and of his position. Scotty beats him with another symbol, the riding crop, rapes him in a harsh manner, and leaves Kirk in a humiliating position. It is finished; Kirk said that he didn't need punishment (and therefore Scotty) anymore.

Even though Scotty treats Kirk badly through his own hurt and frustration, he is not uncaring. He makes certain that Kirk will not accidentally choke and that he can move his hands. He also is so upset that he is physically ill. Even though Scotty has made certain that Kirk will not want to be friends or even something more, a part of Scotty wishes that he and Kirk could’ve found something decent together. The last thing he murmurs to the unconscious Kirk is, "I know you don't want me and my loving. But I so wanted yours. But that will just be my little secret now, won't it?"
Scavanger Hunt Gone Awry

Chapter Summary

Spock makes a startling discovery which unsettles him and McCoy.

The next morning, Spock walked into the bathroom he shared with Kirk, looked around, and saw that the bathroom had no signs of being used overnight by Kirk. There should at least be damp towels or discarded items in the waste cans, but there was nothing out of place. Highly unusual, he thought.

Then Spock decided to investigate further. He gently opened the door leading into Jim Kirk’s quarters and cautiously peeked inside. Nothing but stillness met him.

“Captain?” he called softly into the dim, shadowy room as his eyes glanced around.

The room seemed to take a deep breath and sigh in relief as it acknowledged his presence and relax with the knowledge that someone was here at last who would take charge and remedy the situation within it. The room also felt occupied. Rooms and even the outsides of houses have a look and feel about them when no one is in residence, but this room definitely was sheltering someone.

But where? Quarters on a starship, even for the captain, are small. There were just so many places that Jim Kirk could be.

Spock took a couple of cautious steps inside. A whisper seemed to follow him, cautioning quiet and respect. A lot of people would be spooked by the eeriness of the place, and even Spock picked up some odd vibes. Vibes that told him that all was not well within. But he felt no need to hurry, as if any sense of urgency would somehow be disrespectful.


Still no answer. Just that odd sort of hush after he spoke, as if the room was rushing to fill some sort of vacuum left by the absence of further words.

Frowning, Spock checked the bed. It had not been slept in. There was not even a ripple on its top. Odd.

And getting odder.

Kirk had not been at breakfast. Spock and McCoy had thought nothing of it. Perhaps something had sidetracked Kirk, or maybe he’d even spent the night in some other room and just wasn’t wake yet or, ahem, wasn’t quite ready to leave the other quarters yet. That happened a lot with Kirk. Spock understood that his captain had strong appetites, be it at the table or in the bedroom, so Spock had not even paid attention when he heard no activity from Kirk’s side of the bathroom.

Spock had not grown concerned until Kirk did not report to the Bridge for his shift. Now, that was unusual. In fact, highly unusual for Kirk not to let the Bridge know his location, especially if he was going to be late. He thought that officers, especially the captain, needed to be good role models for the crewmen. So when Kirk still had not appeared at a timely hour or let the Bridge know the reason
why he was absent, Spock knew that something was wrong, or at least highly irregular. That’s when Spock had left Mr. Sulu in charge of the conn and had started a casual search for Kirk. Spock tried to appear calm as he asked various crewmen if they’d seen Kirk that morning. There was no reason in raising a general alarm until such time for more concern was needed.

Spock glanced at Kirk’s easy chair. Nothing. Then a flash of bright blue in his peripheral vision caught his eye and he turned toward Kirk’s sofa. And that’s when he saw it. Or rather him.

Nothing much generally ruffled the Vulcan known as Spock. He could watch the disintegration of a planet right before his eyes or observe a half-naked woman dancing sensuously in front of him without batting an eye or increasing his rate of respiration. But as he took in the pitiful sight of his proud captain, seemingly tossed aside like something discarded by a spoiled child seeking something new to distract her callous interest, his heart gave a lurch of sympathy and alarm. He was greatly affected, although someone observing him would not have realized that he’d changed in any way whatsoever.

Jim Kirk still lay as Scotty had left him the night before, sprawled over the sofa with one naked leg hanging over the side and touching the floor. Spock’s eyes immediately zeroed on the exposed brown eye of Kirk’s anus. It looked angry, as if it had been ill used. Then Spock’s eyes were immediately diverted to the remarkable striping across Kirk’s buttocks. Four red stripes separated by equally spaced white stripes. It had been done so precisely that Spock would guess that the work had been done by someone with the precision skills of an engineer— if Spock was a guessing man.

As for the stripes themselves, there was evidence of bleeding at some time for Spock could see the dried beads of blood dotting the surface. The redness of the stripes was deepened by the dark bruising beneath them. Those stripes must really hurt, Spock thought, then decided that it was lucky that Kirk was not awake and suffering.

As Spock approached Kirk on the sofa, he could see that the only article of clothing that Kirk wore was his captain’s jacket. Wore was rather a misnomer, though, Spock decided with a raised eyebrow as he saw how the jacket had been yanked down from the shoulders and his hands locked together at the wrists. There was no way that Kirk had done that to himself. The angle would have been impossible for Kirk to have achieved on his own. Kirk would have popped his shoulders out of place if he had tried to get his arms in those unnatural bends. Besides there was evidence that Kirk had been bound by the wrists with tape. No way that Kirk could’ve taped his hands in such a manner. On closer inspection, Spock saw that the tape had been cut, but Kirk’s hands still lay as if they were still taped together.

The only part of Kirk’s body covered by his coveted jacket were his arms and a broad band of blue cloth across the upper back. From all that Spock could observe, he believed that Kirk wore no clothing on his front. Indeed, Spock believed that if Kirk was rolled over on his back, his entire trunk and legs would be naked. Odd apparel. Spock noted, and an odd way to be wearing it. There had to be some significance to how he was attired. Or not attired.

Spock stood next to the sofa, careful not to touch Kirk and cause further suffering. He looked down at Kirk’s face, angelic in slumber (or unconsciousness), yet pain lines etched his handsome features. He must have suffered greatly at someone’s hands.

Kirk lay with his head turned toward the room. Spock could see that tape had been applied across Kirk’s mouth, then ripped away partially, maybe in concern that Kirk could smother if his airways became blocked while he was unconscious.

Spock could also see dried tears on Kirk’s face. Oh, how it must have hurt that proud man to have shed those bitter tears! How betrayed he must have felt! Because only someone he trusted could have
gotten close enough to do this terrible thing to him. How ashamed he must have felt to have been sexually assaulted by someone he knew! And how ironic it all was. After all of the sexual experiences he had shared and been in control of, to have this sordid thing happen to him! And in his own starship! Would the humiliation never end?!

Spock placed two fingers on Kirk’s carotid artery and felt a faint, but distinct beat. His captain still lived! But he could not give into the emotion this fact gave him, or he would crumble into so many anguished pieces of his own soul. Instead, being very much in control of the moment, he pulled out his communicator. Leonard. Leonard would know what to do.

Spock lifted his communicator and calmly said into it: “Spock to Sickbay. Mr. McCoy.”

“Sickbay,” McCoy immediately answered. “And it’s DR. McCoy and has been for a number of years now! Kindly remember that in the future!” he snapped. Spock could just see the angry eyes and the frown marring that handsome, sensitive face.

Hmm, perhaps he wasn’t as calm and detached about Kirk’s condition as he thought he was, Spock decided with a raised eyebrow. He stared at his communicator as if not knowing what to say or do next.

“Are you still there?!" McCoy roared, and Spock realized that a moment, or maybe even two, had passed. “Spock! Are you hearing me?!!”

“Yes, Mister, ah, Doctor, uh --” Then he frowned and seemed lost on how to proceed again.

"Spock?!

"You required something of me, Doctor?"

“YOU called ME, Mr. Spock! Kindly answer!”

Oh, Spock thought as he stared at his communicator. He had forgotten. Strange what shock can do to one, apparently.

“Spock, I swear if you don’t either answer or hang up, I’m gonna haul you in here for a thorough mental evaluation! And you won’t like it! That much I can guarantee you! But I bet afterwards I can get you to answer a couple of simple questions without stumping you!”

That brought Spock out of his trance. McCoy sounded very angry and had probably cleaned up his language quite a bit for the benefit of Chapel and the other nurses who could hear the exchange.

“Dr. McCoy, please come to my quarters.”

“Uh--”

“Immediately, Doctor. I need you. Desperately.”

Now the other end of the conversation went dead. Spock could just imagine McCoy’s face and the puzzlement on it. The two guys had spent the night together in McCoy’s quarters and had showered together (the vision of Leonard’s soapy body and the slippery feel of it as he tried to hold McCoy in his arms were still fresh in his mind). They had even eaten breakfast together (tasty food, off each others’ plate). Now, here it was, barely twenty minutes since they had parted, that Spock was calling him to meet. And meet not just anywhere nicely public like the day room, but Spock’s quarters! If they hadn’t been the subject of the rumor mill before, they certainly would be after this conversation was flashed around the Enterprise. And it would be common knowledge before long, of that McCoy
was almost certain.

"Perhaps you didn't understand me, Mr. Spock--"

“I heard you perfectly fine, Doctor. Now please listen to what I am telling you. I would like to see you. Immediately. In my quarters.”

On his end, McCoy pinched his eyes shut. Just keep on giving my staff juicy details, Vulcan! I’m sure my nurses will love any dirt you are willing to share about us. Wanna describe our morning shower and the soapsuds escapade? Or that session in the night when you had me babbling like a demented idiot because you just kept hitting my prostate and driving me wild? Or that eye sex over waffles and scrambled eggs at breakfast? Hmm?? Wanna entertain Chapel and the others with any of those details? Hmm? Hmm?

“Doctor? Are you there?” Spock asked in a worried voice. "Are you on your way to my quarters?"

“How about meeting in the day room?” McCoy croaked. He couldn’t get anywhere close to Spock in private, not with the state of arousal he was suddenly in.

“No, my quarters,” Spock said adamantly.

McCoy groaned to himself. Or maybe it’d been a soft whimper out loud because behind him, McCoy could hear Chapel shift her feet. Or was that a snicker?!

“And, Doctor, bring your bells and whistles,” Spock added.

McCoy blinked. Not many things could make him blink in surprise after all these years, but that did.

“My--"

“--bells and whistles. And, Doctor, please hurry. Your attendance is most urgent.”

McCoy just knew that his face was beet red when he ended the communication. As he turned to face his nurses, he saw that they were fighting to clear their faces of happy grins.

“Well, it seems that I must make a house call, ladies.”

“It seems that way, Doctor,” Chapel said with dancing eyes. “And don’t forget your bells and whistles.”

“Oh, well, yes,” McCoy muttered absently. Was that a smirk from the women, he wondered?

As McCoy picked up his tricorder, replicator, bandages, tape, and a few other odds and ends and stuffed them into a bag, he hurried toward the door muttering under his breath. He swore that the Vulcan better be having a good story for these shenanigans, or there was going to be one less Vulcan in this man’s universe. Or a mighty repentant one, at least.

Behind him, Christine Chapel let her smirk turn into a blazing smile. McCoy and Spock were so cute! And so oblivious to the fact that everyone knew all about them. A moment later, as she turned back to her nurses, she had wiped the smile off her face and was all business. She might glory in McCoy’s sweet secret, but she would always protect him, too.

McCoy steamed into Spock’s quarters with a frown on his face. “This better be good, Vulcan!”

“Follow me, Doctor. It is most urgent.”
That’s when McCoy noticed that the bathroom door was open.

