When the Admiralty first delivered their ultimatum, Chris Pike didn't know who ought to be more offended; Jim Kirk, for being treated as if he were incapable of being independent despite being twenty-two and a certified genius; or Chris himself, for not getting any choice in who lived in his spare bedroom for the next twelve months dammit!

Or: Things Captain Christopher Pike learns about both himself and Cadet James T Kirk during their (not so) brief period of (initially) forced co-habitation.

Notes

Prepare to don a pair of rose tinted glasses, because Mr Chris Pike has a pair permanently glued to his face where Jim is concerned.

Expect excessive fluff, some crackyness, a healthy dose of angst, more fluff, more crack, and to generally bathe in those family feels...
See the end of the work for more notes.
Chapter 1

Chapter Notes

There are two **APPENDICES** for this Fic in the last two chapters. They contain, among other things, a chronological **list of all Chris Pike's points**, **background information on the Academy**, and a **floor plan** for Chris' flat. I would strongly advise not looking at the second Appendix until after you've read the fic!

I'm dyslexic guys! Which means that I miss typos and grammar errors no matter how many times I proof read chapters. So please, please don't hesitate to point out mistakes! It's a big help when I'm editing :)

**PLEASE NOTE!**
If you hover over any in-text points, e.g **Point 6**, a small box will appear detailing what the point is.
This will NOT work with touch screen devices unfortunately :(  

Available as a **Podfic**, read by AnUnexpectedParty

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Captain Christopher Pike has been a member of Starfleet since he turned eighteen, ignored his father’s disapproving scowls and signed the dotted line that Alexander Marcus pointed to while sequestered in the back room of the L.A recruitment office.

To everyone’s surprise -including his own- he made Captain only ten years later, not long after his twenty-eighth birthday. At the time he was the youngest captain in federation history. The paper work for his first commission still hangs framed in his office.

At forty-three, the only reason he hadn’t made Admiral yet is because he point blank refused to take a permanent desk job. How could he when there was so much still left out there in the universe begging to be explored?

He did however (after some considerable nagging from Admiral Barnett), concede to taking on the position of Head of the Academy while he’s stuck dirtside for four years. The offer came with just enough responsibility that he’s thinks he won’t go completely stir crazy with boredom before he gets his hands on the Enterprise and escapes back out into the black.

Everyone is fully aware however, that the promised reward of the flagship is the only reason why he allowed Barnett’s nagging to be successful; he holds enough experience and respect within the Fleet that, had he demanded it, he could have had any ship he wanted without the four year wait.

But here he is. Forty-four now and stood under his gorgeous promised reward, waiting outside a shuttle and simultaneously hoping that one James T kirk does and doesn’t show. On the one hand, he meant it when he said last night that Kirk could be one hell of an officer one day, and the young man turning this opportunity down would be beyond disappointing. On the other, he awoke this morning to a reply back from Admiral Marcus regarding Kirk’s recruitment, and he’s now dreading the outcome of the meeting he’s called. A meeting entitled “discussion of candidate suitability”.

It’s thanks to this comm. then, that the first item on Chris’s mental list of “surprising things about Jim Kirk” is:

**1. Associating with him leads to far more meetings than could ever be necessary.**

When Chris touches the shuttle down in San Francisco later that morning and collars Kirk to drag to the aforementioned meeting, it doesn’t take long before he’s adding another point to the list:

**2. Jim Kirk is surprisingly quiet when he’s not staggeringly drunk**

He doesn’t say a word unless Chris asks him a direct question for the entire duration of the walk to the administration building. And all the answers he receives are short, to the point and unfailingly polite. Chris doesn’t call him out on it and ask where his earlier cockiness has vanished to, because the lad is also just about vibrating out his skin with what could either be nerves or excitement. Kirk is still shaking like a leaf when he leaves him stood alone in the corridor and strides into room 264, to face what he has to repeatedly remind himself, is not actually a court martial.

“You understand why we have concerns Captain?”

_Honestly Admiral? No I really, really don’t,_ Chris thinks to himself. Thankfully for the sake of his career and reputation, he possesses both enough impulse control and enough tact to not utter the words out loud. He’s pretty sure he’ll blurt it out anyway if he opens his mouth though, so he clenches his jaw and nods (in what he hopes is a respectful manner) instead.

“We can see why you think the boy has potential Captain,” Admiral Nogura continues a moment later, “but the picture his record is painting isn’t pretty. He completely lacks respect for authority, holds no-little contempt for rules and regulations and his obvious extreme arrogance and narcissism are not qualities becoming of an officer of Starfleet.”

Chris is glad his hands are clasped behind his back; that way the row of hypocritical, judgemental morons seated before him can’t see that his hands have tightened into white-knuckled fists.

“That being said, he does indeed hold great potential. His aptitude tests are nigh-on unrivalled, and if his education records are accurate, he’ll make one hell of an officer or engineer one day.” This comes from Admiral Marcus, who until now has remained annoyingly silent for the whole meeting. “He simply needs… shall we say, a guiding hand to ensure he stays on track. To that end, it’s our understanding that your ‘Fleet assigned accommodations come with a second bedroom in addition to the standard master and study space?”

Chris swallows hard before voicing his affirmation; he has a really bad feeling that he knows exactly where this is going.

“Kirk. Walk with me.”

Having finally escaped purgatory, Chris finds the kid sat alone on a hard plastic chair outside the meeting room. He’s got both hands under his chin, his elbows on his knees and his right leg is jigging endlessly up and down; he’s a literal picture of restrained nervous energy. He startles at Chris’s request, but grabs his battered leather jacket from beside him and stumbles to his feet with a
reasoned amount of haste.

“Captain Pike sir, what was their decision sir? Did they—”

“Drinks first Kirk. Embarrassing conversations later.”

“Drinks sir?”

“Just one of the many things you’l undoubtedly learn about me, Cadet; Beer or scotch is required for awkward talks. I’m sure you’ll pick up quite a few more facts in the coming years.”

“Um, sir? You just called me Cadet Sir? Does that mean—”

“Beer first Kirk.”

They walk quickly off campus, Kirk trailing silently behind.

Chris resolves to drag the kid to the Academy clinic first thing this afternoon because even with the blood finally wiped from his face and hands properly, he’s still a mess of cuts and bruises. Or possibly he’ll take him to Starfleet Medical instead and get that limp that he’s failing to hide looked at too. And following that, they’ll have to trek out to a department store because he’s pretty sure Kirk’s worldly possessions consist only of the blood-stained clothes on his back and nothing more. And then they’ll have to see about clearing out the spare room because it’s effectively a storage closet right now.

For a brief moment, Chris allows himself to imagine how much simpler his day would have been if he’d left Kirk drooling on the floor of the bar where he found him.

Then he catches sight of the kid walking with his head tilted up, his eyes tracking a formation of Starfleet shuttles completing advanced low-orbit manoeuvres; there’s a small but real smile curling the edges of his lips upwards and the blue of his irises are shining with curiosity and amazement.

Chris smiles to himself too and waves the images of his imagination away. Instead, he tugs Kirk forward to walk beside him rather than behind.

3. Despite his first impressions, Jim Kirk can actually hold his liquor

Chris refuses to talk about anything serious until after he’s devoured his burger and downed at least two pints of bitter. Kirk insists that he’s not hungry when Chris offers to buy him his own meal, but in typical Pike fashion, he ignores what he’s hearing and follows his instincts instead. As such, the plate of fries the waiter places in front of Kirk disappear just as fast as Chris’s first pint does.

(Which is to say, pretty damn rapidly…)

“So Kirk,” he starts once he’s pushed his own empty plate away and signalled for a third pint, “as you may have guessed by now, bureaucracy within Para-Military organisations works exactly the same way as bureaucracy within any other organisations does. i.e. far too much paperwork, far too many meetings, and far too many pointless decisions made and arbitrary rules argued over.”

Kirk merely shrugs at that and takes another large swig from his fourth glass of double Jack and
“With that bureaucracy comes a lot of standard procedures that the ‘Fleet and the Academy use to operate on a day to day basis. One such of these procedures states that any new recruit to the Academy with a minor criminal record is entitled to have that record sealed and discounted until such a time as they either drop out of the Academy or leave the ‘Fleet’s service.”

“And err, what does “minor” consist of sir?” Chris chuckles at the undisguised hope colouring the kid’s voice.

“It means son, that the trail of misdemeanours that you’ve left in your wake can be locked up and ignored while you remain in Starfleet’s employ. Provided of course that you don’t acquire anymore additions to your rap sheet while you’re here. Well, usually that’s what it would mean anyway.”

Kirk’s face smooths out blank and emotionless at that, and he tips back the remainder of his Jack and signals the barman for another before tentatively asking for clarification;

“Usually?”

“Yes well,” Chris answers with a tight smile, “in this instance the Admiralty and Board of Admissions felt that further assurances of your good behaviour were required. Probably because of your famous name if I’m being honest. For the record, myself and Admirals Barnett, Archer and Risscount were all venomously opposed to the idea. You were emancipated at sixteen and left entirely to your own devices, but despite that you’ve managed to avoid anything worse than the odd night in a drunk-tank here and there and a handful of minor offenses for bar-fights; I very much doubt you need more supervision than any other first-year Cadet. Especially a first-year who’s four years older than the standard age.”

“I’m almost afraid to ask what the catch is now,” Kirk grimaces. The expression remains fixed to his features even when he’s handed yet another Jack and Coke.

Chris chuckles dryly, and lifts his pint in a mock toast which Kirk reciprocates without question.

“I’m afraid kid, that you’re stuck living with my miserable self for your first twelve months at the Academy.”

Kirk’s eyes widen before he downs his entire drink in one long gulp.

Chris doesn’t even complain when the kid swipes the remainder of his beer and downs that too; he’s too busy wondering how the hell he doesn’t seem to be even mildly tipsy yet.

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4. Despite expectations, Jim Kirk is not actually a bad patient.

After some internal debate, Chris decides that they will make the trip up to Starfleet Medical despite the Academy Clinic being considerably closer. He figures while they’re there, he can both catch up with Phil Boyce and check in on his other recruit of yesterday.

Decision made, he pays off his tab (and goggles some more at the amount of booze kirk has consumed; the receipt he’s shown is itemised, and damn, how is he still sober?) and bundles them both into the back of a taxi.
One of the many benefits of wearing a jacket adorned with Captain Stripes is that -provided no emergency is occurring- you don’t have to wait around very long in the ER reception before you’re led back into an assessment room.

Kirk follows along without complaint and allows a Nurse to direct him to lie down on a Biobed and begin scanning him in silence; after his own attempts to patch the kid up last night were thoroughly rejected, Chris is honestly surprised that he’s being so docile about the whole process now.

Another advantage to the three stripes on his sleeves is that word of his presence in the hospital very quickly reaches Dr Philip Boyce. In truth, it probably has more to do with his close friendship with the Doctor than his rank, but Chris figures the outcome is the same no matter your explanation.

That is to say, the Nurse has barely managed to finish her initial scans before Phil is barging into the small room demanding to know what sort of trouble Chris has managed to get himself into now.

“I swear to god Christopher, I leave you alone for five minutes! And I suppose you’re the one I have to blame for sending McCoy to me as well huh? How you manage it Chris, I’ll never know!”

“Relax Phil, I’m fine, I’m fine! Cadet Kirk here just needs some basic dermal regeneration and his knee checking over, that’s all.”

Phil drops his hands and stops hovering over Chris anxiously at that and finally turns to look at the room’s other two occupants. Well. Glare at them really. Kirk smiles nervously under the scrutiny and offers up a feeble wave that serves only to cause the Nurse to scold him for not holding still while she’s trying to run a regenerator over his bruised knuckles.

Turning back to Chris with a raised eyebrow, Phil then asks “and why exactly are you personally escorting a Cadet to hospital for superficial injuries?”

Chris shrugs and tries for his best innocent voice:

“Because he’s my new roomie.”

Phil blinks.

“….What?”

Phil obviously demands a more full explanation than that, so once Kirk has had another regenerator strapped to his knee by the Doctor, Chris finds himself dragged to the break room down the hall. Once there, he spills the whole story starting from yesterday afternoon over a cup of crappy filter coffee while Phil laughs at his plight unsympathetically.

“It’s your own fault for scraping him off that barroom table Chris. You literally only have yourself to blame for this one.”

“Yeah yeah, I know. Jackass.”

Phil continues chuckling and deposits both their empty mugs in the kitchenette sink.
5. Jim Kirk is one of those individuals prone to assigning people with seemingly random nicknames

When they return to the assessment room roughly thirty minutes later to collect Kirk, they find the young man chatting away amiably with the gruff-looking doctor (McCoy? Yes, McCoy) Chris had recruited just before Kirk himself. From the brief snatch Chris overhears before the two cut off to greet the two officers, they’re hypothesising how many of their classes they’re likely to share.

McCoy steps back to allow Phil to check the regenerator attached to Kirk’s knee, and Chris uses the opportunity to ensure that the younger doctor knows where to go and who to speak with to complete his enrolment.

Assurances received, he claps Phil on the shoulder as he and McCoy leave, and turns to gather up his own now-discharged charge. When he does so though, Kirk is leaning around the room’s door frame hollering enthusiastically down the corridor.

“Bones! Don’t forget to comm me! You promised Bones!”

“Dammit Jim! Don’t call me that!”

Chris surmises that ‘Bones’ is actually Doctor McCoy and chooses not to comment lest he be saddled with some unusual epithet himself.

Instead he mentally corrects point 2 to Jim Kirk is quiet most of the time when he isn’t staggeringly drunk.

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6. Unless it’s edible or drinkable, Jim Kirk will do his damnedest to stop you from buying him anything.

“Jim. It’s a toothbrush. It’s literally half a credit!”

“Which is exactly why I should pay for it myself sir!”

“You barely have a single credit to your name!”

“You already paid for that bed-sheet set! After I told you not to!”

“Yes! And I’m also going to buy you a tube of toothpaste, a bottle of shampoo and shower gel, your own set of towels and a shaving kit! So I suggest you get used to concept damn fast son and suck it up!”

“But sir!”

Chris decides it’s in his best interest to avoid mentioning that they’re also going clothes shopping as soon as they’re done here until as late as humanly possible!

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As predicted, Kirk is an absolute nightmare in the clothing department too. Chris ends up sending him to try on a single, cheap plain white t-shirt (with the promise that Chris will not pay for it) and then fills their basket with items in Kirk's size and runs to the checkouts while the kid is distracted.
He can honestly say that he could never have predicted that his Starfleet tactical training would be useful in this manner.

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If he thought buying civvies was hard, it’s nothing compared to how purchasing sports clothes and footwear goes.

Chris is fairly convinced the only reason the store manager doesn’t kick them out is because Chris is still in Uniform.

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7. Excepting situations where paying for items is concerned, Jim Kirk will happily follow orders and instructions.

When they finally arrive outside Chris’s apartment block, it’s gone 7pm. Chris is utterly exhausted.

Thankfully for his sanity, Number One is waiting by the front door to the building, and, even more thankfully, doesn’t ask why Chris is clearly nearing his wit's end, or why Kirk is obviously sulking. Instead, she simply relieves Chris of a number of the bags he’s carrying and allows him to proceed her into the block.

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It’s only once Chris has wrestled the door to his flat open and dropped both his load and himself onto the couch in the front room that he remembers that he ought to introduce Kirk and Number One to each other.