“I am NOT taking another shower with you, and that’s final! I don’t care what you think you’re got to show me in there! I’ve seen it! Lots of times! Hell, yeah, I like it! I’d be stupid to say that I didn’t! And I like all the attention I get from it! But there’s a time and a place for everything! You gotta face the fact that there is something else in life besides taking a shower together!”

Spock gave him a puzzled look. “A--?”

“Shower?!” McCoy thundered with blazing eyes. “And I am not going in there with you to play ‘doctor!’ I don’t care what amazing technique you’ve discovered on the Internet! Save it for the bedroom! MY bedroom!”

Spock looked a little insulted, then desperate. Why couldn’t he make McCoy understand his urgency? “Doctor. Please.”

That’s when McCoy also saw how pale Spock looked. He frowned. “What is it?”

Spock didn’t answer, but led him through the bathroom door. That’s when McCoy saw the door leading to Kirk’s quarters was open, too, and realized that Spock’s was going to sail right through it without so much as pausing to knock.

“What are we doing in here?” he asked in the shadowy, eerily quiet room. “Where’s Jim?”

Spock turned away and McCoy followed the direction that his eyes took.

That's when McCoy saw Kirk's body sprawled grotesquely across his sofa as if he'd been carelessly tossed aside by a giant hand with mighty strength and that was how Kirk had landed.

A powerful indignation came over McCoy when he saw how undignified that Kirk had been treated. "Oh, Holy Hell!" Then that was quickly replaced by a great sorrow. "Aw, Jimmy,” McCoy muttered with sadness as he deflated, then forced himself to survey that poor, broken body that had once been his dear friend. He knew that he was going to lapse into deep grieving as soon as his numb heart started beating again. But for now, all he could do was stare in disbelief.

Jim! Why Jim! What would he ever do without Jim in his life?! He just couldn't fathom it. Not yet.

But first he needed some answers. “What in the Hell happened here?”

“I do not know. He did not report for duty for our shift on the bridge, so I went hunting for him. I found him this way. It is rather amazing that he still has a faint pulse.”

“You mean he’s alive?!” McCoy demanded, recovering from the grieving for Kirk’s death which he’d been starting. “Why didn’t you say so?!” he wanted to know as he rushed toward Kirk.

“You wished to discuss showering together for some reason, and I could not dissuade you to do otherwise.”

“Sometimes I just don’t about you, Spock.”

“Sometimes the feeling is mutual,” Spock grumbled.

“Go over there and sit down if you’re not gonna be any more helpful than you are now.” He glanced at Spock. “In fact, it might be a good idea if you sat down before you fall down. You look like the color of limp celery. Are you going into shock? Do you want a hot drink?”
“Just take care of Jim,” Spock said as he settled in Kirk’s easy chair.

McCoy took a quick look at Kirk. “His most obvious injuries are those bruises and contusions across his hips. It looks like he’s been beaten.” He frowned with distaste. “Why is he in such a helluva shape with his ass spread open like that?” He peered closer at Kirk’s buttocks and flinched. “He must’ve been raped, too, by the condition of his anal area.”

“I am not accustomed to such a sight as someone’s anus so thoroughly exposed like that, Doctor. It might have been quite stimulating if it was not for the fact that I was so shocked that it was my captain who was being so crudely and so blatantly displayed.”

“Well, I hope it didn’t give you all sorts of creepy ideas,” McCoy muttered as he straightened and ran his tricorder over Kirk. “Well, no broken bones, so it’s safe to move him. Lungs are clear, too, so no pneumonia, although I’m surprised something like that hasn’t settled in, especially the shape he’s in. He’s probably lain here for hours the way the bruising on his hips looks. Come on, help me get this jacket off him,” he said as he cut the material right up the back. “I think you’ve calmed down a little now. Hopefully, you won’t faint on me.”

“It is a shame that his jacket is being destroyed. The captain loved receiving it so much. He was so proud to become a captain,” Spock said sadly as he came over to help.

“We’ll get him another jacket. But there’s only one Kirk, and I intend to save the one we’ve got if I can. Now, gently, gently, remove the sleeves. His arms are in a helluva bind.”

Kirk whimpered as McCoy and Spock tried to move Kirk as little as they could.

“How can it be both, Doctor?”

“It’s good news because it means he’s responsive and has feeling. It’s bad because I hate hurting him.”

Spock nodded.

“Let’s put his arms down and turn them the way they’re supposed to be. I know, Jimmy. I know it’s bothering you to be moved,” he said gently to the guy whimpering in his sleep. “But it’ll only be for a minute more. Spock and I are here with you now. Everything’s gonna be okay now. There! Got his arms looking more natural now. That’s bound to make him feel better and to improve circulation.”

After they did that, they removed the pieces of tape from Kirk’s hands and face. Then they lifted his hanging leg to lie flat beside the other one. McCoy threw a blanket over Kirk’s back while Spock draped one across his legs.

McCoy turned his attention to the still exposed ravaged hips. He ran his replicator over the red stripes to heal them and make the bruising go away quicker. Then he carefully spread Kirk’s anus open between his thumb and index finger and studied the inside of Kirk’s colon.

Spock closed his eyes and averted his eyes. Seeing the inside of his captain’s colon had never been on his bucket list. He certainly hoped that no one ever learned of his somewhat dubious experience.

“Hmm. Good shape in here,” McCoy muttered. “Traces of semen and lubrication. Our rapist isn’t a lunatic, thank goodness. Whoever did this to him thought enough of him to use lube.”

“As I do,” Spock said proudly.
McCoy smiled sadly, glad to be reminded of how good he had it. “Yes, Spock, just as you do. And you're a sweetheart darlin' for being so considerate of me.”

Spock beamed with the praise. "I will always try to be that way with you, Leonard."

McCoy smiled gently, then frowned when he saw what Spock held. “What do you have there?”

“I found it over here on the floor,” he said as he handled the thing in his hand. “It looks like some sort of limber switch.”

“It’s a riding crop,” McCoy said hollowly, suddenly knowing who their rapist was.
McCoy And Spock Give It That Old College Try

Chapter Summary

McCoy stays with Kirk as he recovers, and Spock is in command.

Spock and McCoy picked Kirk up, still face down, and carried him to his bed so he would be more comfortable. They tried not to move him any more than possible. The top covers had been pushed down to the bottom of the bed, and Kirk looked like he was an advocate of fresh air all over his body as he slept. It gave him a look of normalcy which helped the nerves of his friends who were still shaken by his condition and by how he had apparently gotten into his dire circumstances.

“Will he be alright on his stomach?” Spock wanted to know as they stood looking down on Kirk.

“As soon as his backside gets better, we’ll turn him over. It’s still pretty tender. This will take pressure off it and give it a chance to heal. Circulating air is still a great natural healer. And at this stage, we can use any help we can get.”

“I want to take care of him here,” Spock stated, almost daring McCoy to contradict him. “I do not wish for him to go to sickbay. The fewer people who know what we know, the better it will be. I want to protect him from prying eyes and gossip.”

“I know,” McCoy said softly. “I feel the same way. People would be concerned if they knew, but they would be titillated about the details. Don’t worry, we’ll protect him from that.” he told his tender hearted friend. “And we’ll take care of him here, you and I.”

Spock gave him a blank look. “How? During our shifts, I am supposed to be on the bridge, and you are supposed to be in sickbay.”

“I’ll sit with him. Unless something drastic happens in sickbay, Chapel can take care of routine matters. I can even work on paperwork in here. And you can watch him at night. He’ll be better in a day or so, three at the most, so this shouldn’t last too long.”

“But what can I say if someone inquires about the absence of the captain?”

“The least possible.”

Spock blanched. “But I cannot lie. You are much more better at that sort of thing than I am.”

McCoy frowned. “I’m going to pretend that you meant that as a compliment.”

Spock twitched an eyebrow up slightly but did not answer. He knew that whatever he said at this point might only serve to get him in more trouble.

McCoy took pity on him. It couldn’t be easy for Spock, finding Kirk in such terrible shape, and then having to cover for him to save him embarrassment later on. “Just keep it vague. Just remember KISS.”

“Kiss?” Spock echoed.
“Keep It Simple, Sweetie.”

Spock nodded as if he understood, but McCoy wasn’t certain, so he elaborated. “Details are what will kill you, because people will want details about the details. But you are in charge now. You are in command of the Enterprise. That gives you a certain privilege. You don’t have to explain anything to anybody, if you don’t want to.” He gave Spock a wink. "It's one time that haughty silence of yours will come in handy."

Spock considered what McCoy had said and found that he liked the concept. McCoy decided to give him more explanation, though.

“Nobody’s gonna come up and start cross examining you, at least not in an official capacity. It’s the do-gooders, the ones who will pat your arm in sympathy and cluck over you and Jim, those are the ones you gotta watch out for. They are the ones who will worm all sorts of information outa you if you aren’t careful. Just say that the captain has taken ill and is recuperating in his quarters. He isn’t up to having company, but that you will pass along their kind regards. Even you should be able to manage something like that, don’t you think? If nothing else, just give them an inscrutable look and let them fill in the blanks. They will anyway.”

Spock looked relieved. “Thank you. I do believe that I can do those things. I appreciate the pointers.”

“Society is a lot like politics. It’s saying something without really giving out any solid information.”

“I well might consider taking up a career in politics,” he decided with satisfaction.

“Well, let’s not go that far,” McCoy cautioned. "Baby steps."

“I could be an ambassador, the same as my father.” He sounded insulted that McCoy would not wholeheartedly endorse his aspirations for a political career.

“Yes, you could. But let’s start small, and we'll see how that goes. Save the ambassadorship for another day. As for now, you get to the bridge, and I’ll stay with Jim.”

“What about nourishment for him?”

“Good point. I have access to fluids from the replicator here. Perhaps you could make a brief stop at the mess hall for some chicken soup or mashed potatoes, things like that, and bring them back here. Those are mild foods that I could reheat when Jim awakens. More important than food, though, is fluids. I’ll have to get water down him so he won’t get dehydrated.”

Spock seemed assured again. “We will save our friend, will we not, Leonard.” It was a statement, not a question.

“Yes. Now he will have to do his part and want to be saved.”

Spock looked worried again.

McCoy touched his arm. “His friends being with him will help. He’ll know he isn't alone. Now, go on. You’ve got a ship to run. And I’ve got a patient to keep alive.”

Spock looked down at Jim Kirk, then gently lay his hand on Kirk's shoulder for a long moment. He breathed deeply as if rejuvenated and left without a further word.

McCoy knew it was hard for Spock to see Kirk this way. It was hard for McCoy, too.
McCoy opened his communicator. “McCoy to Sickbay. Lt. Chapel.”

“Here, Doctor,” Chapel immediately answered.

“I’m in Captain Kirk’s quarters. He is ill and I don’t want to move him. He’ll be fine where he is, but I’m going to sit with him for awhile.”

“Goodness, Dr. McCoy! Is there anything I can do?!?”

“Just run sickbay in my absence. If there’s something you can’t handle, call and I’ll be right there.”

“But is there anything I can do for the captain? Any food or a special treat I can bring him?!”

“Just being concerned will help him, I’m certain,” McCoy said with a smile in his voice.

“Be sure to extend my best to him.”

“I will do that. McCoy out.”

Then he frowned. No wonder that Spock was troubled with how to answer people and their inquiries. McCoy wasn’t even facing Chapel, and yet he could see her concerned face and willingness to help. On a ship where the captain was loved so much, he had a lot of people who would be worried about him.

Too bad that not everyone felt the same way. Obviously, there was one person out there who didn’t.

Spock sat in the conn as if he defied anyone who questioned his reason for being there. His face did not have any belligerence to it. He had tried to wipe away all appearances from it except his stoic determination. Indeed it was not from anything physical that people were getting their clues. But there seemed to be some very strong and strange vibes rolling off him, so strange that everyone on the bridge was giving him a wide berth.

But people were feeling the tension. Generally, there was a relaxation among the Alpha crew on the bridge, especially on routine shifts when nothing much was going on. But the Vulcan who was generally so proud of his lack of emotionalism was like a barely contained tinderbox.

“Mr. Spock, I am receiving a communication from the Dorian, sir,” Uhura reported as she touched her earpiece.

“Patch them through,” Spock said, relieved that something, anything, was happening.

“I am sorry, Mr. Spock,” Uhura reported. “I cannot get a visual, just an audio.”

“Very well. I will only talk to the Dorian then.”

“Dorian, this is the Enterprise,” Uhura said over her radio. “Proceed please.”

“Enterprise, this is Captain Ellis on the Dorian,” came the greeting.

“Dorian, this is the Enterprise. Commander Spock here.”

“Where is Captain Kirk? I thought he was the top officer.”
“Captain Kirk is indisposed at the moment,” Spock replied. “I am second in command. You may talk to me,” he said with authority ringing in his voice.

“Alright,” Ellis conceded. “I am calling to confirm that the rendezvous with our ships is set for five solar days. Does that agree with your orders?”

“Yes, it does, Captain Ellis. I will turn you over to Lt. Uhura again for the details.”

“Roger that. See you in five solar days.”

Spock settled back as he heard Uhura began talking to Ellis over the various points of their upcoming agenda. Details that Uhura could efficiently transcribe as well as Spock could, maybe even better. She did not have the upsetting details of Spock's morning rattling around in her head as he did.

The turbo lift door whooshed open and Montgomery Scott stepped out. Or at least he took one step and then stopped to look around. It was a wonder that the door didn't brush his hindquarters as it closed behind him.

“Yes, Mr. Scott?”

“I see that you are here, Mr. Spock.”

“I am generally here during Alpha shift, unless I am required to be elsewhere.” What an asinine thing for Scott to utter, Spock thought, but perhaps Spock did not have access to pertinent information that would clarify Mr. Scott’s statement better.

“I mean that you have the conn,” Scott struggled to explain.

“Yes, I do,” Spock confirmed. Scott was still making asinine remarks, as far as Spock was concerned.

“I mean, that Captain Kirk is not here.”

“That is correct. Captain Kirk is not here.”

Both men were getting frustrated, Scott worse than Spock.

“Is there a problem with him?” Scotty dared.

“He is indisposed.”

“Oh?”

“Yes,” Spock confirmed.

“Oh.”

“Did you want something, Mr. Scott?” Spock repeated.

“Want something?” Scott echoed.

“Yes, Mr. Scott,” Spock answered, starting to get impatient. “You showed up on the bridge. Did you want something?”

“No, no, nothing,” Scotty mumbled. “Just checking.”
Spock caught himself before he could ask just exactly what Mr. Scott was checking, but Spock had a hunch that Scotty might not be able to tell him. Still it was puzzling and Spock had to admit to being more than a little curious about Scott's strange behavior.

“Excuse me, Mr. Spock,” Scotty said as he turned and headed for the turbo lift whose door whooshed open to admit him, then swallowed him up again as if he had never been there.

Odd, Spock thought as he lifted an eyebrow and stared at the closed turbo lift. Spock thought that Mr. Scott would have at least checked his engineering instruments on the bridge. That’s what he generally did whenever he made unscheduled appearances by wandering in as if his mind was greatly preoccupied. Which it generally was about engineering problems. But Scott could generally report the general nature of his visit, not leave without answering his superior officer satisfactorily.

Strange, Spock thought as his eyebrow went higher. On a day of odd circumstances, here was yet another odd circumstance. Oh, well, he had more to keep him occupied than the wanderings of an absentminded engineer who seemed to have momentarily lost his touch with reality.

Spock did not know how close to the truth he was. For Scotty had lost his touch with reality. It had hit him hard not to see Kirk at the conn. Scotty knew that Kirk could not possibly be there and probably couldn’t for several days. Yet it hit Scotty hard that Kirk wasn’t where he was generally supposed to be and that Scotty was responsible for his absence.

McCoy must’ve dozed off because he awoke suddenly with a snort. He looked around, not recognizing where he was. Then he saw that he was sitting in Kirk’s easy chair with some reports in his hands. No wonder he’d dozed off. Those reports would’ve knocked out somebody on a caffeine high.

But something had awakened him and then he heard the noise again. Well, actually, it was more of a movement and a groaning, and it was all indications that Jim Kirk was waking up. McCoy dove out of the chair and rushed to the sofa.

“Jim?” he asked anxiously, looking down at his friend enveloped in blanket, his injured rump shining between the two draped over him. But McCoy was more interested in Kirk’s face, so he didn’t even glance toward Kirk’s marred rump.

“Jim, are you awake?”

Kirk didn’t answer. He didn’t even open his eyes. But a soft smile curved along his lips and he looked contented and at peace.

“Good ol’ Bones. I knew you’d find me,” he murmured softly.

“Actually, it was Spock who found you. He got worried when you didn’t show up on the bridge and he came hunting for you.”

Kirk’s eyes flicked open and he took in McCoy’s form with satisfaction. “Good ol’ Spock. Who would’ve thought that he’d be such a worry wart.”

“He loves you, too, you know. He’ll be happy that you’re awake.”

“At least somebody loves me,” Kirk said as he rolled his head aside.
“We’ll talk about this later. Right now, we’ve got to get some liquid in you and some food. Gotta build up your strength, you know. Spock brought back the chicken soup and mashed potatoes I had him get from the mess hall. He also found some green jello and a package of vanilla wafers. He thought that you’d like them.”

Kirk’s breath caught and he sobbed. “I can’t believe that he actually thinks that much of me to bring me something special! After, after, what happened!”

“Of course he does,” McCoy soothed.

"He's the best, you know. The best!"

"Shh. I know. Spock’s a pretty wonderful guy. Now how about having something to eat?" McCoy knew better than to be jealous of the praise that Kirk was heaping on the absent Spock while McCoy received none. McCoy also knew that Kirk was emotionally compromised. It wasn’t that there was any sort of contest going on here for Kirk’s favor. It just seemed that the least little thing that Spock did was wonderful while McCoy could sacrifice his first born and it still wouldn’t be enough in Kirk’s eyes.

“Before I start taking on more food and drink, I really gotta, ah…. You know,” he intreated.

“Use the toilet facilities? I brought a bedpan.”

“Bedpan?! Really, Bones?!”

That was the most fire that McCoy had seen out of Kirk since he’d awakened. It lightened McCoy’s worry, and he actually grinned. Kirk was going to be alright. Well, at least physically. The emotional part would probably take longer, but first things, first.

“You’re still on your stomach. How do you know that you’ll even be able to sit on the stool?”

“I figure that a bedpan’s gonna hit me in about the same way.”

McCoy nodded his head, impressed. “Well, you’re right there. But I don’t know how I’m gonna get you in the bathroom.”

“My desk chair is on rollers. Hoist me onto it and roll me into the bathroom.”

So that’s what they did after McCoy carefully dressed him in a bathrobe so Kirk wouldn’t feel so vulnerable about his nudity. Every man deserves to have some control over his situation, no matter how defenseless he is at the moment.

After rolling Kirk and the chair into the bathroom, McCoy supported Kirk while he emptied his bladder into the stool.

“Now my kidneys burn,” he fretted. “I feel like I could do more but can’t.”

“That’s dehydration. That’s why you need to drink more water and quickly. We don’t want kidney infection to set in.”

“Before I start all of that drinking could I, ah….”

“Use the stool for something serious?” McCoy hinted gently.

“Yeah!” Kirk answered with a rush of appreciation.
McCoy eased Kirk down on the stool, but it still hurt him to sit.

“Sweet mercy!” Kirk explained as he pushed his body up slightly from the stool.

“Protocol says that you should lie in bed and use a bedpan.”

“I’m gonna do this as God and my mama intended,” Kirk declared with determination as he gritted his teeth through the pain of the pressure on his sore buttocks, “even if I gotta hang my ass out of a porthole of the Enterprise and decorate some passing space dust, it’s gonna be done on my terms.”

“Suit yourself.” McCoy grinned. “If you try hanging your ass out of a porthole, it and the rest of you will get sucked into space. You might think that your body would not fit through a small porthole, but I guarantee that wouldn’t be a problem. You will go through that porthole. It won’t be very pretty to watch, but it would be fairly colorful.”

“Guess I gotta try it this way, huh?” Kirk asked with a grin.

“I’d recommend it. Holler when you’re ready,” McCoy said as he shut the door on Kirk.

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After Kirk had eaten and taken a nap, McCoy thought that he was strong enough to talk.

“So, what set Scotty off? You wanted absolution from the earthquake and volcano eruption, and Scotty got carried away and gave you more than you wanted?”

“What makes you think it was Scotty?”

“Don’t try to protect him. You were attacked right after that fiasco with the earthquake and volcano. It just goes along with your pattern. Besides, Spock found the riding crop on the floor. It had been used. There were blood stains on it.”

Kirk sighed. “Scotty thought that I wanted absolution, too, but it was just like I told you while you were treating the injured in sickbay. I’d decided that I didn’t need to be punished for anything that went wrong. I wanted to celebrate because I’d finally realized I couldn’t hold myself personally responsible for everything that happens to the crew. Sure, I should be responsible and try to make certain that it doesn’t happen again, but it doesn’t mean that I have to pay for the trouble with my personal skin. It was the way you had been trying to get me to see things. Scotty took a different slant. He thought I felt no responsibility or guilt at all and had gone over to the Dark Side. I couldn’t convince him otherwise.”

“So this all happened because you were finally seeing things the way that they should be seen.”

“Right. I’d made a breakthrough, and he thought that I was being callous. I tried to tell him that I had put the misplaced guilt behind me, but he said that was an indication that I’d gone rogue. Before I had felt guilt, but now I felt no shame.” He shrugged. “So he decided to rid me of what he thought was complacency.”

“Oh, hell, Jim, I’m sorry. I’m partly responsible for what happened, too. I tried to get you to see that you shouldn’t try to carry such guilt for whatever happened.”

“I tried to tell him that I wanted to celebrate for finally getting over my unnecessary guilt. I told him that I wanted us to make love because I wanted to be with him. He couldn’t believe that I would ever
settle for someone like him.” Tears sprang into his eyes. “I wouldn’t be settling, Bones. I really want him, and he doesn’t believe me. Worse than that, he thinks that he’s not good enough for me. But the opposite is closer to the truth.”

“Oh, Holy Hell, this is like those messes that Spock and I used to get into and you had to intervene to get us straightened out. Now I’m trying to help you with Scotty. I don’t know if I’ll be wise enough to help you with Scotty, though.”

“I don’t know if anything can help us, Bones. I shouldn’t have used him just because he was such a moral person. Now he’s done something terrible to me, and I know that I’ve shaken his faith in himself. He probably never wants to see me again, and I don’t blame him. While I was trying to get him to help me and my soul, I was destroying his. I don’t deserve him, Bones. And the irony is that he thinks that he isn’t good enough for me.”