“Number One, this is Cadet James T. Kirk,” he begins, not bothering to stand back up. “For reasons I barely understand and agree with even less, Marcus and Nogura decided it was a brilliant idea to assign Kirk and I as flatmates. Kirk, this is Captain Amanda Thirrwood, currently of the USS Hawking and formerly my first officer aboard the USS Odyssey.”

Having also placed their own bags down, the two exchange greetings and a handshake, Kirk with considerably more enthusiasm than Number One. Chris watches the exchange with amusement before leaning back and kicking his feet up onto the coffee table.

“Now Kirk. As your first official assignment as a member of Starfleet, it is your duty to find the takeaway menus in the kitchen and order two extra-large pizzas. The first should be vegetarian unless you wish to face the wrath of Number One, and the second can be topped with whatever you choose provided there’s at least two meat items, no anchovies and no olives.”

Kirk pauses, grins, and then scurries off into the flat’s small kitchen, having declared that to be an awesome first order.

Chris is just glad that the first five words of Point 6 are still holding true.

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7. [AMENDMENT] Excepting situations where paying for items is concerned, Jim Kirk will
happily follow orders and instructions. Provided he agrees with the order.

After Pizza, and following Number One’s departure, Chris thumbs open the door to the spare bedroom and decides that he really just cannot be bothered to clear out the spare room enough tonight to a) find where the hell he’s stored the camp bed, and b) create enough space in the spare room to set the camp bed up.

Accordingly, he tells Kirk to take his bed for the night and that he will camp on the sofa.

“No. I’m the guest here, I’ll take the sofa.”

“Kirk despite our wishes otherwise, you do actual live here too now. So technically you’re not a guest.”

“So there’s no problem with me taking-”

“It’s still my flat however, so you’ll sleep where I tell-”

“I’m not kicking you out of your own room!”

“I’m your senior officer, and if I say-”

“Exactly! And seniority means getting the proper bed!”

“James!”

“Christopher!”

Chris raises an eyebrow at that one.

“Captain Christopher?” Kirk offers haltingly after a moment.

“Bed. Now.”

“…..ok sir.”

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Chris regrets taking the couch. The damn thing is made of misery and lumps and he’s only been here an hour and his back is already crying out for vengeance.

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He wakes the following the morning to Kirk looming over him concerningly close to his face.

“Hey Chris, do the yogurts in your fridge contain strawberry and if not, can I eat them?”

Chris groans and rolls over to look at the chrono on the HoloDisc player. It reads 0543. Chris flops back onto his front, tells himself it’s unbecoming of an officer to cry in front of a junior officer, let alone a cadet, and adds an eighth point to his ‘Jim Kirk’ list:

8. James Tiberius Kirk is one of those goddamn evil, inhumane morning people and Chris hates his life.

Chapter End Notes
Updates were posted on an entirely erratic schedule.

Many of the author notes are now out of date; maybe I'll get around to updating them one day :P
Chapter Notes

"What is this?!" I hear you all cry, "ISPth posted a chapter during daylight hours?!?!? Surely not!"

Credit goes to my Mum for Betaing this chapter; she's cool like that :D

If you're currently reading this, I seem to have screwed up some HTML. I'm fixing it now, so please ignore the large blocks of hyperlink!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

It’s only 10am and Chris’ day is already awful.

**Point 8** had only been the beginning. When he’d eventually dragged himself off the horrendously uncomfortable couch and into the kitchen, not only was the bag of ground coffee for the filter machine completely empty, but the box of pods for the fancy-ass Nespresso machine that Phil had gifted him with was gone too.

Worse, as much as he wanted to, he couldn’t even blame Kirk for the lack of both. He’d used the last of the ground **himself** four days prior just before he left for Riverside and the Shipyards, and Number One had borrowed his box of pods over a week ago with **his permission**.

In short, the lack of decent coffee was entirely his own fault.

Didn’t mean he had to be happy about it.

Of course, to really drive the nail in his coffee-less coffin, when he’d plugged the correct numbers into the replicator to get it to spit out a mug of crappy barely-drinkable, but at least caffeinated coffee-like substance, he had instead gotten an ominous whirring noise, a seriously concerning hollow boom and finally a face full of acrid black smoke as the whole machine fizzled and died dramatically.

The only redeeming factor of the whole sorry situation was that Kirk at least had had the sense to keep his goddamn overly cheerful mouth shut. So frustrated and grumpy had he been feeling, that had the lad uttered one single word, Chris would have utterly lost his temper and kicked more than just the fridge and the door frame as he stomped grumpily to the shower.

A good twenty minutes of hot water, clean clothes, and the discovery that Kirk had not just made his bed, but stripped it and put clean sheets on, had improved his mood just enough that he had felt up to the task of dragging Kirk out for breakfast. The improvement hadn’t lasted long though; just as Chris had **finally** gotten his cup of much-needed coffee and ordered an equally necessary plate of pancakes and blueberry syrup, his PADD had chirped obnoxiously five or six times as his schedule for the day had auto-updated to include yet another goddamn meeting with the Board of admissions. At **eight-chuffing-thirty am**.

Which meant he’d had to swallow down his breakfast so fast he barely tasted it, hastily drop Kirk off at the admissions centre with instructions to get all his paperwork filled out, and then practically run to the administrations building to make it on time.
Which is where he’s been for the last two hours. Trapped in room 264 again, listening to Commodore Morrington drone on and on and on again.

Apparently Kirk needs a curfew on week-days. It’s absolutely essential apparently. There are many reasons why. Important reasons. Contrary to everything Chris has witnessed in the last twenty-four hours, Kirk just isn’t capable of being responsible. Bi-weekly meetings with a senior faculty member. Absolutely essential to ensure Kirk stays on track. Who knows what might happen if the twenty-two year old who’s lived independently mostly successfully for six whole years isn’t kept carefully on the straight and narrow? A total disaster apparently. End of Starfleet life as we know it. Ka-boom. No more Starfleet Academy.

God, Chris is so, so bored.

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Thankfully, Richard Barnett and Jonathan Archer are just as frustrated as Chris is. There’s more than a few others also looking pained and bored stiff, but Barnett and Archer are the ones with high enough ranks that they can actually call the meeting to a close and let everyone finally get on with their lives.

Chris scarpers before anyone can collar him and pile him with yet more responsibilities; he’s already been lumbered with telling Kirk all about his new bedtimes and hand-holding schedule, and he’s now two days further behind with his paper work than he planned to be as well. Chris suspects this is going to be a reoccurring theme and lists it accordingly:

9. knowing Jim Kirk means that you will be perpetually behind schedule. For everything.

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Twenty minutes later, just when he thinks that today might finally be getting back on track, he strolls into the main hall of the Admissions centre to find a Lieutenant practically screaming at a very quiet and very confused looking Jim Kirk, while the other occupants of the room are doing their best to not look they’re watching the unfolding drama avidly.

For a good couple seconds, all Chris can do is stand and gape.

Then Kirk notices him standing in the doorway and Chris watches as a wave of relief visibly washes over the kid. It’s a reaction that he’s gotten used to seeing from his various crews over the years; whenever an away mission went to pot, that was the look the away team would get when Chris stepped up and took control of the situation. Even Earth-side, seeing that look subconsciously spurs him into action and before he’s really registered what he’s doing he’s striding across the room to come to his crewman’s aid.

Well, his roommate’s aid anyway. Ah dammit, that probably means another point needs adding to the list:

10: After only 24 hours, Jim Kirk has already managed to get Chris to claim him as one of his own.

Chris isn’t as surprised by this revelation as he probably should be.

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"What seems to be the problem Lieutenant?" Chris uses his best and sternest ‘Captain’ voice to ask the question, and it has the desired effect of cutting the Deltan off mid rant.
"Captain Pike sir!" she stammers out, jumping in surprise at Chris’ inquiry and snapping out a hasty salute. “Just a simple paperwork issue sir, I won’t bore you with the details.”

"If it’s a simple issue Lieutenant, it won’t trouble you to explain it.” The lieutenant looks a little like a deer caught in the headlights at that, but then Kirk shuffles in his seat and she straightens her spine and raises her chin before answering him with confidence ringing clearly in her voice.

“Sir, despite having the process explained to him three times, Cadet Kirk has failed to properly complete the necessary admissions forms. He insists that he does not have nor need a next of kin, he hasn’t disclosed a large portion of his medical history, he won’t submit to a physical examination, and the majority of his educational background is most likely fabricated.”

Chris carefully keeps his face neutral and his gaze level as he turns his head to regard Kirk. Kirk shuffles some more in his seat and looks a little guilty, but doesn’t offer up an explanation, so Chris leans across the table and swipes up the PADD displaying the kid’s application forms.

A quick perusal later and he knows that the Lieutenant is right; the next of kin section is completely blank, there’s a hole the size of Jupiter in his childhood and adolescent medical records, and the list of his qualifications? Well, Chris reckons he should have done more than skim through his aptitude scores and glance at the top of the education section that night in the bar. A lot more.

11. Jim Kirk is vastly overqualified for basically all of the undergraduate tracks at Starfleet Academy.

“Well, some of this is easily sorted,” he eventually manages to choke out after a few shocked moments of silence. “You can list me as his next of kin until Kirk chooses to offer an alternative. This list of degrees and doctorates can be verified independently with the awarding institutions. And as for his medical records, the Cadet and I will discuss that privately, if you will show us to a side room?”

Chris can almost physically feel the waves of gratitude pouring off Kirk as the chagrined Lieutenant shows them across the hall, so he knows he’s made the right choice in taking this discussion elsewhere.

"Look we’ll get to the medical jargon in a minute son, but first I want to know why the hell you didn’t just laugh in my face and tell me to get knotted the other night when I suggested you were wasting your life and told you to enlist.”

“Well, it wasn’t exactly untrue sir. I kind of was wasting it. Drinking myself into an early grave and all that.”

They’re sat perpendicular to each other in the corner of the small room, the application PADD balanced in Kirk’s hands, and Chris’ own PADD with Kirk’s transcripts listed on it in Chris’. Chris is trying to keep his astonishment off his face as he scrolls through the latter, but he’s pretty sure he’s failing miserably.

“You’re only twenty-two and you have a Bachelors in Mathematical Cryptography, two Masters Degrees in Astronautical Engineering and Starship design, and in Theoretical Physics respectively, a PhD in Electrical Engineering, and you’re in the process of completing a Postdoc in Advanced Computer Science with a specialisation in Starship programming! I hardly think that counts as wasting your life son!”
“I do a lot of online courses is all. I mean, anyone with a PADD or a Comm station can do that sir, so it doesn’t mean a lot really right?”

“James! The only other cadet under the age of thirty that we’ve ever had attend the Academy with that an impressive set of qualifications is three Terran years your senior and a Vulcan!”

“Oh…. Okay. I just thought… I mean, I’m not special or…..” Kirk trails off uncertainly into silence, his eyes wandering away to stare unfocused at the far wall. Chris stifles a sigh and mentally writes out **Point 12:**

12: It’s probable that no one underestimates Jim Kirk more than Jim Kirk does.

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“So, I suppose we had better discuss the sizeable gap in your medical records.”

Kirk shrugs and leans back casually in his chair.

“Not much to tell really. Just after Mom remarried, she got a new commission as a Warp Engineer and started going back up into the black. After she left that first time, I just never really went for any of my appointments for vaccines and things like that. Didn’t know I had to. Probably because I skipped school more times than I actually went. Then I was off planet myself for a while and I guess nobody ever added anything to my file while I was away. Not much too add I suppose. Maybe they should have listed a few of the allergies that I found out about while out there, but that’s it.” Kirk shrugs again, the picture of nonchalance, and Chris just knows that there’s something the kid isn’t saying.

He won’t push to find out what though; he’s pretty damn sure that if he does, not only will he not get his answers, but more importantly Kirk will take it as some form of betrayal of trust and shut him out of everything else even slightly personal too.

“Alright,” he says carefully instead, “sounds reasonable to me. Add those explanations to the notation boxes and then give it here for me to sign off on.”

Chris knows for certain his **Point 13** is correct when he catches the nearly non-existent flicker of surprise in the kid’s eyes at that, and he resolves to investigate further at a later date.

13. **Something bad happened during Jim Kirk’s childhood, and if Kirk has his way, no one will ever find out what.**

Chris’ instincts are telling him that it’s related to Winona Kirk’s more than obvious absence from her son’s life (and probably to those years he spent off planet too). If Jim’s willingness to accept Chris as his next of kin in place of his mother doesn’t make that clear –despite them having met for the first time less than two days ago-, then his unexplained emancipation at sixteen does.

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With the application form now complete, the only thing left to organise is Kirk’s physical examination. Given the secrets he’s keeping surrounding those medical history files, Chris isn’t really surprised that Jim’s not particularly willing to submit to the procedure.

"Look I get that you’re reluctant kid, but I promise you that I will ensure that doctor-patient confidentiality is upheld. So long as nothing comes up that’s going to stop you from participating in the physical aspects of Starfleet training, no one will ever know what happens in the examination room other than you and the attending physician.”
“I know sir, I just- I just don’t like being poked and prodded at.”

Chris recalls **Point 4** but tactfully doesn’t call him out on the lie.

“Would it help if I organised it so that you got to choose which Doctor performed the physical?”

Kirk finally looks thoughtful at that, and Chris again has to stop himself sighing in relief.

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For the second time in as many days, Chris finds himself escorting Cadet Kirk to Starfleet Medical.

Phil is leaning against the reception desk when they enter and as soon as he spots them, he huffs in exaggerated exasperation and strides over to meet them faux-reluctantly.

"Seriously Chris, it hasn’t even been 24 hours since you were last here! I’m going to start wrapping you in bubble wrap and tying you to your own sofa so that I have a guarantee that you’re staying out of trouble."

“Well you could,” Chris grins back at Phil, “but knowing my luck, the trouble would show up in my own front room and I’d be too tied up to walk away from it."

“You really are going to be the death of me one day, you know that?"

“All too well Phil. All too damn well.”

They stand grinning at each other for a few seconds after that, before Phil finally shakes his head and asks them why they are actually there.

“Cadet Kirk here still needs to have his physical. I was hoping you could arrange it so that Doctor McCoy is the one to carry it out.”

Phil sighs, but dutifully pulls out his PADD and sends a Comm to McCoy asking him to meet them in the reception as soon as he’s free.

“Speaking of McCoy, I don’t know what miserable hole you pulled him out of Chris, but he’s a catch and a half. Once he gets over whatever is currently making him grumpier than a sleep-deprived sehlat, he’s going to make some lucky Captain one hell of a CMO.”

“Glad to know you approve of the fruits of my labour. It was a good round of recruitment, even if I do say so myself.”

“Oh I don’t know, your ‘labour’ has left you encumbered with this scoundrel too,” Phil replies, eying Kirk sideways. Kirk, who had been listening to their banter quietly but not without amusement, hunched his shoulders slightly and plastered on a fairly good innocent face.

“Oh don’t look at me like that Cadet. Chris has been trying that one for more than ten years so I’ve had plenty of time to become immune. Puppy-dog eyes will not get you anywhere with me.”

The three of them are still chuckling and bantering back and forth when McCoy finally appears five minutes later. The young doctor looks mildly disturbed when he asks after the source of their amusement and his only answer is an increase in their laughter.

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An hour and two cups of coffee later, Kirk reappears and hands him a signed off physical report.
McCoy is frowning rather forcefully, but he confirms that there’s nothing that should prevent Kirk from proceeding with whichever Academy track he chooses. He does schedule Kirk an appointment with the allergy clinic for a full work up, but other than that he says Kirk is free to go.

Neither Chris nor Phil comment on it, but they both notice the concerned looks that McCoy is throwing Kirk as he relays all this. McCoy also notices them noticing, but doesn’t comment either, so they all head their separate ways with nothing more than an exchange of thanks and a round of polite nods.

Chris debates amending **Point 13** as they leave, but eventually settles on creating a new entry:

**14: Whatever it was that happened, it left enough physical evidence to worry a hardened trauma surgeon.**

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**15: Jim Kirk is better than Chris at menial labour.**

They stop at a deli for sandwiches on the way, but otherwise head straight back to Chris’ apartment after leaving Starfleet Medical. As soon as they arrive, Chris sets about organising the emptying of the spare room.

There are a lot of storage boxes that need going through, and lots of pieces of old furniture that various people have palmed off on him over the years. Chris is just hoping there’s a complete bedframe and a wardrobe in there somewhere; if there isn’t he’ll have to go to hall acquisitions and the current halls Quarter Master has despised him since that night eight years ago when he and Number One drunkenly requisitioned sixteen different HoloVid players and set them all to play 22nd century Denobulan jazz non-stop in the man’s office.

At the time, he had thought it served Commander Hadron right for refusing to upgrade Number One’s accommodation to those befitting one of the ‘Fleet’s best XO’s, despite the request being a perfectly reasonable one. Having since learnt how thoroughly and for how long the man can hold a grudge, Chris now kind of regrets the way they enacted revenge. For one thing, said grudge is the reason Chris is still stuck with his god-awful lumpy couch.

Well, he'll deal with Hadron should it come to that. In the meantime, he and Kirk have to sort out all these boxes and work out what to do with the contents.

They’re only three boxes in when Chris gives into to his frustration, flops backwards to sprawl out on the floor and groans dramatically.

“No. Sorry kid, I can’t do this. I’m bored to tears and I’m sure that at least three quarters of this junk doesn’t even belong to me. So you know what, you pick out what you want and discard the rest. I honestly just don’t care anymore. I’m going to my office to find out how badly behind I am with my paperwork and then I’m going for a well-deserved Friday night pint. Comm me when you’re done and I’ll let you know where to meet me. I might even buy you your own drink if you ask nicely enough.”

With that, Chris rolls to his feet, grabs his Captain’s jacket and messenger bag from the coatrack by the front door, and scurries off out before Kirk can even contemplate forming a reply.

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It’s nearly eight pm by the time he gives up, packs up his files and leaves his office. His Yeoman left.
hours ago and the rest of the building is almost deserted too. At least he’s significantly less behind than he was earlier this afternoon.

He sends both Phil and Kirk a Comm as he walks off of campus, informing both of them of where he’s heading to. Phil replies with a short sarcastic remark on the predictability of aging Starship captains; Kirk simply sends a thumbs up.

The O’Riley Bar has barely changed in the years since Chris first discovered it back in his own first year of the Academy. The long wooden bar is just as scarred, pitted and authentic looking, the walls the same faded cerulean with oak panelling, and the house craft beer just as crisp, refreshing and thoroughly affordable as it always has been.

There are a few reasons he’s still coming back here twenty years on, but the quality of that beer is the main one.

He's still sat at the bar working on his first pint when Phil ambles in looking his usual post-shift levels of exhausted. Chris catches the barman’s eye, and there’s a cool tumbler of Macallan Gold awaiting the doctor by the time he’s pulled up another barstool.

Kirk appears less than two minutes later with Doctor McCoy in tow. McCoy is growling inaudibly at Kirk, but Kirk appears to be his usual cheerful, unbothered self regardless.

“Aw come on Bones, Cappy doesn’t bite. He won’t mind that I dragged you along. Look, I’ll even buy you your first round.”

Chris shoots an exasperated look at Phil when he realises ‘Cappy’ is supposed to be him, but Phil only grins unrepentantly and stands to pull Chris to their usual booth on the back wall; if there’s going to be four of them, they’ll need more space than the bar provides. When he spots them, Kirk grins and nods at them both in acknowledgement and pushes McCoy towards them, before leaning casually against the bar to await his turn to order.

When he eventually joins them at the table, he’s carrying four pints, four whiskeys and a sizable bowl of fries. Chris grins gratefully at him, slides further into the booth to make some room, and happily makes his final point of the day:

16. Jim Kirk may be a goddamn evil morning person and he might have assigned Chris a stupid nickname, but damn, the kid has good taste in booze.

Chapter End Notes

I'm toying with the idea of posting an 'appendix' onto the end of this fic. It would contain a list of all Chris' points so far and other bits and bobs, such as a floor plan of Chris' flat (if I ever finish making it).

Thoughts on this?
Chapter 3

Chapter Notes

I just finished my undergraduate degree, which slightly terrifying
I wrote this is a self-reward for not letting revision kill me

See the end of the chapter for more notes

It’s been a week

James T. Kirk has been living in his spare bedroom for an entire week.

Chris supposes at this point he should probably stop calling it “his spare bedroom” and tell it like it actually is; “Jim’s room” is infinitely more accurate already. All the old boxes and various other bits of junk have been cleared out, and in their place there’s now a sturdy wooden single bed, a double-doored wardrobe and matching chest of drawers, and a somewhat battered, but still perfectly serviceable clear-aluminium topped desk.

Chris is amazed at how it all fits so perfectly; he would honestly think it had been specially built for the room if it weren’t all obviously second hand. Still, he’s quite impressed with the lad’s efforts.

Actually, he’s quite impressed with Kirk just in general. Yes, he could be a little cheeky, and yes, he was quickly eating Chris out of house and home, but he was also quiet, polite and considerate, and all round a pretty good flatmate.

For the most part.

The one thing that did drive Chris up the wall (aside from the constant fridge pillaging) was the kid’s OCD levels of fussiness.

17. Jim Kirk is a total neat-freak.

If anyone had asked him 10 years, last year, last month, hell, even a week ago, Chris would have told them that he would quite like someone who would come round and keep his flat clean and tidy. Not that he has ever been particularly messy, but occasionally he’d stack used plates by the side of the sink and ignore them for several days, or he’d scatter the contents of his satchel over the dining table in the main room and then wish he hadn’t two days later when he had to repack it all to take to his office.

So yeah, he always thought he wouldn’t mind someone who always washed and dried the pots and pans; someone who always made sure all the laundry found its way into one of the clothing refresher units down in the block’s basement.

But honestly, the fact he can no longer leave a handful of crumbs on the kitchen worktop without Kirk giving him despondent puppy-eyes is infuriating. He can’t not feel bad when the kid looks at him like that.

And stars-above save him if Chris leaves used coffee mugs scattered around. The pouting is unbelievable.
So inside of a single week, Chris has found himself changing from a fairly tidy person, into a total and utter neat-freak too. It’s a necessary survival adaptation, lest the Kirk-eyes actually kill him.

(Phil and Number One think this is hilarious too, the unhelpful gits. Something about getting a taste of his own medicine for a change. Chris is less than impressed.)

Perhaps he should be concerned, but honestly he’d rather just make another point and roll with it:

**18. The “Jim Kirk effect” is a very real thing**

And it makes you do things you would never normally even *consider*...

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As he’s just mentioned, the only other issue he and Kirk have, is Kirk’s unfailing ability to consume *everything* even *remotely* edible in his fridge and cupboards.

Yogurts, chocolate, bread, apples, biscuits, cereal, bacon…

Seriously, nothing is safe.

**19. No really, nothing is safe.**

Well ok, Kirk does ask every time before he takes something. But Kirk has those damn eyes, so it’s not like he can say no anyway. He doesn’t even escape on the days he leaves to work in his office in central campus; all it takes is one text comm from Jim asking if he could possibly maybe steal a couple of packets from the multipack bag of crisps and the mere imaginings of Kirk’s sad-face is enough to have Chris messaging him back. (Hint: the answer is never ‘no’. Dammit!)

Combine this with the fact that Commander Hadron still hasn’t seen fit to replace the broken exploding-replicator (and likely won’t anytime soon) and the result of this is that Chris’s cupboards are always bare no matter how many times he pops into the campus store during the day. He’s even resorted to hiding a pack of custard creams in his bed side table, because if he leaves them anywhere else, Kirk will find them and Chris won’t get any.

It’s only been a *week* and Chris is holed up in his office snacking on a carefully hidden bag of dried apricots wondering how the hell he’s going to survive a year of this.

Seriously, it’s been a *week* and he’s already having to sneak around.

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Chris works out how to survive a year of this.

That afternoon, he goes to administration and bullies the Lieutenant Commander on duty in the Welfare Office into signing Kirk up for free campus meals on weekdays.

It’s totally not an abuse of power:

Both Chris’ bank balance and his mental health is relying on those free meals.

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Kirk is both ecstatic and a little sheepish when Chris hands him the meal card when he gets home that evening. It doesn’t actually activate until the first day of fresher’s week in four days, but Chris reckons he can weather the assault upon his kitchen stocks until then.
“Seriously, thanks for getting me this Sir. I asked for one myself and they told me I wasn’t eligible because I’m gonna be getting maximum stipend.”

“Don’t sweat it son. Even without the stupid means-tested rubbish that most of Earth’s higher education establishments use, Starfleet’s grant system is more convoluted than it has a right to be. It’s no skin off my nose to help you out where I can.”

“No really thanks. I know how hard they are to get because they wouldn’t let Bones have a meal card either. He hasn’t got a quarter credit to his name because of his evil-ex, and he barely receives any stipend because he’s gonna be a medical postgrad and yet they still make him buy his own food. Something about him working part time at the Clinic even though that pays less than minimum wage.”

Chris frowns and makes a mental note to see about fixing that. Probably an official-complaint and lots-of-paperwork-and-meetings job (stupid, bloody Point 1!). It’s likely that McCoy isn’t the only one with that kind of monetary issue, so a more official solution that benefits everyone is probably needed.

“I’ll see what I can sort kid. It’s not going to aid the Academy in any way if we’ve got promising students dropping out purely because they can’t afford to feed themselves. In the meantime, go grab a set of cutlery and set the table while I plate this curry up.”

“Sir, yes Sir! Right away with immediate haste Sir!”

Chris cuffs the kid round the back of the head as he passes behind him.

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20. Jim Kirk is seriously allergic to coconut milk

Chris discovers this because he put a splash in the curry he just made. The curry that he and Jim are half way through eating.

It’s a damn good job that Chris’ career has very thoroughly taught him how to remain calm in high stress situations. Because although he’s screaming inside throughout the whole incident, he’s able to keep his cool long enough to do as Jim tells him.

It begins with Jim’s fork clattering loudly against the edge of his plate.

When Chris looks up startled, Jim is staring at the plate in wild eyed horror.

“Jim?” Chris asks him worriedly. “Jim, what’s up son?”

When he gets no response, he repeats himself louder. It isn’t until Chris reaches out and places his hand on the kid’s shoulder that Jim moves at all. And when he does, it’s to fall sideways off his chair, clutching at his throat and gasping for breath.

Chris is out of his own chair and on his knees beside him in an instant.

“Jim! Jim breathe! I’ve just sent an emergency comm to Philip Jim, but I need you to tell me what to do until he gets here!”

Jim reaches up and clenches his fist in the front of Chris’ shirt, his face and neck a slowly deepening red as he struggles more and more to take in the necessary air. Then he grimaces hard and gasps out a single pained sentence.
“Epi-pen, left boot.”

Chris moves with a speed usually only attributed to Vulcans and enraged Romulans.

The pen is indeed in the inside of his left boot, tucked into a small handstitched and lined pocket. Chris grabs the hypo with almost-shaking hands and practically rips the cap off, before jabbing it with a complete lack of finesse against the side of Jim’s neck.

For another thirty seconds nothing happens and Chris’ heart pounds sharply in his throat.

Then Jim takes in one deep shuddering breathe.

And then another. And another.

Slowly, Jim’s breathing and heart rate begin to calm and his death grip on Chris’ shirt starts to loosen. Chris sags in utter relief and leans right over to drop his forehead on the kid’s chest.

“Don’t you ever, ever, ever, do that to me again son. Ever!” Chris tells him in his sternest Captain’s voice.

Jim chuckles weakly, but doesn’t let go of Chris’ shirt.

Chris sighs deeply and then starts chuckling too.

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Phil and McCoy burst into their kitchen panting hard with identical panicked looks less than two minutes later.

Chris and Jim are both still sprawled on the kitchen tiles laughing tiredly. Jim raises his head slightly at the commotion and smiles wanly; Chris just turns his head sideways to meet Phil’s eyes and continues giggling like a crazed drunkard.

Phil yells “Dammit Christopher!” at exactly the same time that McCoy yells “Dammit Jim!”

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The two doctors take note of the abandoned meal and of the discarded hypospray and deduce what happened in fairly short order. And pretty quickly after that, the two of them half drag, half carry Kirk to his bed and submit him to a barrage of tests and scans.

Chris hauls himself off the floor too and collapses back in his chair at the kitchen table as they leave. He pokes half-heartedly at his remaining curry, before shoving it away and dropping his head back tiredly, scrubbing his hands roughly over his face.

Now that the last of the adrenaline has left his system, he feels utterly exhausted.

Across the other side of the flat, Chris can now hear McCoy yelling at Kirk about the importance of attending his allergy work-up immediately. Phil is informing him that his appointment has been prioritised and moved to tomorrow almost as loudly. Chris decides it’s in his health’s best interests to stay well out of their way until their tempers have cooled and drops his head onto his folded arms.

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“Christopher. Wake up you muppet! Chris!”

There’s a hand shaking his shoulder. He shrugs it off grumpily.

“Chris I mean it! If you don’t get up off this table and take yourself to bed right now, I will carry you there myself and McCoy will film it for me!”

Starblaze be damned, can’t the goddamn earthquake tell he’s trying to sleep here!? 

“Right. Well don’t say I didn’t I didn’t warn you! Because I have. Repeatedly.”

Something hooks under his arm and across his chest.

Then the whole world tilts on its axis and his head lolls as it loses the security of its pillow. Chris curses emphatically and flails.

“Oh yeah, now you decide to move and start bitching. Well tough shit, you’re being put to bed like the four year old you apparently are regardless. Deal with it, Cappy.”


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Ok, maybe he’s a little glad for Point 17.

When he eventually rolls out of bed on Friday morning, he finds all traces of last night’s disaster have vanished. The pans are clean and stacked neatly in their cupboard -as are the plates- and the cutlery is washed and stacked neatly in the draining board next to Chris’ crystal whiskey tumbler. Both chairs have been pushed neatly under the table, and a brand new bag of fresh coffee grounds has been poured into the pot besides the filter machine.

Chris could honestly cry tears of happiness over that last discovery; he really, really needs coffee right now. Coffee and long hot shower, because Phil was right (he admits grudgingly), he shouldn’t have fallen asleep on the table. Hopefully a good long dose of hot water will loosen up his aching shoulders.

Steaming mug in hand, he stumbles out into the main room and immediately notices that Jim’s door is only halfway slid shut. After a couple of seconds of internal debate, he shrugs and goes to poke his head in through the doorway.