"I think there's more irony than you've mentioned already, isn't there? Don't you have feelings for him now? Good feelings?"

"Yeah, and I don't know how anything like that had a chance to grow. But he's special, Bones. Tender. Caring. Loving. Oh, I know he whipped me, but that was only because I goaded him into it. Other times, he was considerate of me. Seeing if I was okay. Being nicer to me than I deserved. And I've lost all of that, Bones. Lost it, and it's my own damn fault."

“Don’t worry about it now, Jim,” McCoy said as he pulled the covers up over Kirk. He could see that Kirk was getting tired again and nothing could be solved now anyway. Better that Kirk got more rest. Then they would see what the next day would bring.

And he might even be having a friendly chat with Mr. Scott himself.
Chapter Summary

Kirk, Scotty, and McCoy dig deep within themselves for the courage, honor, and fortitude each needs.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Scotty looked up. A grease spot streaked one cheek and he gripped a spanner in his hand. Genuine delight seemed to cross his face, or so it seemed. He did not want to show his stress at seeing his visitor, but this was the one place on the Enterprise where he felt the most secure and still he’d been found. "Dr. McCoy! I don’t know the last time since I’ve seen you in the engine room. What brings you down here?"

McCoy put his hands behind his back. "Well, I couldn’t find you in the mess hall or the day room or your quarters, so this was about the last place I could think to look for you. I should’ve known that this place would seem more like home to you than any other spot in the Enterprise, even your own quarters."

Scotty looked around the familiar room with love in his eyes. “Aye. This is my home alright.” He glanced at McCoy. “But why are you down here at this hour? Isn’t it well past your bedtime?"

“And I could probably ask the same of you about the time. Wasn’t your shift over some hours ago, Mr. Scott?"

“Aye, a wee bit ago,” Scotty answered as he bent his head and wiped his hands on a rag so McCoy couldn’t see his face anymore.

"Then why are you still here?" McCoy pushed.

“Just seeing to our lady. Making sure she is feeling her best.”

"And how long will that be taking?" McCoy pushed some more.

"I dinna know, sir," Scotty evaded. "I might just stay here tonight and listen to her sing to me. She has such a lovely voice when she is happy."

"Don’t we all?" McCoy mused, as if it was great philosophical truth that Scotty had uttered. Actually, he was trying to calm Scotty for he could feel the angst churning through the good-hearted Scotsman.

Scotty softened. "Aye," he agreed with his heart full.

McCoy took advantage of the softening to get more personal. “Want some company?”
Scotty shook his head. “You’ll be needing your proper rest, sir. I’m not one bit tired.”

“Not sleeping well?”

"No, sir," he grudgingly admitted.

"I'm real good company for someone trying to heal up," McCoy said softly. "You know, there's more than one way to heal up. Sometimes it isn't just physically. Sometimes it's our hearts that are hurting."

Scotty pursed his lips and looked down.

"I come with good experience," McCoy cajoled. "I just sat up with Jim Kirk for most of the day while he's trying to heal up."

Scotty looked up. "How is the lad?" he asked, partly because he thought he should to throw suspicion off himself and partly because he really wanted to know. He had no idea that his eyes were showing great suffering and that would be a clue to his inner turmoil.

“Spock’s with him now.” McCoy grinned. “Spock will smother him with kindness.”

“That’s good. The lad deserves to be treated well.”

“I thought that his friends could take turns being with Jim. Let him know that he's being taken care of. Let him know we care. He's feeling awfully fragile now and needs reassurance. That's where we as friends can help him. I know that you'll want to be included in that. Will you be free sometime tomorrow so you can take a turn?”

“I canna do that! He wouldn’t want me there!”

“I happen to believe that he would.”

Scotty’s eyes bugged with disbelief. “He said that?!”

“Not in so many words. But, Scotty, he needs you now," McCoy said gently.

Scotty bowed his head. "Not the likes of me! Never the likes of me!"

"You're the only one who can give him the help he needs."

Scotty looked up. "He told you what I did?"

"Some of it. Some of it, I guessed. But, Scotty, he doesn’t blame you for what happened. He blames himself."

“I beat him with that damn riding crop! I raped his defenseless body! I am no good for him!”

“If that was really true, you would have killed him.”

Scotty grimaced.

“Without a qualm,” McCoy continued. “Without a second thought. And then you would have celebrated.”

“By all that’s holy, sir, I could never do that.”
"I know that, and so does Jim. But why were you so severe?"

"So he would not feel bad about turning away from me for good. So he would not feel responsible for making me hurt him." He grimaced. "So he would hate me. And I believe that it worked."

"No, it didn't," McCoy said gently.

"It didn't?"

"No. You see, Scotty, there's something stronger than hate. And it cancels out everything else."

Scotty squeezed his eyes shut. He wanted to believe McCoy, to grasp onto some hope, but that might only bring fresh pain.

"He wants to see you."

"I don't deserve anything good--"

"You've got to forgive yourself."

Scotty started to shake his head. "It's too soon, if ever."

"He needs to see another side to you, the side that you want him to see, instead of what he wanted you to be for him."

"Now how am I supposed to do something like that?"

"By making a gesture."

"A gesture? What kind of gesture?"

"Only you will know. But it has to signify what you would be willing to give up for him."

"Why, my life, if it would square things with us," Scotty declared as if he was making an oath.

McCoy grinned to lighten the intensity of the moment. "I don't know if you'll have to go that far."

"You do not know how much I am hurting."

"I think I'm getting the idea. Look, this forgiveness thing isn't all one-sided. Jim needs to apologize for driving you to do such evil things to him. He knows that you would've never done things like that if he hadn't compromised you. He drove you to a crisis of principle that you should've never had to face. He wants to start over with you, but to bring the good things along that you've discovered together. I think you know what he means by that," McCoy hinted broadly.

"The best thing I can do is to stay away from him. Now, please, sir, just leave me and my lady alone."

McCoy had no choice but to honor Scotty's request and leave the engine room. He had no idea that Scotty's "work" was actually therapy. Scotty was badly in need of tinkering with the machinery, because McCoy's words had stirred him so deeply.

There was nothing that Scotty would rather do than to relieve Spock and stay with Kirk all night to make certain that he was indeed on the mend. Scotty would especially like to crawl into bed with Kirk and hold him all night so they could both sleep in contentment. Then Scotty would know that he was truly forgiven and that Kirk truly loved him as much as he loved Kirk.
But neither of those things would ever happen, so Scotty had to concentrate on his work in the engine room, the place where he was truly needed and loved.

The spanner felt good and pure and true in his hand. He just wished that the contentment he used to know from working with it would be his again. He just wished that he didn’t feel hollow inside.

McCoy wasn’t paying attention as he got off the turbo lift and started down a hallway. His mind swirled with this mess between Kirk and Scotty. How could two nice guys like they were get into such a knotty situation? He smirked to himself as he realized that’s what people must’ve thought about him and Spock when they’d get into a sticky situation with their relationship. Now McCoy realized how frustrating it must have been for their friends to see the two of them going through so much torment. It really helped to see the other guy’s point of view.

Chekov and Sulu came around a corner and McCoy stepped aside so they wouldn't collide.

"Doctor," Sulu said apologetically when he finally saw McCoy. "We had no idea that you were there."

"No problem, gentlemen," McCoy remarked graciously. How could Chekov and Sulu notice anything when they seemed to have eyes for nobody but each other the last few days. Whatever their problem had been seemed to have corrected itself.

McCoy wondered if they knew that not everyone was as lucky as they were.

McCoy continued his gracious apology. "I had my head in the clouds and my mind was a thousand miles away." Boy, wouldn't the Vulcan have trouble with THAT sentence!

"How is zee Captain, Doctor?" Chekov wanted to know.

"On the mend," McCoy answered with a sincere smile. "I'll tell him that you asked about him."

It cheered McCoy up to see that relationships could work out, he decided as he watched Sulu and Chekov hurry down the hallway.

A few minutes later, McCoy walked into Spock’s quarters.

Spock looked up, amazed. “Doctor? Why are you back here so soon? I thought I was supposed to watch the captain while you and he slept. Have you made a change in your plans?”

McCoy didn’t answer, but just kept walking toward Spock.

Spock frowned. “Doctor? What is the matter? Why are you not answering me? Why are you looking so grim?”

McCoy just kept walking and staring straight into Spock’s eyes.

Spock was really worried now, but did not step aside as McCoy bore down on him. Neither did he flinch when McCoy grabbed him. He did, however, pull his arms around McCoy when McCoy drew him into a warm, delicious kiss.

A smile was tickling Spock’s pleased face when McCoy pulled back and solemnly looked into his eyes.
“Well, I do not realize that I would get such an unexpected, yet generous reward for watching the captain as he slept. I will most certainly be quite ready to perform that duty if and when the need arises again. I will even be interested if there is no such need.”

Ordinarily, something like that would receive all sorts of acrid remarks from McCoy. But this time, his eyes misted over and he reached up a hand to brush the backs of his fingers across Spock’s face.

Those actions alarmed Spock and he frowned. “Leonard? What is the matter?”

“Oh, Spock,” McCoy said softly. “I love you and you love me, and we both know it.”

It was Spock’s turn to frown. “There is something wrong with that?”

“No. Of course not.” Then tears really did spring into his eyes. “It’s just that other people aren’t as lucky as we are.”

“I suppose not. I know that there is only one Leonard McCoy, and I am not sharing. So how could anyone else be as lucky as I am?”

McCoy’s eyes flicked over his face, then he gave Spock a sad smile. “And there’s only one Spock. And I’m sure as hell not sharing, either.” He pressed himself against Spock’s chest and found his favorite spot for his head between Spock’s shoulder and neck. “Oh, Spock, the universe can be cruel to people sometimes, can’t it?”

Spock ran his hands up and down McCoy’s back. He knew that McCoy needed to be comforted for feeling sad about something. He knew not what it could be, but he would provide comfort and protection for McCoy whatever it was.

Finally Spock led McCoy to his bed and held the emotionally and physically exhausted man while he slept.

It was a good thing that Vulcans require little sleep, Spock thought as he cradled McCoy securely against him. For now he was watching two of his closest friends.

Spock sighed.

Perhaps he should open a day care.

But he would not have this night unfolding any differently.

Well, there MIGHT be a different scenario, he thought. But, if he couldn’t have that, at least he had McCoy in his arms. He nestled McCoy a little closer and nuzzled his face.

McCoy smiled in his sleep. “Spock—”

“Here, Ashayam. Sleep well. I am with you.”

McCoy sighed and sank into a deep slumber.

Ashayam. It was the first time that Spock had called McCoy that.

He liked it.
Kirk had improved so much by the third day that he dressed and went to the bridge. There he was greeted with smiles and words of congratulations on his improvement. It warmed his heart to see the genuine caring for him from the bridge crew.

Meanwhile, Spock had hopped out of the captain’s chair.

“No, no, sit, sit, Mr. Spock. I am just visiting. Just wanted to see if everything was shipshape.”

“Steady as she goes, Captain,” Spock reported with his hands behind his back. “We will get to our rendezvous spot with the Dorian according to schedule.”

“Good. Good. Well, I’m just going around to some of the departments, getting a little exercise and a change of scenery. Love my quarters, but two days of it are about all I can take.”

“Perfectly understandable, sir. If we can be of further service, please let us know.”

“I will do that, Mr. Spock.” He turned with a smile and nodded to his coworkers. They returned his smile and he noticed that there were some misty eyes, especially from Uhura.