Despite clearly having been up and about earlier, Jim is currently fast asleep. He’s flat on his stomach with his arm dangling off the side of the bed and he’s managed to push most of his duvet off onto the floor so that only his feet are still covered. On the arm that’s hanging, Chris can see the steady green blinking of an active Bio-bracelet with Starfleet Medical’s logo printed on it.

Hesitating before moving again, he eventually shuffles into the room, quietly placing his mug atop Jim’s chest of drawers before carefully lifting the forest-green duvet up off the floor and smoothing it down over Jim’s t-shirt covered back. For a few moments, Jim shuffles noisily and Chris fears he’s woken him, but he settles back down quickly.

22. Jim Kirk is kinda cute when he’s sleeping and Chris is disgusted at himself for thinking such sappy thoughts.

Snatching his coffee back up, Chris retreats quickly before he does accidently wake him.
He decides he forgives Phil for the name-calling and carrying last night when he discovers that his schedule for the day has been entirely cleared and replaced with “temporary medical leave”.

No meetings, no office work, no paperwork deadlines. Nothing. Just sweet blissful emptiness!

He’s even closer to weeping with joy over this than he was over the fresh coffee. In the end he doesn’t quite stoop that low, but he does decide to postpone his shower and grins all the way back to bed.

Chris is woken for the second time that day by the sound of McCoy’s low grumbling coming from the kitchen and the smell of fresh-baked waffles. He’s saved from having to decide if they’re worth crawling out of bed for by the sound of Jim’s familiarly hesitant knock on his door.

“Ugh, come in Jim,” he rumbles unhappily, hauling himself upright to lean against the headboard.

“Morning sir,” Jim responds cheerfully, having thumbed the door open, “I bring you fresh happiness cooked into waffle form! Bones brought them with him from that patisserie down at the other end of the bay. I even remembered to ask him to get you blueberry syrup.”

Chris snatches the takeaway box and accompanying fork from him eagerly and immediately starts cramming the contents into his mouth. Today is awesome he decides.

Jim has retreated to hover awkwardly in the doorway, so Chris waves and gestures at him until he gets the message and comes and sits cross-legged on the end of his bed.

“So,” Chris mumbles around a mouthful, “How you feeling this morning? Gave us all quite the scare last night you did.”

“Yeaaah, sorry about that. Coconut milk you know? Lethal evil stuff apparently. Along with pineapple, Risan Mulberries, pretty much any and all nuts, strawberries, Orion soy products, Risan buttermilk, shitake mushrooms and an annoyingly wide variety of general and local anaesthetics and painkillers.”

Chris feels his eyebrows climbing towards his hairline.

“Oh, and I can’t eat Vulcan style protein nibs anymore either. And that’s just the stuff I currently know about.” Jim shrugs as if it isn’t a miracle that Chris hasn’t nearly accidently killed him with his cooking before last night.

23. Forget coconut milk, Jim Kirk is seriously allergic to half the damn galaxy!

“Hey Chris? Are those English custard creams in that drawer? Can I have some please?”

McCoy eventually drags Jim off to his allergy clinic appointment, but not before he’s devoured the entire packet of biscuits.

Chris watches Jim leave with the empty packet sadly, and reminds himself sternly not to sulk too obviously.
Just as he’s starting to get bored of pottering aimlessly about the flat at about noon, Number One comms him. Ostensibly, she’s inviting him out for lunch on her. But Chris would bet his own right foot that she’s been gossiping with Philip about last night and want she actually wants is an opportunity to pick over his version of events too.

Still, it’s a more attractive venture than remaining cooped up indoors all day, so he replies with his affirmation and goes to rummage in his wardrobe for a clean pair of jeans and a fresh shirt.

Number One holds off on her interrogation for far longer than Chris thought she would. He’s actually more or less finished his macaroni cheese before she gives in and asks.

“So are you going to tell me what exactly happened last night? Our Doctor only gave me the bare-bones version.”

“Well,” he begins, “the most important detail of last night is that I’ve probably been put off of making Thai green chicken curry ever again…”

Over the next half hour and two portions of Cardassian lime and vhash-fruit torte, Chris relays the entire story. He tries to leave out the part where for a while there, he was genuinely terrified that Jim was actually going to die on him, but Number One has always been able to read him like a book and draws the confession out of him with her usual no-nonsense attitude.

When his plate is empty and he’s run out of words to say, he actually feels better about the whole ordeal. Phil is always reminding him that talking his troubles out does actually help and Number One is usually the first person to agree with the doctor. And Chris has experienced its therapeutic effects enough times now that even he can’t deny the truth of the words anymore, no matter how much he stubbornly wants to.

So yeah, he’s feeling better now that he’s somewhat gotten it all off his chest.

Well he was. Then Number One has go and question his name-using habits in a way that has him groaning in resignation and silently listing off another point:

24. At some point last night, Kirk had become Jim and Point 10 has upgraded from a professional claim into a personal one.

Chapter End Notes

honestly, I feel like death warmed over right now, so please message/comment if you spot mistakes or inconsistencies.

Also. Custard creams. If you’ve never had a proper English custard cream (or a decent Bourbon biscuit) then I feel terrible on your behalf.

And as for fresher's week. I'm going to assume that all Uni's/College's have an official week before the start of the 1st term where the faculty and the Student's Union team up to ensure that all the new students have the opportunity to repeatedly get as drunk as
humanly possible.
This is the second year that Chris has been the Head of the Academy. Which means it’s the second year that he has had to organise and run Freshers’ week.

Freshers’ week has been a tradition of all of Earth’s Higher Education establishments for not-quite one-hundred years. As Chris understands it, prior to Earth’s unification in 2150, most establishments around the world had a welcome week of some variety, but it was only the UK who deliberately advertised it as an officially sanctioned week of binge drinking and excessive partying.

That’s not to say the drinking and clubbing didn’t happen in other Colleges and Universities around the globe, but as far as he knows, only British and Irish Universities intentionally tried to give their new students alcohol poisoning.

Then United Earth became official, the legal drinking age universally became eighteen, and British Freshers’ week traditions became global traditions.

Sanctioned anarchy became the norm.

Chris’ thoughts on this?

In short, he thoroughly hates Freshers’ week.

No matter how well anyone tries to plan the event, no matter how well organised the officers of the Academy are, Freshers’ week always turns out to be one unending disaster after another. This was true when Chris was a first year Plebe Cadet himself, it was true at the beginning of his second Upperclassman year when he graduated with his second Master’s degree, and it’s still true now that he’s the one running the show.

This year’s primary incident (at least so far…) involved a dozen unfortunate second year engineers, the Turnkike Memorial Fountain, three vats of Andorian Hypabubble mixture, one extra-large box of Denebian fire-rice and four incredibly stupid freshers.

One of those freshers’ has already been asked to permanently pack his bags, another found herself with a tier three formal warning and three months’ worth of academic suspension and the other two are still in Starfleet Medical - along with the majority of the second years who had the misfortune to be holding their first study group of the year beside the fountain.

Combine this with the usual plethora of drunken fist fights, broken furniture, cases of alcohol poisonings, noise complaints, stupid injuries, incidences of skinny-dipping, off campus arrests, health code violations, STI contractions, roommate falling-outs, and Phil’s endless complaining about the general stupidity of youth, and the result is that Chris has the mother of all headaches.
It’s only Wednesday afternoon.

Only four and a half days left then!

(Chris feels like crying)

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25. Jim Kirk seems determined to stick it to the Admiralty simply by behaving and being a model student.

Much to Chris’ utter relief, Jim seems to be fairly uninterested in most of the week’s wilder activities, legal or otherwise. He’s usually still in the flat when Chris leaves at about 0830, and he’s always back before his curfew at 2300. He’s taken to using his meal card with gusto, so Chris can actually put food in his kitchen now and still have it be there the next day. He hasn’t come in stumbling-drunk at any point, his name hasn’t come in a single incidence report, and Chris has heard not one unsavoury rumour concerning him.

That’s not to say that Jim isn’t going out and enjoying himself. Chris has spotted him around campus a few times, nearly always with McCoy and one or two others in tow, laughing and chattering away. There’s also a handful of brochures for the various extra-curricular clubs and teams stacked neatly on the coffee table, so the lad must have been and toured round the activities fair at some point. And yesterday a set of laser spanners with the Starfleet logo printed on the case appeared on Jim’s desk so he must be making friends in the Engineering department too.

Basically, given his experiences from the last two weeks of living together, Jim is acting exactly like Chris predicted he would; in an open, friendly and mature manner.

In complete contrast, certain members of the Admissions and Academy Boards are, in Chris’ opinion, being neither particularly fair nor mature. Chris rather suspects the individuals involved are a tad put-out over being proved wrong so far, and are thus lashing out in childish retaliation. Regardless of their motivations, the fallout of their petty machinations is that Chris is most definitely not getting his spare room back until September next year, and that Jim has not only lost his curfew-free weekends on top of his weekdays, but his right to off-campus liberty on weekday nights too.

And best of all, Chris has yet again been lumbered with passing this information on to Jim. He’s beginning to feel a bit like a human comm pad if he’s honest; one that only ever gets to deliver bad news. Nothing he can do about it though (besides sigh dramatically and curse and scowl once he’s out of the Admiral’s hearing range), so he accepts the responsibility and moves on with his life.

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“Hey kid, every go ok today? Manage to get your uniforms picked up fine?” Chris asks tiredly as he kicks off his boots by the door and drops them on top of the low shoe rack. The pandemonium of this week has meant he’s been working some serious overtime; not getting home until gone-ten has unfortunately become his new norm.

Shuffling further into the room, he finds both Jim and McCoy are both flaked on the couch, beer bottles in hand, with an old Holovid flickering away on the opposite wall. The two young men look up as he rounds the corner, McCoy with a polite nod and tilt of his bottle, Jim more cheerily, letting his usual sunny smile light up his features.

The sight of the two of them together, completely at ease in one another’s company, combined with the knowledge that they’re already rarely seen apart, brings Chris to another realisation:
26. Jim Kirk and Leonard McCoy are probably going to be this generation’s Pike and Boyce

He hopes the two of them do stick together through the Academy and beyond. Chris has had more than twenty years out in the black to learn all the benefits of having your CMO be one of your best friends; there are many and they are wide reaching.

“Yeah, yeah all good!” Jim grins, pulling Chris back out of his musings, “Uniforms all collected and hung up ready for next Monday, and our initial timetables should be prepared by tomorrow as well; Admissions finally got the last set of verifications through for my other degrees this morning, so they’ve finally stopped protesting over my post-doc arrangements.”

“Ah good, they’ll stop nagging me about it too then hopefully,” Chris sighs in relief, shrugging out of his jacket and tossing it through his open bedroom door, “one less set of people demanding my constant attention at least. Not like I don’t have enough of that already this week. Now budge over you pair of lummoxes, would you? You’re taking up more space than a pregnant Orogenbeast.”

Jim laughs at Chris’ grumbling, but quickly scoots over closer to McCoy, allowing Chris to drop neatly into the gap next to the couch’s arm. Showing his intelligence, McCoy then pulls a still-chilled beer out from under the table and hands it over along with a bottle opener.

“Gugh, thanks Doc,” he rumbles gratefully, “You’ve have literally no idea how much I need a drink right now.”

“Oh I can probably guess sir,” McCoy replies wryly, “Doctor Boyce decided today that I’m going to be his chief lackey for the rest of the week, so ‘run off my feet’ is just a little bit of an understatement. I should imagine your own day wasn’t much calmer.”

“You could say that. I had to hand out three more suspensions this afternoon. And sit through an Admiralty consultation with some rich kid’s parents who decided to buy their son’s way into the academy because he failed the entrance exams. Oh, and I got yelled at by the police commissioner again! For the same incident I thought we’d cleared up yesterday! I seriously hate freshers’ week. Anyway, enough of my grumpy moaning, what the Nova are we watching?”

Jim turns to him with a palpable burst of enthusiasm, and proceeds to extol at some length on the ‘awesomeness that is Inspector Mayhew and his trusty robo-companions, Pylon and Rig! And how you can you not have seen this before Cappy, everyone knows it’s a classic!’

Chris doesn’t know why he’s never seen it before, but he does know that he’s had far worse ends to bad days.

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27. Jim Kirk does strange things while Chris is still in bed.

The replicator is in bits.

As in, all the panels have been unscrewed and the circuit boards and wiring pulled out all over the kitchen worktops.

Chris decides it’s too early to solve this mystery and takes his coffee back to his room with him.

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28. Chris should stop forgetting that Jim Kirk is a genius with far too many science and engineering degrees.
Once he’s a bit more alert, it occurs to Chris that the replicator being dismantled is probably the result of Jim attempting to fix it. If he’s being honest, it’s probably beyond repair (come on, it literally exploded!). But Jim is welcome to try anyway; the last he heard from acquisitions was that his request has been placed on the very bottom of the low priority list.

Hadron is a dick like that.

So Jim is of course welcome to try and get the ancient machine working; it will save Chris a fair bit of time and effort if he does manage it. Obviously, he’s got a few alternate plans just in case. The first involves asking the current Academy Quartermaster, Commodore Varring to have a quiet word with said dickish Commander, see if he can be convinced to be reasonable. Should that fail too, he’ll then resort to no-mercy mode and sic Admiral Archer on the stubborn cuss.

But he’d rather not do either, so he’s hoping against the odds that Jim is actually successful.

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When he gets in that night after another long day of dealing with imbecilic behaviour and angry officials, he finds to his surprise, that the replicator is back in one piece, has been scrubbed completely clean, and is powered up ready to run.

There’s a Padd leaning against its door, which turns out to be loaded with hundreds upon hundreds of replicator codes. Many of which were previously well beyond the computing power of the machine to achieve. Which means that not only has the kid fixed the device, but that he’s also done some hard-core upgrades.

Chris spends nearly a whole hour gleefully inputting codes and creating anything and everything he can think of. It’s probably costing him an actual fortune in energy, but he’s too excited by the endless possibilities he apparently now has to give a damn.

Seriously, this machine is brilliant.

“Jim! Jim, you beautiful son of a gun! I am going to laugh so hard in Hadron’s face because of your genius!”

Jim and McCoy’s answering chuckles from the main room only improve Chris’ mood further.

29. Jim Kirk is welcome to keep his spare room permanently if it means Chris continues to come home to such awesome surprises!

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Chris realises he may have gone a little overboard with the replicating when McCoy saunters into the kitchen with two empty mugs, takes one look at the overflowing counters, and bursts out laughing.

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“Hey Chris, have you ever heard of the Finnegan family?”

It’s now Friday and the mayhem of the week is finally beginning to die down, many of the new students too busy nursing chronic hangovers to go out and get into further mischief. Chris, having taken advantage of the lull in the storm to escape from his office for his lunch break, had just begun ambling across the open square behind Cochrane and Reid Halls, and the Law building when Jim jogged up to him with his question.
“That’s Captain Pike to you when I’m in uniform Cadet,” he reminds Jim sharply, conscious of all the other students around them, “let’s not go giving anyone excuses to hand you demerits before the term’s even properly started.”

“Uh, yeah. Yes Sir. Sorry sir. I err- It won’t happen again Captain.” Jim genuinely looks mortified by the reprimand, so Chris softens his features and nudges Jim’s shoulder.

“Alright it’s fine, mistakes happen son. Come on, walk with me. So you were asking about the Finnegan’s? They’re a three? Four? Generation ‘Fleet family? I know there’s a Commander Finnegan currently serving on board Star Base IV as a tactical officer, and I think his father was a Commodore who died in a conflict on Rigel V before you were born. I probably hadn’t even signed up yet when that happened though, so don’t quote me on it.”

“So they’re a bit of a legacy family then sir? Well known around here?”

“Well sort of yes.” Chris shrugs, “Not of the same calibre as you Kirks of course. They’ve served well and done their duty and earn their share of respect for it, but none of them have gone above and beyond in the same way your father and grandfather both did. They’re intelligent and they make solid officers, but they don’t stand out like your family does, the way your father did when he saved those 800 lives.”

Jim has gone suspiciously quiet, and when Chris glances at him again, he’s frowning hard at his feet as he walks. With an uneasy grimace, Chris realises he probably came on a bit too strong with the George Kirk hero worship there, and berates himself for not keeping Point 12 in mind. He’s got plenty of his own first-hand knowledge when it comes to absent fathers after all, even if the circumstances behind the two occurrences are vastly different.

30. Christopher Pike, you are an idiot who should know better than to compare people to their fathers, Jim Kirk included.

It’s Phil’s voice that he mentally hears listing that point, but as he’s pretty sure the words are exactly what the Doctor would say if he were present, Chris supposes he does deserve the imaginary scolding.

Unfortunately, Chris doesn’t really know how to go about apologising for his careless words without making both of them feel even more awkward than they already do. So he decides to put the problem on the back burner for now, and pulls the conversation back to its original topic;

“So why the sudden interest in the Finnegan’s anyway?”

“What? Oh, err,” Jim stutters, startled back from wherever his thoughts had wandered, “Nothing important really Sir. I just met one of them is all - just met a Finnegan I mean. Cadet Jake Finnegan. He’s an upperclassman on command track.”

“Oh right, yeah I know who you mean; I’d forgotten he was here at the academy. Don’t know much about him if I’m honest; he’s one of Admiral Komack’s favourites so we don’t interact much.

“Yeah well be glad that you don’t. I apologise for the crudeness of the statement Sir, but he’s a total dick! Like a full on meat-headed douche canoe! He tried to tell me you’re a maverick! And then he went full Malfoy on me! No seriously Captain, it’s not funny, he did! I swear if his ego inflates any further, they’ll have to put a photo of him in the Federation Standard dictionary underneath the entry for ‘Pretentious asshole!’ Chris! Stop laughing at me! Don’t look at me like that, you’re not behaving very Captainly right now, so I’ll call you what I like! Aw come on man, it was your honour I was defending! Really?! Would you please stop giggling like a tribble high on Nitrous Oxide!?”
Douche Canoe! Ah lord, he likes that one!

A stoned Tribble!

Chris doesn’t stop laughing at him for the entirety of his lunch break.

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31. Jim’s curfews are a pain in the ass.

That evening, Chris follows his usual Friday night routine and heads to O’Riley’s. Safely sequestered in the usual back booth, not a troublesome student in sight, he sighs in contentment over his pint as a lot of the day’s tension begins to drain out of his shoulders.

Opposite him, Phil is fast asleep leaning on the wall, having spent all day carrying out one emergency surgery after another. When he’d shown up looking ready to drop where he stood, both Chris and McCoy had immediately tried to send him home to bed. But the stubborn Doctor was having none of it, so here he still is, out cold and not quite snoring.

Jim is unashamedly using his Padd to take Holopics of him, childish glee lighting his eyes up and entertaining everyone around him. Number One is leaning over Jim’s shoulder offering up editing advice and suggesting ideas for more shots. Beside Chris, McCoy is swirling the deep amber liquid in his glass in a continuous slow whirl, feet kicked out, head tilted back, eyes shut; he’s singing lowly under his breath, smooth southern drawl colouring the lyrics of whatever slow blues song he’s chosen tonight.

Chris sinks some more into his seat, takes another long sip and feels utterly at peace with himself.

Then Jim’s wrist-chrono suddenly starts beeping shrilly and the moment is shattered completely.

Phil jerks awake in surprise, kicking McCoy in the process, which in turn causes the younger doctor to jump and chuck his bourbon all down Chris’ crisp white shirt. Chris swears furiously and tries desperately to dab at the spill with the wodge of napkins Number One throws his way. Jim looks between Chris and his chrono, his earlier glee replaced with horror and self-recrimination, and immediately begins babbling panicked apologies and generally acting terrified.

“Jim! Jim, it’s fine! Even if a cycle through the refreshers doesn’t get it clean, I’m pretty sure the Quartermaster will manage to sort it.”

“But I’m so sorry! I didn’t mean—”

“Hey, Hey none of that Jim! Really, I’m really not that bothered; it’s just a shirt okay? We’ll get it sorted alright? It was an accident and no-one is to blame, least of all you. Right now though, we had better get you home before that chrono of yours beeps again and you end up breaking curfew.”

Jim continues to look horrendously distraught as they leave the bar, despite Chris’ constant stream of reassurances; so much so that Chris begins to feel furious enough to make another point:

32. Someone in Jim’s childhood taught the lad to be absolutely scared witless of making mistakes and Chris is going to beat the responsible party senseless the first opportunity he gets.

On the curb behind them, Number One and McCoy are bundling a swaying Philip into a taxi. Chris watches them clamber in after him, forces down his rising anger and comes to a decision.
“Come on Jimmy, we’ll walk back.”

He tries not to think too closely about why Jim initially flinches away when he throws an arm over the kid’s shoulders:

He knows he won’t like the answer at all.

Chapter End Notes

ahhhh Freshers' week, such fond memories...... *runs away screaming*
Chapter 5

Chapter Notes

Happy 4th July to all you Americans! Have a present to mark the day!

Happy Monday to the rest of us! Here, you can also have a present to mark the day!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

33. Jim Kirk is just as prone to hero worship as any other being in the universe

"You... asked Admiral Archer to be my academic supervisor sir!? But- But the man's a legend!"

Chris had originally planned to be Jim's supervisor himself, but that was before their being flatmates was confirmed as a permanent condition of Jim's attendance at the Academy for the first year. Because of that, he's now not sure that taking on the position would be entirely proper. And as the higher-ups are still quietly grumbling even now, he'd rather not invite even more scrutiny.

But he's also very reluctant to let any of the commanders or lieutenant-commanders who usually supervise cadets take on Jim; the kid's schedule is so overflowing and varied compared to normal, Chris would really rather entrust the job to someone who can afford to give Jim their full commitment.

It's not that he doesn't trust the Academy staff to do their jobs and to do them well; it's just that he knows from personal experience that some cadets need a little extra. They need to be watched over and guided by someone who's willing to work overtime and make them their first priority and go the extra mile.

Hence Chris going to Archer and begging him to take on Jim.

"Yes I did, and yes he is. He said yes anyway. Your first meeting with him is a week tomorrow."

Jim is gawping at him. Open mouthed, wide eyed, gawping.

“But. But! He's- Oh starblaze, I have to go to a meeting with Admiral Archer next week! The Jonathan Archer! Oh gods, I'm just a Plebe. I'm just me, and I'm nobody! And he's going to meet me! He wants to meet me!"

“Jim!” Chris laughs, “Jim breathe son!” Jim is quite literally flailing around, arms waving every which way, seemingly torn between terror and exhilaration.

“Breathe? Breathe!? But Chris, he's Admiral Jonathan Archer!”

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Jim does eventually calm down.

Once Chris puts a plate of pasta in front of him.

Jim really does like his food after all!
34. Jim experiences first day jitters just like everyone else does too.

It’s the Sunday night before term-proper begins. Chris is unbelievably relieved to be seeing the back of freshers week for another year. The beginning of the new academic term will bring its own set of problems with it of course, but it won’t quite involve the same level of anarchy that freshers week does.

With the last of the issues from the week-from-hell finally wrapped up early in the afternoon, Chris had been able to leave his office and head home at a reasonable hour for once. He’d stopped off at Archer’s place on the way back for the afore-mentioned begging, but he’d been back in his own flat by 1752. Just knowing that he could get an early night and not have to get up even earlier than usual for once was doing wonders for his state of mind; he felt calmer now than he had for the entire week, including during the usual Friday night out at O’Riley’s.

Chris was fully planning on doing sod-all all evening, besides replicating a plate of whatever and collapsing onto the sofa with a beer and a HoloVid.

Up until now the only minor hiccup with this plan had been Jim’s reaction to Chris explaining his supervisor situation, and honestly that had been more amusing than anything else. Throughout tea, Jim had occasionally muttered to himself and shook his head in disbelief, but by now he had accepted it and settled down again.

Or so Chris had thought.

“Jim. You’re fidgeting worse than an entomophobic sat next to an anthill. What on Earth is up with you tonight?”

“Um, nothing really. It’s just- It’s nothing. Honestly Chris, I’m fine.”

Chris raises a sceptical eyebrow and then very deliberately stares at Jim’s still jigging knee. Jim colours slightly and slaps both his hands down atop the offending appendage.

"Really! I’m fine!" Jim continues, sounding mildly hysterical now. Chris sighs dramatically, sits up and pauses the HoloVid.

“Ok, out with it. What’s gotten you so worked up now? Still worried about meeting Archer? I told you it’ll be fine; he’s not nearly as terrifying as campus rumour would have you believe. And I’ve got to go with you the first time anyway.”

“No, no that’s fine. Totally chill about that. Well, mostly chill.” Jim pauses, head cocked slightly to the side, “Well. I am at the very least well on my way to being mostly chill about that.”

“So what’s up then?”

Jim shuffles back on the couch, flipping his feet up so that he’s sat cross-legged in the corner. Then he fiddles with the hem of his t-shirt with one hand, the other tapping rhythmically on his left knee. Chris is just about to ask him again less patiently, when he finally speaks up.

“I hate first days. First days anywhere. New school, new town, new planet, new job. Everybody always knows my name, and they always, always have expectations. Expectations that I very rarely live up to. I never measure up, no matter how hard I try, and I hate it.”

Chris doesn’t really know what to say. He’s aware by this point that any reassurances that he offered
Jim would probably be taken as little more than empty words, but remaining silent is likely to be
even more detrimental to his confidence. But then again, saying the wrong thing would be even
worse again.

Chris silently curses **Point 12** to the heavens and back and then prays that he doesn’t bungle this too
badly.

“Look, I don’t know who told you that you don’t ever measure up, but they clearly had an IQ lower
than that of a goldfish. Remind me again how many degrees and doctorates you have?”

Jim mumbles the answer, blatantly avoiding looking Chris in the eye.

“So,” Chris ploughs on regardless, “you have three degrees and two PhDs, you speak at least two
languages other than Standard, you’re a fully qualified mechanic, you’re half way through a Post-
Doc, you’re a chess grandmaster and yet you’re only just half my age. And that’s only the academic
related stuff. I could go on and on and on about your many other enviable qualities, but I think
you’ve far more than merely ‘measured up’ already. And if anyone does give you flack over your
parentage, then you take names and let me bash some heads together. Got it?”

Jim is doing a fairly good impression of a gaping seal again, his mouth moving but no sound coming
out. When he finally nods, Chris pats his knee with a smile, flicks the Vid back on, grabs his bottle
and turns back to the screen with a contented sigh.

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35. **Jim Kirk scrubs up pretty damn well.**

It’s the first time Chris has seen him in full uniform. And he looks good in it. The bright red doesn’t
suit everyone, but Jim really pulls it off.

Jim obviously feels incredibly self-conscious wearing it, but Chris knows that once he’s in a hall full
of people all wearing exactly the same thing, he’ll relax some. But in the meantime, he’ll just have to
tolerate Chris’ approval and compliments.

It’s a big change from the blood spattered tee from their first meeting that’s for sure. A big change
and a vast improvement in Chris’ opinion.

Right on time, the front door buzzes and Chris steps over to let McCoy in. The two of them share
their first class on Monday mornings, and so had arranged to walk together. The doctor too, was
looking much improved from their first meeting in Iowa; clean shaven, hair neatly parted and no
overwhelming whiff of strong bourbon.

Chris has of course, seen them both plenty of times since that first night cleaned up and dressed in
decent clothing, but seeing them both in freshly pressed uniforms highlights the difference so much
more than Civvies do.

“Go on, to class with you. Both of you.” Chris shoos them out with a laugh, which the two young
men echo as they disappear down the hallway.

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36. Jim’s prediction that his famous name would cause problems turns to be out a lot truer
than Chris was hoping.

Just before noon, Chris gets an alert from his Yeoman saying that there’s a professor waiting in the
hall to speak to him about one James T. Kirk. Resignedly, he sends a Comm back telling him to send the man in.

“Lieutenant Jovik. What sends you my way today?”

Jovik stops in front of his desk and glances at the chair placed there, clearly debating whether to risk sitting without permission or not. Chris doesn’t plan on giving him that permission, so it’s a good job that Jovik wisely decides to remain standing.

“Captain Pike sir,” he begins confidently, “I have some concerns regarding a first year cadet who was in my Intermediate Federation History class this morning sir. The class is usually recommended for Underclassman on Command Track, and a few exceptionally performing second years may also be allowed entry, but it’s too advanced for a Plebe, no matter what their name and heritage.”

Chris groans internally, knowing damn well where this conversation is going to be headed.

“You are aware Lieutenant, that the cadet in question has passed all the necessary prerequisites for entry onto the course.”

“His Academy transcripts state such yes, but I fail to understand how a first year on his first day could have obtained those qualifications without resorting to underhanded methods, and I’m not alone in realising that. Kirk shouldn’t be allowed to subvert the system without consequences just because of who his father was sir, and I personally won’t stand for it.”

Chris narrows his eyes into his best unimpressed Command glare. He’s had a lot of years to perfect it, and the Lieutenant pales before it.

“I personally organised and oversaw the examinations that Cadet Kirk undertook in order to test out of most of the first year, and a large proportion of the second year classes. The Board of Admissions and several members of the Admiralty then moderated and approved of the results. Are you suggesting that the integrity of not only myself, but that of the Board and, among others, that of Admirals Archer and Marcus should be questioned?”

Javik visibly quakes under the combined effect of Chris’ steely glare and icy tone, stutters out a “no sir” and a hasty apology, and then bolts from the room as soon as Chris dismisses him with sharp nod.

As soon as the door slides shut, Chris rolls his eyes, kicks his feet up on his desk and Comms Phil to finalise their lunch plans. Novafire, after that debacle, he needs to speak to someone intelligent in order to restore his faith in the universe!

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Phil, as usual, is entirely unsympathetic towards any of his Jim-related problems. Apparently they’re still his own fault as he’s the one who recruited him.

Chris throws a grape at Phil’s head, alongside an accusation of being unsupportive. Phil just grins unrepentantly.

“If you’ve only just worked that one out Cappy, then you’re even worse a Captain than I already thought you were.”

“You’re such an asshole, you know that right?”

“Asshole and proud Cappy. Now shut up and eat your fruit you loser.”
Chris very determinedly does not shut up, repeating **Point 21** to himself all the while.

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When he gets back to his office at 1329, there’s another professor from the academy waiting for him, this one absolutely gushing with praise for Jim. Properly, irritantly, gushing with it. And most annoyingly of all, she’s a Commodore, so he has to be polite. Chris smiles and nods in what he hopes are all the right places, agrees to pass on her commendations to Jim, and herds her out of his office as forcibly as he can without being obvious about it.

Then at about 1515, there’s a third year Andorian student who’s ostentatiously there to discuss changes to his course units, but actually spends the full 20 minutes trying to ask question after question about Jim.