He turned and headed for the turbo lift. At that moment the door slid open and Scotty stared back at him. Neither blinked, but neither turned away, either, although it was evident that both wished to do just that.

“Captain Kirk, good to see you. I heard that you were out and about, sir,” Scotty said stiffly, his Scottish burr very pronounced and a clear indication that he was highly stressed.

Kirk knew, too, that burr indicated nervousness, and it calmed Kirk right down. He gave Scotty an aggravating, lazy grin. “That I am, Mr. Scott. I was about to head for Engineering. Shall we ride down together?”

Kirk saw Scotty’s eyes widen with panic. Kirk had no intention of being alone with Scotty, but he wanted him to sweat a little, which he was obviously doing.

Behind Kirk, Sulu and Chekov exchanged glances. Mr. Scott? Kirk hadn’t called Scotty that in months. That only came out of Kirk’s mouth if Kirk was being reserved and remote with Scotty for some reason.

Just then, Spock, either by design or by accident, saved the situation from getting any more awkward.

“Did you have business on the bridge, Mr. Scott?” he inquired.

Scotty swung wide around Kirk who made a quick dash toward the turbo lift.

“Yes, Mr. Scott?” Spock inquired, impatiently looking up.

Scotty heard the turbo lift door closing and relaxed. “Just checking some of the instruments up here, sir.”

“Then see to what needs to be done, Mr. Scott,” Spock said, settling back in the command chair, bored already with Scotty’s presence.

“Aye, sir,” Scotty mumbled as he headed for a console.
They arrived at the rendezvous point and found that the ship they were to meet in space, the Dorian, had landed on the surface of the small planet instead.

“Odd,” Kirk said. “There must’ve been a change of plans and we weren’t informed. How does it look on the ground, Mr. Scott?”

Scotty consulted his viewer. “All quiet, sir. I see the spaceship, but no one is near it.” He took a closer look. "In fact, it looks like it might have crashed landed now that I can see it better."

"Let me see."

Scotty stepped aside so Kirk could take a look. To anyone else, it looked very natural, but there were three in that transporter room who knew that Scotty and Kirk were trying to keep their distance away from each other.

Kirk straightened. “You’re right, it looks suspicious. Well, we’ll go down and take a look. That crew has to be somewhere. Spock, McCoy, you’re with me and three guards.” He and the others quickly arranged themselves on the transporter pads. “Beam us down, Mr. Scott.” Kirk hadn’t even glanced at Scotty since entering the transporter room, and Kirk intended it to stay that way between them.

It was fine with him if Scotty wanted to be polite but distant, and that was the general way that Scotty had been treating him since he’d recovered. Kirk could happily play that game, too.

“Aye, Captain. Beaming down.”

Kirk and the others disappeared from the pads, and Scotty was left alone in the transporter room. He let out the breath he had been holding. It was a relief to get away from the tension between him and Kirk.

It was only then that he glanced at his scanner and saw movement in the trees behind the spacecraft on the ground. Then natives bearing all sorts of primitive weapons surged into sight.

“Captain Kirk! Captain Kirk! It is a trap!”

“We know! We’re trying to fight them off long enough so we can be transported!”

Scotty held his breath until he heard the magic words: “Six to beam up, Scotty!”

“Aye, Captain! Just stand still long enough for me to get a beam on you!”

“Hurry, Scotty! We’ve got wounded! And the natives are coming back to attack!”

“There! Got ya! Hang on, Captain! Beginning beaming sequence now!”

“Scotty, sorry I couldn’t be what you need and deserve,” Kirk burst in breathlessly while strange voices yelled behind him. Those voices were too angry and too close to mean anything good for the away mission. ”But maybe I can show you that I’m a good person and make you respect me again.”

Scotty panicked. “What the hell are you saying, man?! Now’s not the time--”

“No time left! Wish, wish I’d been better for you! Please don’t think too badly about me! I wish I had another chance, but I know I don’t deserve you!” (Click. Click.) “I, I love you! No! Agg!”

“What?! Jim! What?!” Scotty’s eyes bugged out as he yelled into the communicator, but the line was
dead.

With bulging eyes, Scotty feverishly worked the controls, but he’d lost contact with Kirk. He shouldn’t be hearing any transmission from anybody being beamed up, especially since shimmering was starting to appear on the transporter pads. With his heart in his mouth, he stared at his crew mates materializing before him.

McCoy and Spock were each holding up a crewman in a red shirt. A third red shirt was crouched low, holding onto a wounded arm, barely keeping himself from falling over.

“Where’s the captain?!” Scotty roared with blazing eyes as he rounded the monitor.

Spock and McCoy both looked around in astonishment.

“I don’t understand it!” McCoy roared back. “He was with us!” He stared at Spock. “You don’t suppose he stayed back there to fight off the natives so we could get away, do you?!”

“It appears that way, Dr. McCoy,” he replied calmly as he gently eased his wounded red shirt into McCoy’s other arm.

McCoy automatically grabbed the added man, but staggered with his load. “How in the hell am I supposed to do anything with two of these guys in my arms?!” he snarled.

“I do not know, Doctor. I am rather busy at the moment with my own problems,” Spock said haughtily. “Perhaps Mr. Scott can help you. But first he must beam me down so I can help the captain and bring him back.”

“You’ll do no such thing!” McCoy’s eyes were really blazing this time. “You’re injured and so am I! And I’ve got these three guys to save!”

“But the captain--”

“I want to help him just as much as you want to, Spock! But we just ran out of manpower!”

“No, you haven’t. I’m here,” Scotty said with determination as he strode to a transporter pad. “I’ll go. Beam me down, Mr. Spock.”

“We’ll get more men--” McCoy started.

“I have to go, Doctor. Please understand why,” Scotty said as he lined himself up on the pad. ”He made his gesture. I must make mine.”

"This was his idea, Scotty. I had nothing to do with it."

"Then it will play out as it is meant to, between us. If you will let me go to him."

McCoy looked him levelly in the eyes, then nodded.

“I cannot condone your actions, Mr. Scott,” Spock protested. “It could be suicide for you to go down there. As your superior officer, I order you to stay on the Enterprise.”

“But I must go, Mr. Spock. Please understand. Dr. McCoy--” Scotty said, turning a pleading look on McCoy.

“Let him go, Spock.”
“But, Doctor--”

McCoy swung his head toward Spock. “He has to be the one. I’ll explain why later, if need be. I’ll be responsible for whatever happens to him down there.”

Scotty solemnly nodded his thanks to McCoy.

Spock arched an eyebrow ever so slightly. “There is no need for explanations,” he said as he worked the controls and Scotty began to shimmer and disappear. “I am not without certain sensitivities myself, you know. I thought that I had been proving something of that nature to you for a long time now,” he said as he turned to confront McCoy with a slightly hurt and offended look on his face.

“You have been,” McCoy answered softly. “It has nothing to do with you, darlin.’”

Spock breathed deeply as he felt vindicated. “I believe that you have not explained fully what has been going on with the captain and Mr. Scott. Is it because you assumed I could not have any compassion and empathy for them and their situation?”

“Must we really be having this discussion right now?” McCoy asked, hoisting up the two wounded men in his arms.

“I suppose not,” Spock said, turning aside.

It was a helluva time for the Vulcan to get in a snit. But McCoy had to admit that he hadn’t always picked the best time and place for clearing the air between them, either.

“Let’s just say that Mr. Scott would never forgive himself if he didn’t try to help Jim now. And Jim needs to know that Scotty tried to help. I’ll gladly examine the particulars.” He glanced at the wounded men who still had the ability to hear and understand what was being said around them.

“Later.”

“Thank you. I do appreciate being included. As for Mr. Scott, I believe that we may have just sent a man to his death.”

“He’d want it that way. Now let’s get these men to sickbay.” Then he stared as other red shirts ran into the transporter room. “NOW we get help,” he said ironically.

Meanwhile, Scotty materialized and saw hand-to-hand combat going on between Kirk and several natives. Kirk was bloody and slowed by his injuries. It was only a matter of time before he would go down and not be able to get up again.

Scotty waded into the fray with nothing but his bare hands, his Celtic anger stirred at the odds that Kirk was facing, and a fear in his heart for the safety of the man he loved.

“What the--” Kirk said, stunned when a native was pulled off him. Then he saw who had done it and grinned. “Scotty! What the hell are you doing here?!”

“I might ask you the same question, sir!” Scotty ducked a blow, but the next one flattened him.

“Scotty!” Kirk roared as he scooped in to pull Scotty to his feet, despite his own injuries.

“Keep your hands to yourself, Captain, sir,” Scotty muttered as he fought off Kirk as much as he did the natives. “And be minding your injuries! You’re leaking like a sieve!”

Kirk couldn’t stop grinning. “Never thought I’d see you again.”
“Will you just--” Scotty shoved a native away from Kirk. “--pay attention to what you’re supposed to be doing here?! These natives won’t be defeating themselves, you know!”

“No, but maybe these guys materializing might be able to help us.” Kirk nodded to several red shirts appearing nearby. “I think the cavalry just rode in.”

“Aye,” Scotty agreed as he glanced at the red shirts running toward them. “And a pretty sight they are, to be sure.” It felt so good to be standing this close to Kirk, united and shipmates again. Scotty was pretty certain that Kirk was feeling the same way, too, by that relaxed grin on his handsome face. Oh, how Scotty had missed that face smiling at him!

Kirk never saw the hatchet headed toward him. The blow took him completely off guard. He grunted and crumbled in a heap as if someone had removed his spinal column instead of hitting him in the head.

“Jim! No!” Scotty bent down to gather Kirk’s limp form in his arms, but he feared that he was too late for even a goodbye.

Chapter End Notes

The ship the Enterprise was to rendezvous with was named the Dorian because that was the name of the hurricane which was raging through the Bahamas and threatening the Southeastern coast of the United States as this fic was being written.
To Thyself Be True

Chapter Summary

Kirk awakens to changed circumstances and some not.

Snatches of conversations from people long dead or at least in his past echoed in Jim Kirk’s brain.

“… you’re the reason we don’t have a father! He died saving you and now we have to be stuck here in Iowa instead of out in space where all the adventures are! And it’s all your fault! Yours! …”

“… you ought to be more appreciative! Frank provides you and me with a roof over our heads and the least you could do is take a little spanking from Frank when you deserve it ….”

“… I know that George Kirk would want his son attending Starfleet, and I will be more than happy to sponsor you, son ….”

And the ones from the relative present who had influenced him so much.

“… damn it, Jim! I thought I knew how to drink and get into trouble! But I bow to the master! Gladly!Oops! But right now I think I gotta bow to the toilet and puke my heels up ….”

“… Your crew is your family. Would you not do anything for your family? ….”

“… No, Mr. Kirk, that is highly improbable that a bird would have time to build a nest on the top of my head while I am in a staring contest with you. Now, if you are quite finished with being flippant, we will resume our study of Thermodynamics in an orderly fashion ….”

“… I’ve got the Enterprise, Bones! The Enterprise! And of course you’re gonna be right there with me. I couldn’t do without ya ….”

“… You know, in spite of everything, I think that Scotty is one of the most moral people I know ….”

“… I don’t want to hurt you anymore, Jim! Please don’t make me hurt you anymore! ….”

Had he actually heard that, or had he just wanted to hear that from Scotty? Or was that something he thought that Scotty wanted to tell him?

Then the last voice made him groan to himself, because he had at last found something he couldn’t conquer. It had to be given, and he didn’t know if the other person could ever do that for him.