**37. Chris is going to have to organise an official Jim Kirk Fan Club at this rate.**

He’s seriously debating attaching a sign to the outside of his door which reads “If it’s about Cadet Kirk, don’t bother” at the very least.

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He officially gives up on the universe at 1703 when a TA stops him as he’s leaving the building to ask if he has Jim’s Comm number.

**38. Chris’ life would be a lot easier if he’d never met Jim Kirk.**

Well ok, he’s known that for quite a while now, but today has really hammered that point home.

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The next three days are no better.

By the time he packs up to head home on Thursday evening, he’s had no less than eight teaching staff, three more TA’s, four or five of the braver students, and half a dozen officers who have nothing to do with the Academy, ask to speak to him regarding Jim. About a third of them seem to have it in for his flatmate, more than half do nothing but endlessly praise him, and the majority of the remainder are quite blatantly looking for a hook-up with him and seem to think Chris will aid them in their endeavour.

Out of all them, precisely one person comes to him with a genuine concern, and as it relates to Jim’s allergies, he simply instructs the Commander to speak to either Phil or McCoy and sends them on their way.

Chris is thoroughly sick of it all, so he can only imagine how hacked off Jim is feeling.

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“So Jim, tell me your secret!” Chris calls out as he hooks his satchel on the back of one of the dining room chairs.

“Secret?” Jim’s confused face pops around the frame of his open bedroom door; he’s got a stylus tucked behind one ear and a unlocked PADD clutched in his hand. Probably working on assignments then.

“Yeah, the one where you’ve managed to not punch anyone in the face yet. If one more person asks
me if you’re single or if they can have your Comm number, I may accidentally forget to be a mature
and sensible commanding officer.”

Jim laughs heartily and drops the PADD onto his desk before sauntering into the main room.

“I don’t have a secret Cap, I’ve got a Bones. He’s very growly and very intimidating when I need
him to be. All he has to do is start thumbing hypos and muttering about strange incurable xenoviruses
and everyone clears off pretty rapidly.”

“That? That is pretty clever,” Chris grins back with a finger pointed in Jim’s direction, “I approve of
the tactical thought that went in to that. It’s a crying shame I can’t use Phil for the same purpose.
Where is McCoy anyway? He practically lives here too the amount of time he spends here.”

Jim shrugs, his good mood dimming a little.

“Working. Down at the clinic. Phil’s trying to get him transferred to Starfleet Medical permanently
on account of his trauma surgery skills going to waste, but in the meantime he’s stuck with evening
shifts handing out flu vaccines, STI hypos and safe sex lectures.”

“Sounds thrilling,” Chris replies dryly. “And you? What are you getting on with? Anything I’d find
interesting?”

“Mackey’s Law in relation to post-quantum reflux limits and its implications for Einstein’s relativity
and sub-light impulse movement, taking into account electron-positron collision eliminations,
Killgravel’s matter-antimatter drive advancements, and how all that may apply to the future of warp
flight engineering.”

39. (See Also, Points 11 & 28) It’s a good job Jim chose Command Track over engineering,
because otherwise Chris would’ve been hilariously out of his depth all the time, instead of just
half of it.

“......Yeah I got nothing kid. All just engineering babble to me I’m afraid.”

“Well it’s all going into the design of your new ship Cappy, so I suggest you learn it so you know
what she’s gonna be capable of. Can’t really entrust her to you otherwise, can we?” Chris debates
cuffing the lad for his cheek again, but then Jim adds a wink to the end, so he gives up debating and
actually does it. Jim guffaws at him, ducks sideways and darts around him towards Chris’ bedroom
door, poking Chris in the ribs as he passes.

“You laugh now Jimmy boy,” Chris calls as he spins to give chase, also laughing “but see if I still
make you Chief Tactical Officer when you graduate if you keep this blatant disrespect up!”

That brings Jim up short. He stops dead in front of the display case against the kitchen wall, and
turns to Chris with a look of pure shock.

"What!?"

“You heard me. You’ve already got two PhDs, and you’ll probably have a completed Post-Doc too,
so the minimum rank you’ll Pass Out of the academy with is Lieutenant Commander. So you stay
out of trouble and do your damnedest to graduate in the top ten in your year, and I will see to it that
you not only get a place aboard my ship, but that you’re made a section chief.”

“W- WHAT!?!”

“Really Jimmy, do I have to repeat myself? Oh, you’ll need to be a qualified helmsmen too to be on
the Alpha bridge crew, but you already knew that and signed up for the relevant courses, so just pass everything and you’ll be fine.”

“Oh my God-

“I think ‘Oh my Captain’ would be more appropriate right now.”

“Jesus Chris, shut up! You can’t just do that! You actually can’t right? Right!? Can you do that? Oh Gods, you can do that. You can get me on your ship and make me a senior officer straight away. Oh frack, that’s insane!”

“I can, and I will. What’s the point in being a Fleet Captain if I don’t abuse my power from time to time hey? Now go sit down before you fall down, you lanky blonde buffoon.”

Much to Chris’ amusement, Jim continues to look shell shocked for the rest of the night, pausing every now and then in his report writing to shoot Chris another incredulous look through his doorway.

Chris, for his part, thinks that’s one of the best spontaneous decisions he’s ever made. So maybe he’s only known Jim for three weeks, but Chris has always had fantastic instincts when it comes to people; it’s one of the reasons he made Captain so fast. And he’s got more than a good feeling when it comes to Jim, just like he did with Spock the first time he met him.

And most importantly, it’s a step towards achieving the goal that makes up Point 40:

40. Chris is going to spend this year fixing Jim’s self-confidence and seeing to it that Point 12 ends up very much a lie

Chapter End Notes

I’ll update the appendix later, because it’s a tad later than I planned on being awake till. EDIT Appendix is now up to date :D

On a similar note, if you have anything you want adding to the appendix, be it lists, images, art, definitions, etc. feel free to ask (comment here or message my Tumblr) and I’ll see what I can sort :)
Chapter 6

Chapter Notes

Oh look I did it again...

Surprise! Happy early chapter day!

Quick note: there's a small problem with some of the italics. I'm fixing it now!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chris has not forgotten Point 8

Jim still gets out of bed far too early in Chris’ opinion. Anything before 0700 should be considered an unnecessary evil. Barring of course, wailing claxons and a red alert. Even then, Chris always spares two seconds to close his eyes and hold back a sob before rushing off to fix whatever is causing the emergency.

But on an average day, Chris usually crawls slowly out of bed between 0700 and 0730, and Jim is always already up, alert and full of far too much energy. Until now, Chris hasn’t had a single clue what he actually does that early in the morning (aside from disassembling dead replicators that is!).

41. Jim Kirk is one of those people who are obsessed with early morning running

It should have occurred to him before really. Jim’s sports clothes can often be found in the laundry basket in the bathroom in the morning after all. And his running trainers often migrate back and forth between the rack by the front door and under his desk overnight.

But he still doesn’t put two and two together until his PADD starts beeping horrendously at 0557 on the second Monday of term. He ignores the blasted thing for as long as he can, but when it still hasn’t stopped after a full thirty seconds, he realises it must be a priority two alert at the very least and forces himself to roll over and pick it up.

Once he’s cursed and blinked past the blindingly bright screen glare, he’s able to discern that it’s an alert from Starfleet Command. And that to view the full message, he’ll have to stumble over to the main Comm unit in the study. Grumbling and swearing in almost every language he knows words in, he hauls himself upright, grabs a discarded t-shirt and stomps grumpily out of his room.

The message turns out to be a HoloVid notification sent to all senior HQ officers –Captains, their XOs and above basically- giving a basic outline on the attack and near-crippling of the USS Farragut by three Klingon warbirds. Initial reports state that nearly a third of the crew are either confirmed dead or listed as missing-presumed-dead. The ship itself just about had warp capability still, but they couldn’t push above warp two due to severe structural damage. And as both their chief engineer and his second were unfortunately among the casualties, they were nervous about pushing her even that hard.

Consequently, the Farragut was Earth bound as fast as she was able, and the USS’s Yorktown and Hawking were gearing up to head out and provide assistance, emergency repairs and to escort her home.
All in all, it’s really not something you want to hear about first thing in the morning.

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The text Comm from Number One pings up on the bottom of the screen just as the Vid is signing off.

AThirrwood342:- I presume you received the message along with the rest of us?

CPike177:- It’s just finished running
CPike177:- Shit #1, a third of the crew went down.
CPike177:- That’s more than 250 crewmen

AThirrwood342:- at least the ship got away more or less intact with the captain and everyone else safely on board
AThirrwood342:- I have to go Chris
AThirrwood342:- Command has ordered my ship out there. The whole crew is headed to the orbital space dock for loading

CPike177:- I know
CPike177:- Stay safe and come home
CPike177:- And bring our people back with you
AThirrwood342:- I always do x

Once the chat panel has blinked shut and the Comm gone back into standby, Chris tiredly scrubs his hands over his face and stumbles back out into the main room. That’s when he notices Jim.

The young man is sat atop the shoe-rack, still breathing fairly hard and pulling at the laces of his sneakers. The long running shorts he’s wearing are black and adorned with a silver ‘Fleet logo on the left leg, but the royal blue compression shirt is one that Chris had forcibly purchased for him that first day. Chris blinks tiredly at him when he looks up, trying to force his brain into gear.

“What on Earth you doing up Chris?” Jim asks, surprise clear in his voice, “I thought you were, and I quote, “allergic to mornings”? It’s what? 0620? 0625?”

Chris grunts noncommittally at him, and turns to return to his quest for coffee.

“Chris? Are you alright?”

42. Jim can be quite the unnecessary worry wart

Ok maybe that a little harsh, but he’s tired, uncaffeinated, has just heard about the deaths of 250 of his colleges and just found out one of his best friends is heading back up into space without him. He figures he can cut himself some slack for his surly attitude.

“It’s fine Jim. Bad news, bad morning. Just forget it.”

“Are you sure? I mean you don’t… alright look, do you want coffee?”

Chris eyes him tiredly again, before mumbling a “please” and sliding carelessly into a chair at the kitchen table. He’s only had his head dropped onto his arms atop the table for a few moments before Jim is placing a steaming mug in front of him and is cheekily ruffling his hair.

Chris decides he doesn’t have the energy to bat his hands away.

“One sugar, no cream, and blacker than Komack’s soul. Drink that down while I go for a quick
shower. I’ll be back in ten, and then I’ll see about breakfast for the both of us. Capiche?”

Chris answers with another noncommittal grunt and lazily hooks his mug towards him.

Chris’ mood does not improve until after Jim has fed him a full cooked breakfast, and even then he’s not exactly cheery.

Jim, Chris can tell, is very carefully keeping himself from asking more questions. He tries to be appreciative, but he’s hyperaware of the tension it’s causing between the two of them.

“Okay, you know what?” he huffs out eventually, getting up to take the empty plates to the sink, “Go jump on the Comm unit in the study. I left it in standby so I should still be logged on. Find the latest Vid Comm from Command in my work inbox and replay it. Do not tell anyone I let you watch it.”

Jim sits and silently stares at him from the table for several long seconds, before sliding quietly out of the kitchen.

About a minute later, he hears the Vid start up. He decides he’s probably better off not listening to it again, and slides off to take his own shower instead.

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43. Jim Kirk can keep a secret

To the best of Chris’ knowledge, Jim doesn’t breathe a word about the contents of the video to anyone until well after it becomes common knowledge; not even to McCoy.

Chris is exceptionally glad that his trust in the young man has so far proven to be well placed.

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Jim’s first meeting with Admiral Archer is in just under an hour. About thirty minutes ago, Chris started getting a near-constant stream of messages from Jim.

44. Jim Kirk is a nervous message-spammer

Chris stop ignoring me!!! :'(  
Seriously!! What am I supposed to wear Chris???
Can I ask him about the NX-01 engines? Or should I just read stuff in textbooks instead?  
What about the Xindi?  
He’s not gonna be mad if I ask about the Xindi right?  
Does he really live with T’Pol?  
How come he doesn’t live in ‘Fleet accom?  
Is my pale blue button down ok???  
Should I go buy a bottle of something to bring?  
Jeans or slacks?  
Bones says I need to calm down. I am calm! D:
He was President of the Federation for a few years. What’s your bet that he knows all sorts of federation secrets?  
Maybe I should put a black shirt on instead???
Bones says my good jeans are fine, but I’m still not sure which shirt to pick  
I speak a fair bit of conversational Vulcan. Will T’Pol think my accent is awful if I talk to her using
Chris rereads the last 20 or so messages and chuckles to himself as he locks his office door behind him. He’d stopped replying after the first five, most of which were also questions on how smart or casual he should dress. After that, he’d Comm’d McCoy and sent him round to deal with Jim instead. The stream of messages didn’t stop, but at least he could ignore them with far less of a guilty conscience.

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He gets back to the flat exactly fifteen minutes before they have to leave. It’s a carefully planned move, designed to minimise the amount of time that Jim can use to get himself all worked up and anxious again; McCoy’s last message stated that he’d finally gotten Jim calmed down and dressed and Chris didn’t want to set him off again. So… fifteen minutes; just enough time for Chris to shower and change, and to grab the six pack of Corona from its hiding place in the bottom of his wardrobe.

“Button down, jeans and Nike High tops… wow you really meant it when you said this was a casual meet and greet.”

Jim is bouncing up and down on the balls of his feet by the study door, one hand shoved in the pocket of his leather jacket, and the other clutching a bottle of Macallan scotch. Around the corner from him, leaning on the arm of the couch, McCoy huffs in exasperation and tugs on the collar of his own jacket.

“Well yes Jim,” the doctor drawls, “he’s been telling you that repeatedly for the past week. You’ve only asked a couple of hundred times though, so we I suppose we can forgive you for your uncertainty.”

“Hardy-ha Bones. The Junior Tellarite Comedy Club called, they want their lame joke back.”

Both Chris and McCoy roll their eyes, McCoy doing so with so much sarcasm evident, Chris fears he might genuinely strain his eyeballs. Jim opens his mouth to retaliate again, but Chris cuts him off before he gets any words out by clearing his throat loudly and tapping exaggeratedly on his wrist chrono with his free hand. Jim’s mouth snaps shut and he swallows hard before striding purposely towards the door.

----------------

The three of them are most of the way across campus when Jim stops dead in the middle of the footpath.

“Oh my god Chris, you have Pacman on the back of your sneakers! You utter nerd!”

“Oh so says you,” Chris replies with a raised eyebrow. “Mr ‘I currently have a Pokéball necklace tucked into my shirt’. And you keep stealing my Marvel Comic socks. You think I don’t notice, but I do!”

“You’re the one who owns Marvel socks! So that’s not really helping your case!”
“I never denied it kid, I simply highlighted your hypocrisy!” Chris smirks at the lad, before adding “You nerd” with a wink.

“Oh for the love of…” McCoy loudly cuts across them both, before striding ahead of them both with his hands thrown in the air. Chris grins at the doctor’s back, and cheerily adds another point:

45. Chris may be a huge nerd, but so is Jim Kirk

He decides that 45 is his favourite point so far. Even if it does mean his socks keep vanishing.

Archer’s “small meeting” turns out to be more than two dozen people, a barbeque, and several crates of beer and other booze. Chris really isn’t complaining. Jim seems happy enough too and sets about demonstrating Point 3 with gusto. McCoy grumbles about forced socialisation and his hatred of small talk when he sees the crowd, but within five minutes of their arrival, he’s engaged in an intense-looking conversation with the perpetually smiling Doctor Phlox, a Vulcan Chris doesn’t know, and Admiral Robert April.

Phil hasn’t shown up yet, so Chris grabs a Bud and heads over to the barbeque to help Archer with flipping burgers.

“Christopher! I see your mini-me hasn’t inherited your distaste for socialising. Hand me that pack of sausages would you?” Grabbing the indicated packet, Chris glances over his shoulder and realises that Archer is right; Jim already has about half a dozen people crowded around him, all of which are laughing uproariously at whatever story he’s in the midst of telling.

“Mini me? I have only known him for about a month you know.”

“Oh please, he’s a six foot, blonde haired, blue eyed genius with a passion for command, tactics and pretty ships. And he has a cheeky streak a mile wide. He’s definitely your mini-me.”

Oh hell, Archer is annoyingly on point with that assessment. Even if Chris’ hair had stopped being blonde nearly ten years ago.

“Plus,” Archer continues, still smirking, “his best friend is a grumpy doctor with an extreme fondness for country music and smoky bourbon.”

“Jonny please do shut up.” Chris scowls at the older man, feeling more uncomfortable by the minute.

“Not on your life kid.”

46. Chris, apparently thou hast a clone, and its name is Jim. Dammit.

Jonathon Archer seems intent on continuing to freak Chris out, so Chris does the sensible thing and does a runner at the earliest opportunity. With Phil still in absentia, he decides to wander over and join McCoy’s conversation. Unfortunately, the medical jargon is flying thick and fast, meaning he has precisely zero hope of actually following what’s being said.

He preserves for another ten minutes, but when Robert excuses himself to go join his wife Sarah, McCoy, Sifeck(?) and Phlox stop bothering to even attempt to laymanize themselves. At that point, Chris calls it quits and goes looking for another beer instead.
He doesn’t get one because before he reaches the table, Jim materialises at his side and hands him a plastic tumbler of something suspiciously blue instead.

“This better not be Romulan Ale son. Romulan Ale is very illegal. Please tell me it’s not Romulan Ale.”

“It’s not Romulan Ale.”

“You’re a dirty liar.” He swallows a mouthful. “Go find more.” Jim smirks at him and disappears back towards the patio with a yes sir. Definitely a good example of Point 7, that one.

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“Oh my God Phil, you came!!”

“Woah, hey Christopher! What? Oh, we’re hugging now are we?”

“Yes Phil, you came!”

“I told you I would, I was just running a little late because some stupid kid fell off the pier on the waterfront and broke both her legs.”

“I thought you’d left me here by myself Phil. It was awful! Don’t ever leave me, you’re my bestest friend.”

“Holy Starblaze Chris, how much have you had to drink?!”

“Noooo Phil, m’not drunk. You’re just so awesome!”

“…Sure Chris, whatever you say love.”

“You are my love an’ I’m never gonna shtop hugging you.”

“Oh dear god, I bet this is Jim’s fault isn’t it.”

“Point 47 Phil. Everything is Jim’s fault Philip, Everything!”

“You’re probably right there. Wait. Point 47? What does that mean?! What are Points?!”

“I need another drink Phil. An’ Jim needs a hug too.”

“I’m not so sure Chris, perhaps we should sit you down. Chris! No Chris, come back!”

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“Good lord Chris, what on Earth happened to you!?!”

“Booooones! Where did Jimmy go? I need Jimmy!”

“Oh wow, you’re properly drunk. Come on let’s get you back to Phil. I can see him looking for you.”

“No Bones! Jimmy!”

“He’s talking to Admiral Archer Chris. Come on, mind the steps look. There we go.”

“Stop talkin’ like I’m drunk. M’not drunk!”
“Ohh, you really are. Dammit Chris! Chris get back here!”

Chris escapes the villainous clutches of Doctor Bones. He really needs to find Jimmy. Because. Because…? Oh whatever. He just needs Jim okay? And he needs this drink too. Yup. All of it! Where did the bottle opener go? Nooo Robert, you need that bottle, give it back! Oh yay! Selfies! Robert and Sarah are awesome! Oh wow yes, HoloPics are the best idea! Wait. He needs a selfie with Jim and Phil and Bones and Number One. Oh wait, Number One’s gone. That sucks. The worst kind of suck. He misses his best friend. But Phil will never leave him, because Phil is his best friend too and his CMO. His CMO! Even if he doesn’t have a ship at the minute. The flat can be a ship. And he can be Captain. And Phil is the doctor. And Number One is the XO with Spock. Does he need Spock? Jim hasn’t met Spock yet. And and Jimmy can be the engineer because he’s sooooo clever. Bones! Bones can be Phil’s head nurse thingy. Because you can’t have two CMOs because Starfleet is rubbish! He should go ask Archer to change that. He needs Bonesy to be his CMO too. Because otherwise Jimbo will get sad, and the Point 40 means Jimbo can’t be sad. No Phil! He needs to talk to Archer!

Oh hell yes! Jim is really drunk too! Oh yes, this is the best day ever!

“Wakey wakey Sunshine! You have a meeting in an hour!”

Jesus fuck Phil, shut the bloody curtains!

“Come on, up you get Cappy!”

Chris is going to die. Like, actually die.

“Ah ah ah! No sympathy for self-inflicted misery!”

Seriously, fuck off Phil.

“Good news Chris! Jim hates his life just as much as you do! Isn’t that right Jim?”

Jim sounds like death. Chris feels like death.

“Come on both of you, up. Jonny and T’Pol want their spare room back.”

48. Chris is never, ever drinking with Jim ever again. Ever.

Actually, Chris is never, ever drinking again full stop!

Chapter End Notes

Drunk Chris in no way resembles drunk me *cough cough*
Chapter 7

Chapter Notes

Greeeetings!

some of you have noticed that Chris occasionally uses British English vernacular; this is actually deliberate! (all will be explained eventually...) On the other hand, if you notice anything odd spoken by any of the other characters, please do point it out to me :)

As an extra to that, "half-inched" is Cockney Rhyming slang for "pinched" (as in stolen)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The problem with Point 2, Chris thinks two weeks later when yet another HoloPic tag notification pops up, is that the condition that comes with it is true no matter what Jim’s state of sobriety. Yes, Jim is surprisingly quiet when he’s not drunk. But on the flip side, when he is drunk, he’s very much not quiet; he’s excessively loud and cheery, incredibly tactile, overly inclined to flirt with anything that moves, and prone to random bursts of song.

Most importantly to Chris, drunk-Jim is very good at convincing other people to join him in his drunken escapades and exploits.

Good lord, there are so many HoloPics and Vids of Chris saying and doing stupid shit at Jim’s behest. And goddamn Archer keeps sharing everything online; the shirtless Pics, the transcripts of his rambling, the Vid of him sobbing in a corner over a broken bottle of ketchup, a list of everybody he hugged or announced his undying love and devotion too with evidence where available… Hells, the list is nigh on endless.

Chris is never going to live that night down. Ever.

He would just reiterate Point 48, but he feels the situation is dire enough to deserve its own mention:

49. If you get drunk with Jim Kirk, you must be prepared to deal with weeks of embarrassment afterwards

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The most annoying consequence, Chris finds, is that the small portion of Starfleet that seem to dislike Jim on nothing but principle, now seems to feel even more justified in their irrational distain. And that means they’re even more likely to come complaining to Chris about him.

He’s dealing with yet another individual belonging to that portion right now, this one ranting about Chris’ newly minted Point 50:

50. Jim Kirk is an overachiever.

Chris is not surprised by this in the slightest. He’s lived with the young man for over six weeks now after all, and there have been plenty of hints that contribute towards that conclusion. Take Point 11 for example; no-one racks up that many degrees in that short an amount of time without being both a
genius and an overachiever.

The Commander currently pacing back and forth in his office however, apparently is surprised and dislikes it intensely.

“Captain, my concern is not with Cadet Kirk’s willingness to engage in the class debates, but with his tendency to argue his idea to the point of exclusion of all others. He has a bad habit of coming to class far too prepared, and then using his extra reading to discredit other ideas before a proper discussion can begin.”

“So he is consistently able to back his argument up with enough evidence and supporting facts and theories, that the majority of the other Cadets are inevitably swayed to his side regardless of their initial position on the issue being discussed?”

“Yes sir.”

“Commander, isn’t teaching our students how to do that the entire point of the Introductory Diplomatic Debate course?”

“Um… Yes sir?”

“And you’re genuinely complaining because one of your students is good at his homework and thus good at your class?”

“Well when you put it like that-“

“Commander I’m really struggling to see the issue here, especially given that I warned you this would happen five weeks ago when you refused to allow him to test out of the class. Just pass him already, like I suggested at the beginning of term and advance him to the second year course.”

“…Perhaps you’re right sir.”

“I’m known to have my moments. Any further questions Commander?”

“Uh, no sir.”

“Good. Dismissed Commander.”

50. [AMENDMENT] Jim Kirk is an overachiever and this causes Chris no end of issues.

Cursing Points 1,9 and 36 as well just for good measure, Chris scrubs a hand roughly over his face and goes back to desperately trying to catch up on his paperwork.

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“Hey Chris! Do you remember singing that RadioJam song? The cover one with all the harmonies? Late 2290’s? I think it’s called Soldier’s Poem.”

Chris has just thumbed the front door shut, when Jim comes (literally) bouncing around the dining table, sporting a worryingly manic grin and with a PADD clasped in his hands

“We were singing?” Chris asks back worriedly.

“Yeah, Admiral Barnett uploaded it this afternoon. I didn’t even know he was at the barbeque? Well anyway, there’s a HoloVid and Uhura just showed me it —oh, Uhura’s here by the way, we’re doing Andorian prep work. But yeah, we really blasted it out and oh wow, why have you never told
anybody you can sing!? Even Phil was surprised apparently!”

He can sing? Well ok, Chris has always been vaguely aware that he’s not a terrible singer, but given that he’s never been inclined to so much as hum or whistle when other people are around (playing guitar on the other hand, now that’s another matter entirely…), he’s never had any opinion other than his own to go on. And he’d place his singing as mediocre at best.

“What? Here, gimme that PADD.” He makes grabby hands at Jim, who obligingly hands over the device after tapping at the screen a couple of times. The Vid is already loaded and ready to play when he rotates it the right way up, and he presses play with no little trepidation.

51. Apparently, both he and Jim can really carry a tune, drunk or not

The two of them are both stood in the middle of Archer’s deck, Chris wobbling slightly but with one foot dramatically stepped up on an over turned box, and Jim has his right hand over his heart and his other clutching at Chris’ arm. Off to their left, Jonathon Archer is leaning heavily on both his cane and on T’Pol’s shoulder, but is managing to shout and wave encouragement regardless. Someone out of shot curses emphatically and the HoloCam shakes slightly, temporarily revealing a sizeable crowd on the other side of the deck. Once it’s stabilised, the sound quality improves greatly, and suddenly you can hear both him and Jim singing their metaphorical hearts out.

Yeah okay, he and Jim actually aren’t that bad.

Despite Chris having the naturally deeper voice of the two, he’s the one hitting the high notes (even slipping into falsetto occasionally!), while Jim switches back and forth between the lower harmony part and the counter-melody. Regardless of the spontaneity of the performance, they sound surprisingly well rehearsed and polished.

“Well,” Chris grins weakly as the Vid cuts off in the middle of a round of enthusiastic applause, “at least they can’t take the piss out of us for being awful singers right?”

Jim claps him on the shoulder, smirking for all his worth.

“Don’t worry Cappy, we did plenty of other stupid stuff to more than make up for that. We’ll be being laughed at for months to come regardless, trust me.”

Chris groans theatrically and drops his head onto Jim’s shoulder, fake-sobbing.

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52. Since Jim moved in, Chris’ flat has apparently become an open access space

When Chris smiles a goodbye to his mother and step-father and shuts down the Comm Unit at just after 1900, he steps out of the study and nearly walks smack-bang into Phil’s chest. McCoy is sat behind him undoing the magnetic buckles on his boots, and both doctors are still dressed in slightly grubby Medical scrubs.

“Hey Cappy,” Phil greets him tiredly, grabbing his shoulders to stabilise him, “I’m gonna go jump in your shower. Your towels are still the dark blue set right? Okay good. I’ll be back in twenty, Bones will help you cook.”

Chris watches him saunter into the bathroom bemusedly, before turning back to McCoy with a raised eyebrow. He almost asks why the two of them showed up here rather than going back to their own rooms after their shift, but then doesn’t bother given that the likely answer will just be a shrug and a grunt. So he takes a different tack instead.
“You let Phil call you Bones now?”

“Captain I don’t let anyone call me Bones, but it keeps on happening anyway. I keep protesting, but I have a feeling I’m fighting a losing battle; both him and Jim are more stubborn than a lovesick fool in denial when it comes to that blasted nickname and now everyone else is picking up on it too.”

Chris can’t help but feel McCoy’s probably right, and morosely resigns himself to a lifetime of being called Cappy.

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“Anyway, what’s this about cooking?”

“We stopped off at the campus store on the way over. Jim-safe taco and fajita ingredients.” McCoy hefts two canvas bags that Chris hadn’t noticed until now and vanishes into kitchen with them, yelling as he goes.

“James Tiberius Kirk! Get your damned skinny ass outta your room and come chop these peppers up for Chris and I!”

Chris can feel the bemused look creeping back up onto his face, and lets it slide into one of amusement when Jim’s head suddenly pokes out of his bedroom door.

“Booones! My ass ain’t skinny! It’s shapely and defined and damn fine and you know it! You and Uhura both know it!”

Chris can’t hear whatever it is that Uhura says in return clearly, but judging by Jim’s indignant look, it was cutting and probably funny to everyone but Jim. Chris has a feeling that he’s going to really like Uhura once he’s gotten to know her, and that she and Phil will get on like a house on fire.

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53. Jim is actually a damn good cook

This is another one of those facts that Chris was already 80% sure of long before he actually made the point. Thanks to Chris’ tendency to take charge at meal times, Jim hasn’t made anything that wasn’t breakfast related until now, but what he had made had been pretty good; Jim’s blueberry French toast could probably be used to establish a peace treaty with the Klingon’s, it was that good.

But right now he seems to be doing a fantastic job of preparing a main meal too; there’s a practiced efficiency to the speedy way the young man is slicing up the two red onions and then transferring it into bowls. Chris stands leaning in the doorway, watching the way he and McCoy move easily around each other, handing each other utensils and ingredients almost without prompting.

Uhura steps up close behind him and leans forward to talk lowly in his ear.

“I will castrate you and make you hand feed the remains to an Aaamazzarite to make clothing from if you ever tell him I said this, but right now I can kind of see why everyone thinks Jim’s so attractive. I might decide to kidnap him for my own kitchen if he keeps sashaying about like that.”

Chris winces and swallows hard, and promises to never breathe a word to anyone. He also tacks on “completely terrifying” to the end of his mental description of the Xenolinguistics Cadet.

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Phil tumbles out of the bathroom wrapped in Chris’ towels, his hair stuck up every which way and shambles into Chris’ bedroom barely a minute after Uhura has finished delivering her threat and observation. When he reappears several minutes later, he’s half-inched a pair of Chris’ checked pyjama bottoms —despite the fact they’re more than an inch too short— and his favourite worn grey pullover hoodie.