“… I don’t need the chastisement anymore, Scotty. I just need you to make love to me … You. No one else. Just you... you... you....”

He rolled slightly on the bed and felt hands holding him in place so he wouldn’t fall. He felt a groan vibrating in his throat, but he wanted it to be Scotty's name. Scotty's name he was calling... calling. But Scotty wasn't there. Never there... anymore.... But he had to make Scotty understand. He had to make Scotty want him.

Please, Scotty, just love me. I love you so much! If only you’d believe that! Please, Scotty, please. I
need you. I know you don’t believe me. But I need you!

But something else was in the void. Something else was calling, calling him. Life was calling. It was not through with him. Life, with all of its noise and chaos and awareness wanted him back. Wanted him not to wallow in memories and what ifs. Wanted him to get up and fight and participate.

Now!

...Uhhh! No! Too much! Too much noise! What was that noise?!

...and he awoke from that calliope of sound so abruptly that he grunted from the suddenness of the change.

“Umph!” he explained and blinked as he fought to focus his eyes and his thoughts as he realized that he was back in the land of the living once more. The light and the cold were shocks. He wondered if this was how a newborn baby felt when being popped unceremoniously into the world outside its mother's womb?

McCoy was just straightening up from holding him on the bed. “Oh, don’t be so dramatic,” he said as he flashed a scanner over Kirk as he lay in isolation in sickbay. “You were only a little bit dead.” He stepped back and assessed his patient. “Yeah, you’ll live. Now.” His eyebrow got crooked as McCoy admitted his own longtime tension. "Finally."

“Thanks for saving me, Bones. I have a feeling that wasn’t very easy for you to do.”

“Well, it helped that there was a crack neurosurgeon on the Dorian, the ship that came to our rescue, and that she worked eleven hours on you. But Dr. Mullins brought you through. She’s one helluva doctor. Had your brain exposed and everything. Spock and I got to observe. Spock even said, ‘Fascinating’ several times, so you know what a big deal that operation was. We can just be happy that Kate Mullins was on the Dorian.”

Kirk frowned. “The Dorian? But we saw it crashed on the surface of the planet.”

“Well, it helped that there was a crack neurosurgeon on the Dorian, the ship that came to our rescue, and that she worked eleven hours on you. But Dr. Mullins brought you through. She’s one helluva doctor. Had your brain exposed and everything. Spock and I got to observe. Spock even said, ‘Fascinating’ several times, so you know what a big deal that operation was. We can just be happy that Kate Mullins was on the Dorian.”

Kirk’s frown deepened. “But those natives weren’t technologically advanced enough for that kind of ruse. They were still in the Stone Age. I know that must’ve been one helluva rock that hit me, but it was still just a rock.”

“It was one helluva rock. Granite. We saved it for you.”

“Great. I always wanted my own piece of the rock.”

McCoy sighed deeply in fake boredom. “If you’re gonna start quoting old commercials, I’ll have to call Dr. Mullins back and have her check her work over again. She might’ve left something in there that’s causing a draft, because you’re suddenly full of hot air.”

“Very funny, Bones. But was that why we couldn’t see anything but a supposedly downed spacecraft on the viewers when we scanned the site? It was camouflaged?”

“Right. Scotty didn’t see the natives come out of the trees until we were materializing down there. By then, it was too late to warn us. Besides, we had started to scatter to fight the natives, so Scotty couldn’t get us back in one spot quickly enough to transport us back. He about went crazy up here, because he thought he had let us transport into a trap. The truth was that it wasn’t his fault, but he still
feels guilty.”

“He shouldn’t. He wasn’t at fault. He was trying the best he knew how.”

“Then he shouldn’t be punished for what happened?”

“No! Of course not!”

“Think about it a minute, will you? After all, he did put all of our lives in danger, didn’t he?”

“It was an honest mistake. And he shouldn’t be punished for what happened.”

McCoy smiled. “Good. I’m glad to hear you saying that.”

“I’d hate to see him get punished for something that was beyond his power to prevent, even though he was supposed to have knowledge about what was going on. Some things are just beyond our control sometimes. It’s not neglect of duty; it’s the roll of the dice. Stuff happens, and that's all there is to it.”

"So no corporal punishment for Scotty or any physical repercussions like that?" McCoy wondered.

"Good Heavens, Bones! We're not in the Middle Ages anymore! We threw away the cat o' nine tails years ago!"

"Steady. Don't get so excited," McCoy cautioned as he put a hand on Kirk to soothe him. "That's better." He frowned. "Well, what if Scotty feels guilty about what happened to the landing party?"

"We'll throw him in the brig with some poker buddies and unlimited access to whiskey," Kirk said with a smile and a wink. "That should teach him a good lesson."

McCoy's eyebrow went up. "Well, I wouldn't mind getting incarcerated with him. But what if that isn't enough for Scotty? What if he feels that it won't be a cleansing punishment for him unless he's humiliated and beaten?"

"Then I say it's time for him to see a religious figure or a psychiatrist. But no way is he to suffer physical abuse. He's too good of a man and too good at his job to feel so unworthy."

McCoy folded his arms over his chest and grinned. “Glad to hear you say that, too.”

“I swear, Bones, it takes the oddest things to make you happy.”

“It’s all just an illusion,” he said mysteriously. "Just like on that planet."

“Speaking of that, I still don’t know how the natives could produce such illusions. They just were not that far advanced. If they had been, they wouldn’t have been wearing animal skins for clothing and chicken toes through their noses and dangling off their ears for jewelry. I don’t know anything about their religion, but I think their god might’ve been a chicken. Those kinds of people know nothing about scientific achievements. If they did, they’d be smelting silver and making real jewelry for themselves.”

“The natives might not have been advanced, but the planet itself was.”

“Eh?”

“The planet was protecting the natives. They were its children. It lured food to itself so the natives could live in a paradise and never want to leave.”
“You got the natives to talk?  How?”

“Some victims of previous ruses were being held prisoner.  Once every year or so, the natives would toss a prisoner into a certain volcano to appease the planet god.  Of course, that was unnecessary.  The planet was happy to provide for its children as long as they kept it company.  I think we finally got that through the heads of the natives so they won’t have to lure more unsuspecting spaceships to their planet.  And they’re gonna get some outside help.  Agriculturalists are going to show them how to plant food so they can grow their own paradise and take a lot of the load off the planet itself.”

“How do you manage to get all of that done?!  How long was I out, anyway?!?”

“Awhile.  Long enough for a newborn to learn to walk.  No, not that long,” he said to Kirk’s startled face.  “It just seemed that long to us who were waiting for you to wake up.  And to answer your other question, one of the prisoners had learned to speak the native tongue.”  He studied Kirk.  “Hmm.  I better check you again,” he said as he ran a scanner over Kirk again.

Kirk grinned weakly at his friend whom he was so happy to see.  Snarling, or ranting, or charming the bark off a sweet gum tree, Leonard McCoy had to be one of the prettiest sights that Jim Kirk had ever seen.  But he had a feeling that he better not be mentioning something like that.  He knew he was in a sentimental mood for being alive and knowing that McCoy had saved him.  But there was the possibility that Spock might not like it if Kirk was calling his boyfriend pretty.  Besides, guys just don’t say things like that to other guys, especially if the other guys know pressure points on the human body.

Kirk decided to go macho instead of sentimental.

“Bones, you know if you keep insisting on waving those medical gadgets in my face every time you get close to me, I’m gonna have to start taking them away from you.”

“Well, you can try.”  McCoy muttered as he kept checking Kirk’s vitals.  “When you think that you’re strong enough to take me on, kid, you can sure as hell try to take my drums and whistles away from me.  I’m kinda partial to them and won’t let them loose any too easily.  Spock hasn’t been able to get them away from me for all these many years, and I’m sure as hell not gonna let a scrawny farm kid from Iowa get the best of me now.”

Kirk felt a happy grin creasing his face.  “Are you gonna be talking that big when I finally get outa this bed and can take you on?”

“Hell, I might be dumb, but I’m not stupid!  When you finally get able to haul your skinny ass outa my sickbay, I’ll help you on your way by giving you the most loving butt kissing you’ve ever gotten,” he vowed dramatically.  "And that’s probably saying something, since someone else has probably already done that much better than I ever could."  Then he glimpsed aside and nodded toward the chair on the other side of Kirk’s bed.  “Am I right about that?  You’d know a whole lot more about that sort of thing than I would.”

Kirk looked to see who was sitting there and his heart gave a leap as his eyes widened in recognition.

Scotty!

Kirk felt himself blush, then grow thankful.  Scotty was with him.  Nothing else mattered.  Scotty was here!  Tired looking, but here.

Scotty was blushing profusely, too, and also looked a little self-conscious.  He probably had several reasons to do so, and one of them had to do with the conniving doctor in the room with them.
And then Kirk remembered his recent discussion with McCoy about Scotty's guilt. And how Kirk had stoutly defended Scotty.

Kirk quickly glanced at McCoy who gave him a shit-eating look.

“You set me up!” Kirk accused. “You just let me bury myself deeper and deeper, didn’t you? You just let me defend Scotty and knew I’d have to see the correlation with myself sooner or later.”

“And it worked, too. I just had to get him to stay quiet long enough for it to work. Maybe now the both of you can stop torturing yourselves.” McCoy winked and grabbed Kirk’s foot to give it a healthy squeeze. “Glad you’re back, little brother. You sure as hell can make an old man feel older, though. I know that I need some long overdue rest. Maybe I’ll go reintroduce myself to your First Officer. It’s been awhile since I’ve seen him, in a personal way. IF you know what I mean.”

“Go get some well deserved rest, Bones. Let Spock take care of you.”

“He’ll probably fuss over me like I’m an invalid and may even try to feed me some of that Plomeek soup of his. Ugh! It’s gotta be an acquired taste-- like he is.”

“He’s just trying to telling you what you mean to him. Let him baby you a little.” Kirk wished he wasn’t feeling so tired himself. He didn’t understand that, either. He’d just awakened from probably a helluva long nap. But maybe getting things straightened out was relaxing him.

“I just might do that. In the meanwhile I’ll leave you to your nursemaid,” McCoy announced as he sailed toward the door of the private room. “I gotta check on someone who’s really sick!” He paused at the door and looked back at the pair. "And YOU, Mr. Scott, get some rest." He tried to scowl at them. “You’re still a patient, Kirk. So, no rough stuff. Scotty, pretend he’s the finest piece of stemware you’ve ever seen. As for anything else, I’ll let your conscience be your guide.”

The room quieted after the door swung shut on McCoy. Finally Kirk turned to Scotty who was watching him without trying to show his anxiety. He did look extremely tired and washed out.

“Hi,” Kirk said quietly with a soft smile.

“Hello,” Scotty chirped. He was also trying to act positive and not succeeding very well. That’s what happens when you’ve been tense for a long time and finally give into exhaustion.

“Bones used the right word there, didn’t he, and he didn’t even know it. Conscience.”

Scotty looked down. “Aye.”

“I’m sorry I put that all of that on you, Scotty. That was asking too much of anyone, especially a friend.”

Scotty dared a quick glance up, then lowered his head again. “Aye, sir.”

“You’ve been here all along through the operation and everything, haven’t you? You’re as tired as Bones is. Aren’t you?”

“Aye. I couldn’t be anywhere else, though. I had to be here in case, in case--” He bit his lips together.

“Thanks. For that. I appreciate it. Even if I don’t deserve it.”

“Damn it, man! We’re still friends! I couldn’t just forget about you! I don’t care what had happened
before! That didn't matter anymore!” Scotty burst out, then lowered his head again. “Nothing mattered, if you were gone.”

"Oh, Scotty, I feel the same way!” Kirk's breath hitched.

"Sorry. I didn’t mean to be upsetting you in your condition.”

“You know I’m not that delicate piece of stemware that McCoy was talking about, don’t you?”

It was Scotty's turn to blush. “I think he was referring to sexual activities, in case we got that notion in our heads. He may not have seen the evidence of what had happened between us before, but he probably had seen you stiff and hobbling around and figured out what I had done to you. He knows what I'm capable of doing to you.” His mouth worked with self-loathing.

“And he knows that was my fault.”

“No, it wasn’t!” Scotty contradicted Kirk as his head shot up. “I was the one who beat on you!” He lowered his head. “I was the one who raped you. I was the one who left you to suffer alone.”

“After I’d driven you to do all that. Now can we move on?”

"It still happened," Scotty insisted softly.

"I know. And you hurt me. Physically and emotionally.”

Intense pain flickered over Scotty's face.

"But I have regrets for what I did to you, too. I’m sorry I compromised you so much. I made you lose your respect for yourself as a man.” He studied him a moment. “Scotty, you really are a good person. You really are moral. And I was wrong to try to shake your faith in your ideals and in yourself. For all of that, I am eternally sorry.”

“And that’s what you were trying to tell me during that last transmission, wasn’t it? That you were sorry that you hadn’t treated me better.”

“Yes,” Kirk answered sorrowfully. “Friends don’t do that to friends, not if they’re really friends. I’ll understand if you don’t want to be my friend anymore.”

“That would just hurt me more than I’ve already been hurt. We are friends, and there’s no getting around that. So that’s not even to be discussed.”

Tears bit at Kirk’s eyelids as he gently smiled his thanks.

Scotty took a deep breath. “Okay, now there are some other things to discuss.”

Kirk smiled softly at the earnest, business-like look on Scotty’s face. “Sure. What do you want to talk about?”

“What about the fact that you love me.”

Kirk blinked. “Heard that, huh?”

“Yes, I did. Do you intend for that to be forgotten, too?”

“I didn’t mean for you to hear it at all. I thought I’d taken my finger off my radio. I must’ve squeezed down instead.”
"There were two clicks. And then you said..." Scotty frowned, still having difficulty with what had happened. "...what you said."

"Oh."

"I heard you yelling about the natives coming. I heard the fear in your voice. The inevitability of it all." Scotty bit his lips together as tears stung his eyelids. "I heard you struck down."

"Oh, Scotty, I'm sorry," Kirk breathed.

"And it hurt all the more because I'd never told you how I really felt." He gave Kirk an earnest look. "I'd never had the nerve to tell you that I was in love with you."

"Oh, Scotty. Really?"

"Not just love, but in love."

Kirk smiled weakly. "I understand." He grimaced. "But I don’t know how you could feel that way."

"It was more in spite of and not because of," Scotty said as he stood up. "Mind explaining?"

"I dinna want to beat on you," he started, the Scottish burr affecting his words heavily. "But after awhile, I developed a taste for it. But now I know that it was because I was developing feelings for you. Not the beating, not the perverseness, but you. I had fallen in love, but I knew that wasn’t what you were wanting. I suppose what happened that last night was my way of saying goodbye to all of that. If we’re to have a future together, it will be built on more wholesome ways," he declared firmly as he approached the bed.

"You want a future? With me?" Kirk asked softly.

"Aye. More than anything."

Kirk extended his hand with his fingers spread apart. Scotty laced his fingers between Kirk's, and they brought their fingers down to form a solid fist.

They both watched as Kirk rubbed an index finger over Scotty's knuckles. "I think I'd like that," Kirk murmured, then he drew Scotty down to sit on the edge of the bed.

"So, you've been doing a lot of thinking about us, huh?"

"Aye, I had the time," Scotty said with a weary smile as he glanced at the chair where he'd spent so many long hours. "While we waited."

"You didn't leave me," Kirk said softly.

"Now where else would I be, you eejit?" Scotty murmured, the warmth in his voice contradicting the harshness of his voice.

Kirk lifted the covers. "Wanna come in here and tell me more?"

"Do I dare? You’ve been ill, man."

"But I’m getting better. You’re the best medicine for me. McCoy knew that. That’s why he let you stay. Come on, what do you say? I’d like some cuddling. Besides, you were told to get some rest."
“Cuddling?” Scotty asked with a wary tone to his voice. “Are you sure that’s all you'll be wanting?”

“Just for now. I’ll want more than that later on. But nothing bizarre. Good, clean loving. If you’re willing to provide it.”

“I’ll be willing to provide about anything you’d ever be wanting. Sir,” Scotty said as he grinned.

“Get your ass in here before I give it a good going over.”

“Anytime, Sir,” Scotty agreed as he scooted under the covers and the sheet settled over them. He understood now that Kirk liked to talk big sometimes, but that he was a man of simple needs at heart. Scotty knew that he was more than able to provide what his captain, and friend, and lover could ever need. All Scotty wanted was the chance to prove it.

“This is nice, Scotty,” Kirk said as he wiggled his toes in appreciation and gave Scotty a soft smile.

“Aye, Captain,” Scotty agreed as he gathered Kirk close for a kiss, just the first of many which he bestowed on Kirk that day. That is, when they weren't sleeping in each others' arms.
All's Well That Ends Well

Chapter Summary

It feels great to be back on the bridge of the Enterprise again with the old gang.

Chapter Notes

Just a breather after all the angst and an opportunity for being together with the Alpha shift who are like family to each other.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

It certainly felt good to have the conn on the bridge again with the Alpha shift. Kirk had missed the commonplaceness of routine, and he had wasted no time in getting settled when he was finally cleared for active duty again. All of the gang were where they supposed to be when he appeared on the bridge and seemed happy to have Kirk back with them. Even McCoy had taken a few minutes from sickbay and now stood beside the conn as of old.

Everyone was there except for one, and he was probably with them in his heart. He was certainly present in Kirk's heart even though Scotty's body was probably roaming somewhere around the engine room. For Montgomery Scott was the only one who was missing.

Then the door to the turbo life slid open, and Scotty stepped onto the bridge of the Starship Enterprise. And even before Jim Kirk saw him, he knew who it was who had entered.

Kirk glanced up from the conn and his eyes softened and glowed when he saw Scotty. His lips twitched with the grin of welcome tickling them. A look of warmth passed between the two lovers as if they were the only ones present.

“Mr. Scott, what brings you to the bridge?”

“Just checking the instruments up here. I will only be a moment, sir.”

Kirk tossed his hand in the general direction of the consoles that Scotty meant. “Be my guest, Mr. Scott. Don’t want any… instruments malfunctioning now, do we?” he inquired in the most flirty way possible as his playful eyes promised all sorts of wicked things.

A dark discoloration began to tinge Scotty’s cheeks, and any onlooker could surmise that one of Kirk’s favorite pastimes was getting Scotty to blush. That same onlooker would probably be correct in assuming that Scotty endeared himself further to Kirk every time that Kirk produced that healthy glow in his partner.

“Aye, sir,” Scotty said moving toward the console in question. He had a difficult time of tearing his eyes away from Kirk as Kirk did away from him.

Kirk followed him with his eyes. High interest for what he was seeing sparkled in those said eyes.
Meanwhile, at the controls of the Enterprise, Sulu smirked even though he did not take his eyes off the front viewing port.

“Were we ever like them?” Chekov whispered to him.

“How do you mean, Pavel?” Sulu teased with sparkling dark eyes as he flew the ship.

“You know, so gobsmacked with each other?”

Sulu grinned. “That’s an odd word for you to be using, isn’t it?”

“I know, but it covers those two, doesn’t it?”

Sulu looked beguiled at Chekov. “Out of the mouth of babes,” he said, shaking his head with wonder.

“I am not all that young! Or inexperienced!” Chekov countered.

With upraised eyebrow, Sulu gave him an appreciative look. “I stand corrected. You most certainly are not immature. I can personally attest to that from, ah, personal experience.”

Chekov blushed. “You will be telling all of our secrets,” he hissed in a low voice.

“Not all of them. I will most assuredly be keeping some information to myself.” He gave Chekov a flirty look. “I will personally attest to that, too.”

Chekov’s blush deepened.

Sulu studied him a moment. “Have I ever told you how utterly gobsmacked I am with you?”

Chekov gave him a stunned look. “The whole bridge can see every move we make!”

Sulu looked back at the viewing port. “But they can’t read our minds,” he murmured without turning to Chekov. “Or read our lips.”

“I don’t know,” Chekov hissed back without moving his lips much in his best ventriloquist style. “I expect that Mr. Spock could, if he set his mind to it. Or even Captain Kirk.”

“Don’t worry so much. Captain Kirk is watching Mr. Scott at the console behind Kirk. And Mr. Spock may be turned toward his scanners, but my guess is that he is watching Dr. McCoy out of the corner of his eye.” Sulu had pronounced all of this information in a mighty rush of air as if he had taken a deep breath and was expelling it instead of talking. “The only one who is paying the least bit of attention to what she is doing is Lt. Uhura. And she is probably thinking about Christine Chapel more than interpreting odd static on her radio.”

“You and I are doing our jobs, too,” Chekov said proudly.

“You set the navigational data into your computer and are monitoring the screen in front of us in case some anomaly occurs. I am piloting the ship for the same reason and am also watching. For all intent and purposes, our jobs could be taken over quite easily by robots.”

Chekov looked disappointed. “Then what would we do with ourselves?”

Sulu shrugged. “Design smarter computers and more intricate software for them, I suppose.”

“Somehow that doesn’t seem as exciting as what we are doing now.”
Sulu grinned with good humor. “Relax! We will never be replaced by machines. A machine will never be able to interpret data and negotiate with other thinking creatures as quickly and as efficiently as the human brain.”

Chekov exhaled. “That is good to know.”

“A machine will never be able to evaluate the ins and outs of a situation. There will be too many factors which will be constantly changing. And that information will be needing to be entered into its memory banks with all of the subtle ends and outs of meaning in every word and sentence. That’s why a computer will never replace us. It can give us instantaneous information THAT HAS ALREADY BEEN PROGRAMMED INTO IT, but it cannot think for us and give us solutions. Mankind will still be needed to be around,” he concluded with a great deal of satisfaction.

“And what happens if we perfect a computer that can evaluate information?”

“Then we will have produced a Mr. Spock,” Sulu answered with a grin. “I’m kidding,” he said to Chekov’s startled face. Then he sobered. “No, if we get thinking machines, then you and I will have to get oil cans and learn how to service the machines.”

“Are you teasing again?” Chekov demanded, halfway angered, halfway charmed.

“I wish I was,” Sulu said with a sigh. “I wish I was. Nobody knows for sure,” he said turning to Chekov. “But I intend to do my part to stay in the pilot’s chair of ‘this old tub,’ as Dr. McCoy would call her, for as long as they let me.” He turned his eyes back to the viewing screen, noted some scattered space debris coming up on the left, and steered the Enterprise out of its path. “Or until the robots roar in here and toss me out of this chair.”

Chekov did not know if Sulu was teasing or not, but was determined to stay seated in the navigational chair for as long as he was able to serve, too.

Or until the robots roared onto the bridge of the Enterprise and tossed him out of his chair, too.

Meanwhile, Scotty turned away from his instruments after tinkering with them for a few minutes.

“Better?” Kirk asked with a lazy smile.

“I don’t know,” Scotty answered with a worried crease between his eyes. “Our lady is running a little rough today.”

Kirk looked halfway concerned, halfway interested. “Oh? A problem with the engines?”

“I don’t know. I was checking up here first. Then I thought that I might take a wee peak inside her hidden innards. It just might be all of this space dust that we’re been going through.”

“Mr. Sulu just shifted course to avoid some space debris.”

So Kirk hadn’t had his eyes exclusively on Scotty after all!

“Aye, I felt our lady shift,” Scotty concurred. "I will check this console again for changes."  

“Mr. Spock, what do your scanners tell you?” Kirk asked, turning around toward the Vulcan.

“Heavier debris evident on our port side the further course we would take in that direction.”

So Spock had been paying attention to business after all, too. But of course he hadn’t reported anomalies until asked by Kirk, which made his strict attention to his instruments highly suspect.
“Deductions?” Kirk asked.

“That a large planetoid disintegrated here recently, either by native volatile conditions or from some outside force such as the gravitational pull of some larger body passing too near it.”

“By ‘native volatile conditions,’ are you suggesting that a volcano on the planetoid erupted and killed its host? Is that a safe assumption, Mr. Spock?”

“That is correct, Captain,” Spock snapped back smartly with a perfectly sober face as he straightened.

"Recommendations?"

"That we stay on our present course and continue to observe visually for debris. If and when said debris is located, then we should employ an evasive action around it."

"Very well, Mr. Spock. Thank you. You may return to your scanners, if you would please. And consult the computer for any pertinent information about the destroyed planet and any of its history which may be in our memory banks. Oh, and, add the present information which we are now accumulating."

"Certainly, Captain. All shall be done, as those methods are recommended by Starfleet directives."

"Of course, Mr. Spock," Kirk agreed, feeling a little brought to task by the nitpicking Vulcan. Then under his breath, he muttered, "Bones, I feel sorry for you if you misplace the top on the toothpaste tube. That loss must mandate the drawing up of documents just short of a declaration of war to account for the loss."

"Sometimes I think it would be easier to sneak the uncapped tube outa our quarters and dispose of it with the sickbay trash. It'd save a helluva lot of angst and discussion for the both of us, and I'm not stretching facts one iota."

Kirk gave McCoy a playful glance as the good doctor stood beside the conn. "The delights must never end between you two," he murmured under his breath. "With a jolly, carefree soul like his about, you must be highly entertained all the time."

“Haven’t gotten bored yet,” McCoy answered in an equally hushed voice. Then he rocked on the balls of his feet because he couldn't contain the joy he was feeling about Spock. The Vulcan might be a nitpicker and a worry wart, but he never stinted with his affection when it was time for loving. McCoy had nothing to complain about in that department. No, sirs!

Kirk saw McCoy celebrating his love life and asked with a little curiosity, but also with a little bit of envy, “Does he perform magic tricks? Tell colorful stories full of smutty jokes? Or does he grow a couple more pairs of hands in the dark?”

McCoy grinned, in spite of himself. “I swear there's times I don’t know how only two hands can be that many places at once.” He thought about something else. "Actually, it isn't all that dark."

"Oh?" Which was a clear indication to continue with more details. Kirk was such a voyeur!

McCoy leaned closer to Kirk's ear. "We run the lights at ten percent. We like to watch each others' eyes get all smoky with passion. It's a definite turn-on."

Kirk squirmed in his chair, definitely interested. "Really?"
"That's when he develops all those hands. And that's when I have to forget all about being modest."

"No!"

"There's nowhere left to hide from him and all those hands," McCoy murmured as he straightened, then gave Kirk a solemn, no kidding nod.

"Must be hell." Kirk could barely contain his envy.

McCoy grinned. "Actually, it's really quite heavenly," he admitted with a lot of satisfaction and a wink. "Makes up for all his snooty behavior at other times. Whenever he gets extra prissy acting in public, I just picture his face all twisted up with his desperate need for me. And that puts everything back in perspective for me."

Kirk snorted with laughter and tried to cover it with a coughing fit.

"Sir?" Spock asked with a frown on his face. "Did you say something?"

"Nothing," Kirk answered, but then murmured to McCoy, "Damn his Vulcan hearing! That's gotta be rough living around."

"Try getting rid of some gas pains in the bathroom, and he's in the next room," McCoy murmured back. "I do a lot of coughing."

That time Kirk nearly choked himself.

"Captain?" Spock looked quite concerned about Kirk and gave McCoy the equivalency of a dirty look. It was as if Spock was insinuating that the doctor was not taking good care of Kirk. After all, it hadn't been that long since they had almost lost Kirk.

"I'm getting the Vulcan look of disapproval," McCoy whispered. "I think I'd better go take a bath since I'm feeling so dirty now."

"He'll probably want to be in there with you," Kirk shot back and got his revenge when McCoy started sputtering with laughter.

Spock rolled his eyes and turned back to his scanners and computer. His body language suggested that he was disapproving of the way in which the children were acting. Of course that tickled the 'children,' too. Kirk and McCoy did not even dare to look at each other in fear of earning more wrath from Spock.

Then McCoy sobered. "I wanted to tell you that I did a little bit of soul searching about you and Spock."

That piqued Kirk's interest. "Me and Spock? Don't you mean about me and Scotty?"

"Well, yes, but it was about you and Scotty and what I knew about you two. Spock felt left out. I hadn't told him a lot of the details when it was all happening. So, later, when you were better, I, ah, decided to fill him in," he admitted with a deep sigh as he looked down.

"I can imagine what a difficult spot that put you in," Kirk said. "How did you handle it?"

"Well, when I started to tell him, he interrupted me and said, 'Leonard, I trust you to do what you had to do in accordance with your patients and what you owe to them in regards to your discretion. I, who am such an observer of manuals and how strictly they should be followed, would be the last one
to have you betray your integrity. Although I am by nature curious, I will forego my need to know so you will not compromise yourself."

"Wow! What did you say to that?"

McCoy grinned. "I won't give you all the details, but just let me say that I was awfully good to that boy in bed that night. I took a long time and made sure that he was experiencing everything fully. He was sobbing like a baby when we finished."

Kirk gulped and gave him an appreciative look. "And well deserved by him, I should say. If I wasn't so happy with Scotty, I'd be jealous."

McCoy shrugged. "What can I say? We're both lucky."

"That we are, that we are," Kirk thought a moment. "How about if I fill Spock in a little about what happened between Scotty and me?"

McCoy started, as if that idea would solve a lot of his problems. Then he reconsidered. "He thinks so much of you, Jim. Don't belittle yourself for my sake."

"I'll just explain that I had certain needs and might not have found the best way to fill them. But it all worked out because it got me a wonderful guy who's making me happy. My explaining things to Spock might even help our relationship. Let him know I don't always use the best judgement. Let him know that I can make mistakes, the same as anyone else."

McCoy gave him a warm smile. "I think you won't be tarnished one bit for him. I know you sure aren't for me."

While Kirk was glowing in the warmth of McCoy's words, Scotty turned away from the console. "Well, that's all I can do up here," he announced.

"Found the trouble yet?" Kirk asked, suddenly serious.

"No, not yet. I may have to go inside her, just as I thought I might."

Kirk perked up. "Troubleshooting?"

"Aye." Scotty’s eyes were beginning to twinkle.

"Spanner time?" Kirk asked with a quickening pulse.

"Aye!" Definitely a twinkle in Scotty's eyes.

"Need some help?" Kirk asked like a hopeful schoolboy.

"Aye. And your wrench is waiting for you, sir." There was definitely a chuckle echoing in his voice.

Kirk shot out of his chair. "You have the conn, Mr. Spock!"

"Aye, Captain," Spock answered as he left his post and settled in the command chair which Kirk had just vacated.

Kirk and Scotty stepped into the turbo lift with shining eyes looking at each other.

"Well, they won't be seen for awhile," McCoy muttered to Spock.
Spock frowned. “Doctor?”

“Just remarking about their upcoming whereabouts.” McCoy turned toward the viewing screen, but wasn’t even aware of it. “And their upcoming activities.”

“They will probably be tightening some screws in the engine room,” Spock supplied.

“Yep, there’ll be some screwing going on somewhere around the Enterprise, that’s one thing for sure,” McCoy said as he heaved himself away from where he was leaning on the conn chair. “Well, I gotta be getting back to sickbay. Hard telling what’s going on down there.”

Spock frowned. Had Dr. McCoy just said what Spock thought he had said about Captain Kirk and Mr. Scott and what they would be doing instead of working? Or was that just some idiom that Spock didn’t understand?

“Dr. McCoy—” Spock started with a frown.

“Don’t worry your pretty little head about it,” McCoy advised as he patted Spock’s arm. “You’ll get more wrinkles than you already have.”

“Those are just character lines,” Spock said haughtily. “They make me look distinguished.”

“Yeah, you just keep on thinking that,” McCoy suggested with a deep intake of breath as he slapped Spock’s arm. Then he leaned closer. “Until later, darlin’, when we can celebrate our own rendition of space exploration under the covers.”

With the beginnings of a smile on his face, Spock gave McCoy an interested look. “Are we making a rendezvous, Doctor?”

“You can bet your sweet—” He looked around to see if Uhura could hear him. “—chocolate covered nut clusters we are,” he finished in a lower voice. “Don’t you know that the Enterprise isn’t a Starship anymore? There's romance everywhere on this ship, and now it’s a love boat. And I don’t intend being in favor of it changing back anytime soon.”

“Far be it for me to be against anything so popular,” Spock said with a twinkle in his eyes. “Is not the pleasure planet we are headed for named after Aphrodite, the Roman goddess of love? And is that not the reason why I recommended it to Captain Kirk for our shore leave?”

“You sly old space dog, you!” McCoy exclaimed in appreciation. “You’ve been hiding secret talents from me, haven’t you?!”

“It is not my intention to hide anything from you, Leonard. In fact, I will be quite willing to share any hidden assets of mine with you at any time. Just say the word, and I will gladly disclose anything of mine to you.” He gave McCoy a meaningful look. “And I sincerely mean ‘anything.’”

McCoy leaned closer and murmured, “What do you say to turning the conn over to Sulu, and we can hunt up a snug little nest somewhere? Preferably nowhere near the engine room. I think it’s gonna be a little busy for awhile. And you can start making good on that offer? Hmm?”

“Why, Doctor,” Spock said innocently, “I did not know that you would be that interested in seeing my collection of red rocks from the surface of Vulcan.”

McCoy looked blank, then stern. “I’ll make you pay for your deception, Vulcan.”

Spock felt pleased with himself. “I certainly hope so, Doctor. I will be most interested in how you
"I intend to make me pay."

"Don't worry, Mr. Spock. I can just guarantee that you will like it."

"Most assuredly, Doctor," Spock said with a twinkle in his dark eyes. "I am counting on it. I like that this ship is a love boat, too."

And the love boat known as the Enterprise continued to sail through the everchanging pattern of stars around her with her crew safe and contented within her steel arms.

And the universe hummed for sheer joy. It liked its children happy, too.

Chapter End Notes

mindcomber told me that Gene Roddenberry had originally pitched a Love Boat type series before Star Trek. I am indebted to mindcomber for the reference to 'love boat' for that reason.

End Notes

I own nothing of Star Trek, its characters, and/or its story lines.

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