His hair still hasn’t seen a comb either. Chris’ laughs at both this and his best friend’s dopily happy expression and tells him to go sit down. Phil ruffles Chris’ hair on his way past so that it’s a mess too, but does as he’s told and shuffles over to the couch.

“Alright you noisy lot, come on sit down! Jim put that vase on the shelf behind you. Oi! Hands off Phil ‘til everyone is seated. Hey, and the same to you Jim!”

Chris mostly successfully corrals everyone to the dining table, and Phil and Jim only manage to nick a couple of shreds of lettuce each before they’re all seated and settled. Chris is about to tell them all to dig in, when McCoy clears his throat and looks at him pointedly.

“I know most o’ y’all are space obsessed northerners, but my mamma raised me to be a good and proper southern boy, so you best be saying a few words before we start Captain.”

54. Jim’s friends are just as good at puppy eyes as Jim himself is

Chris sighs and audibly grumbles that he’s not technically northern given that he’s originally from California, but obliges McCoy’s request. Reaching to either side to grab Jim and Phil’s hands loosely, he bows his head and tries to think of something heartfelt, yet suitably amusing.

“Dear Space Gods, whom we all healthily fear and respect, we thank you this day for delivering to us this spicy Tex-Mex instead of forcing us to consume yet more replicated space rations. We thank you for gorgeous ships and interstellar travel, for those few Cadets that actually seem to have a brain, and for every Common Cold victim who has the wisdom to stay in bed and drink chicken soup instead of infecting everyone at the Clinic and Medical with it. Mostly, we thank you for bringing another sensible and mature friend into Jim’s life, as the rest of us have our work cut out as it is!”

Chris pauses while Jim whines and everyone else chuckles. “And finally, we thank you for bringing this group of lunatics to my table in the first place, without whom my life would be easier and calmer, but considerably more boring. Amen and all hail. Now tuck in before it goes cold!”

The only way this spontaneous group meal could be improved, Chris thinks as he stuffs more cheese into his taco, is if Number One were back dirtside and here as well.

Well they’ll just have to have a repeat when she’s back in three days, won’t they?

Phil ends up staying overnight.

Chris suspected this would happen when the doctor appropriated Chris’ pyjamas. Despite already knowing how awful the couch is, Phil is adamant that he can manage and stubbornly drags the spare sheets and pillows off the top of Chris’ wardrobe.

When he realises what’s going on, Jim offers Phil his bed for the night instead, stating that he’d do better in the main room given his comparative youth. But that leads the two of them to have an argument which is strikingly similar to the one that led to Chris’ amendment of Point 7. Eventually,
Jim huffs off to his room, muttering about damnably stubborn idiots. Chris kind of agrees with the lad, but he knows better than to say as much in Phil’s hearing.

Instead, he waves goodnight and retreats to his own bed.

“Phil? Was’ goin’ on?”

“Nothing Cappy, go back to sleep.”

“Wha’ you doin’ Phil? S’time is it?”

“It’s still early. Shut your eyes, there’s nothing wrong.”

“y’sure? Okay then.”

“Phil. Why are you in my bed?”

“Your couch is a torture implement.”

“Yes, but why are you in my bed?”

“Your bed is both a double and not a torture implement.”

“…”

“What! It’s true!”

“You’re unbelievable.”

55. Chris swears Phil’s recent tendency to break unspoken boundaries is also somehow Jim’s fault

He then decides he need more sleep before dealing with this and rolls back over.

When Chris’ alarm goes off at 0715, Phil is happily curled around a pillow and not-quite snoring. Chris isn’t actually as annoyed as he pretends to be; Phil has been and his best friend for going on twenty years, and his primary doctor and CMO for a large portion of that, so it’s not actually the first time they’ve shared a bed. Phil’s seen him battered and bruised, sick as a dog, on the literal brink of death, and just generally at the lowest of all his low points. When you’ve been through all that together, and added in that the reverse situation is also true, a thing as small as a bit of duvet sharing for one night becomes a non-issue really.

Shaking his head, he leaves Phil sleeping and goes in search of Jim and coffee.

“He’s in your room isn’t he. I knew he wouldn’t survive the couch.”

“Yes, he’s in my room. Chuck me an apple?”
“Heads up! Ooo, good catch! So how long did he last until he came begging for mercy?”

“No idea, I was more than half asleep still.”

“You literally let him crawl in with you no questions asked didn’t you? Gods, you’re such a softie. I can’t believe everyone thinks you’re such a stern hard-ass.”

“Hey! There were questions asked! Such as “What do you think you’re doing?” and “Oh god why?” And I’ll have you know my reputation is well earned!”

“Of course Captain, whatever you say Captain. I have absolutely no reason to ever doubt the veracity of your words Captain.”

“Shut up and go to class Kirk.”

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He’s just shoving his gym bag into the cupboard next to his office door when he receives the first message from Phil. He ignores it until after his Yeoman has brought him more coffee and stacked another pile of unsigned documents on his desk. When he does pull it up though, he immediately regrets not looking at it straight away.

PBoyce83:- I’m going to murder your pet cadet.
PBoyce83:- Seriously, I’m going to maim that boy of yours the first chance I get
PBoyce83:- Then I’m gonna beat Archer round the head with Jim’s still bleeding limbs
PBoyce83:- And you’re going to want to help

CPike177:- ????

PBoyce83:- log into your network profile and check your notifications.

His unease growing, Chris pulls up the page and taps the relevant link; it’s another upload by Jonathon Archer.

It’s a Holopic. Of him and Phil asleep. In Chris’ bed. Phil has his face mushed into Chris’ shoulder. Chris is smiling slightly in his slumber. Jim must have snapped it early this morning and sent it to Archer. Chris is going to kill them both.

CPike177:- meet at noon. My office
CPike177:- bring surgery gear
CPike177:- Phaser too quick and painless for those two

56. Chris is gonna murder Jim

Chapter End Notes

Research for this chapter led me to discover that Bruce Greenwood is actually quite the guitar player. I’m a drummer and percussionist, so this greatly pleases me.

The song that Chris and Jim sing is an as-yet-non-existent cover of Soldier's Poem by Muse. The only reason I chose this song was because it came up on my shuffle while I was writing the relevant paragraph :D
Relevant art for this chapter and the previous at the end of the Appendix
Chapter 8

I don't title my chapters, but if I did, this one would have been called "The Terrors of a Trip Hazard"

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chris likes routines.

This is primarily evident in the way he usually goes about his mornings. On weekdays he forces himself out of bed between 0700 and 0730 and immediately goes in search of coffee. If he's lucky, Jim will hear him getting up and have a fresh mug ready for him. If it's an 0700 day, either he or Jim will then cook something for breakfast; bacon and eggs, waffles, pancakes, whatever. Later starts usually mean a bowl of cereal and piece of fruit for Chris, and the same or a trip to the Academy mess hall for Jim.

Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays are then shower, don uniform and head straight to the office days. Tuesdays and Thursdays are sports clothes, senior officer's gym, then shower and head to the office days.

Saturdays differ in that both he and Jim tend to get up later and then head into the city together for breakfast (after coffee of course). Following that, Jim will vanish to go do Jim things (mostly his post doc work apparently), and Chris will spend the rest of the morning in the Fleet sport centre; he's really quite fond of swimming.

Sundays are lazy lie in days. They order take away from the local patisserie and just generally be lazy all day.

Simple, easy, organised routine.

Then of course, Jim has to go throw a spanner in the works by showing up slightly late after his usual morning run with a bundle of fluff in his arms.

57. Jim Kirk is a dog person.

“Jim please tell me that’s not a puppy.”

“Archer and T’Pol are going to Vulcan for a week.”

“Yes, but why do you have a puppy?”

“This is Planchet. He’s a miniature Siberian Husky! Look, he’s so cute!”

“I can see that, but why is he here in my flat?”

“They’re taking Aramis and Porthos with them, but Planchet is too young yet to go gallivanting around in space.”
“So what, you just volunteered to take him for a week?!”

“Look at his little face Chris! Tell me you’d say no to that little face.”

“Oh god, you’re unbelievable.”

When Chris asks what exactly Jim plans to do with the fur ball while he’s in class, Jim simply smiles and tells him he’s got that covered. Chris has absolutely no idea what that means, but Jim won’t expand on his cryptic answer, not even when Chris tries pulling rank on him.

Chris is forced to leave before he gets a suitable answer in order to make it to his morning meeting with Admiral Marcus on time. He rather sternly tells Jim that they will be having words later, but all Jim does is smile disarmingly at him again and let Planchet lick his chin a couple of times.

58. Jim’s message spamming isn’t limited to episodes of anxiety

“You seem to be receiving quite the stream of messages Captain. I won’t be offended if you check them quickly you know.”

Chris is seated in Alexander Marcus’ rather large office along with most of the other section heads, supposedly discussing Starfleet’s post-quarterly budgeting report. Most of what’s been argued over so far though, has had very little to do with financing. As Chris is the only person in the room with a rank below Rear Admiral, he’s thankfully managed to sit unobserved and ignored for the most part, but now thanks to Marcus’ question the entire room is focused on him.

Well, thanks to Marcus’ question and the fact that his PADD has been chirping away near non-stop from inside his satchel for at least the last five minutes. Chris is currently repeatedly kicking himself for not setting ‘do not disturb’ mode on for longer when he arrived; he mistakenly thought three hours would be long enough and now his bag is now across the other side of the room and thus well out of his reach.

“Ah, it’s probably nothing sir,” Chris replies, sternly reminding himself to sound confident despite his embarrassment, “I’ll just silence it and check them later.”

“Nonsense Captain! It must be at least mildly important given the sheer volume of messages you seem to be receiving. Risscount, hand the man his bag, let’s see what this is about.” The moustached and grey haired head of the Diplomatic Division obviously restrains a sigh, but does as Marcus asks and stands to pass Chris’ leather satchel over to him.

Doing his best not grimace under the scrutiny, Chris accepts the bag with a nod and fishes his personal PADD out. Flipping it the right way up, he silently prays it’s not anything Jim related and then presses his thumb against the lock button.

It is of course, Jim related.

Chris suddenly finds himself rather occupied with shoving his fist in his mouth in a failed attempt to not burst out laughing. He can feel everyone’s eyebrows raising as his laughing fit worsens, but as he’s far too busy staring at the images he’s scrolling through, he’s spared actually witnessing most of their incredulity.

59. Jim Kirk is going to be the death of Chris
It’s a group message system initiated by Jim that includes basically all of their mutual friends. The very first message is a HoloPic of McCoy in one of the Academy’s biggest lecture theatres, surrounded by other red-clad students and scowling hard enough to crack the HoloCam with his eyes alone. Most importantly, the young doctor has the fluffy head of a very excited puppy poking out of the top of his unbuckled jacket collar.

Jonathan Archer has then replied with a Holopic of himself sprawled smiling on a narrow ship-bunk, his old beagle Porthos curled on his chest with his master’s cane held loosely in his mouth.

Then there’s one of Planchet stood carefully on Jim’s shoulders and head. McCoy is stood to the side wearing a mild look of terror, and both his arms are raised as if he’s afraid that the small dog will fall off any second.

Half a dozen replies back and forth later, Phil has interrupted the stream of dog HoloPics to insert a Pic of himself cradling a cup of coffee in the Clinic’s on-call room, with the caption “my baby is better than yours”.

From then on out, the message system has apparently become an all-out war to see who can take the most ridiculous Holopic. There’s scores of them; Uhura and a young Orion woman balancing an apple with a face drawn on it atop unsuspecting cadets heads in the mess hall; Phil treating his mug as a patient and tucking it into various Biobeds and “injecting” it with hypos; Archer giving Porthos a tour of the bridge of whatever ship he’s on-board; McCoy trying to sneak the puppy into his beginner flight-sim class and getting caught red handed by his instructor, Jim giggling himself stupid off to the side.

There’s a single Pic from Number One and nothing else; her and her sister are frowning at the Cam, the caption simply reading “WTAF?”

Chris can’t breathe, he’s laughing so hard, tears streaming down his face.

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60. Against all logic, Jim’s antics are actually improving Chris’ respectability

Chris is aware that he’s always had a bit of a reputation for being, as Jim puts it, a stern hard-ass. He’s known to be fair, and to be a very competent and understanding officer, but people first and foremost think of him as someone who’s strict and doesn’t tolerate nonsense. He very rarely cuts loose around anyone, and nearly all of his relaxing is done either in the comfort of his own home, or tucked away in the back booth of O’ Riley’s, away from prying eyes.

“Good god man, what on Earth is in those messages?”

That comes from Rear Admiral Mayweather, the frighteningly competent head of Starfleet Engineering. She’s also the woman managing the design and construction teams for the new Enterprise, so for the sake of maintaining his claim on the new ship, Chris makes no attempt to stop her when she leans over and tugs the PADD out of his grip.

Within seconds, both she and Admiral Barnett are chuckling as they scroll down the series of messages. Then Risscount is shuffling over to peer over their shoulders and he starts sniggering too.

Before Chris can manage to get his own laughter back under control and claim his PADD back, it’s been passed along to the other four Admirals sat opposite. Doctor Batch is the first of that group to succumb to laughter, having recognised Phil and McCoy. That apparently is the final straw for Marcus, who rolls his eyes and moves in front of his desk to see the source of everyone’s amusement.
“Well I never thought I’d see the day Pike. First I hear about this BBQ and singing of yours, and now this. If I’d known that all I’d have to do to get you to lighten up a little was force you to live with a troublesome Cadet for a few months, I’d have done it years ago.” Marcus looks across at Chris with a small smirk and then clearly starts typing on the screen. Chris’ laughter dies in his throat, having been rapidly replaced by a not-insignificant amount of dread.

Chris’ PADD makes the small pip noise of a message delivery and then Marcus smiles like a shark and the HoloCam shutters once, followed by another pip.

“When problem solved Captain,” Marcus smirks across at him again, “though you better be aware that from now on I’m expecting you to smile at least once every meeting Pike. Now, where were we? Ah yes, the upcoming Denobulan hosted diplomatic conference.…”

Chris spends the rest of the meeting with his heart in his throat and doesn’t get his PADD back until they finally adjourn for the day in the mid-afternoon.

JArcher1:- [Holopic] Porthos and Aramis are quite enjoying Co-Captaining the USS Hood
JTKirk67:- [Holopic]
LHMcco13:- Dammit Jim!
LHMcco13:- I told you not to send that!
CPike177:- Greetings Ladies and Gentlemen. This is Fleet Admiral Alexander Marcus. As you may have gathered, I have confiscated Captain Pike’s PADD. Imagine my surprise when I opened it to find this series of HoloPics? Professional and mature are not the words that spring to mind. I strongly suggest that you all do what you can to alter that perception in the future. Mr Archer, you may be superior in years to me, but you are not in rank. I expect you to at least act like you’re a senior flag officer in the future please. Mr Kirk, if I personally hear a single complaint concerning that dog… Well I’m sure you can imagine the consequences without my having to specify. And just so none of you are tempted to cause further interruptions to my meetings, the whole group of you (and that includes you too, Pike and Archer) have been scheduled to attend a seminar on the proper use of Starfleet resources and equipment. 1500 sharp on the Saturday after next in the Baxter Building. I need not stress what your failure to attend will result in.
CPike177:- [Holopic] and should you be doubting the truth of my identity, please see the attached HoloPic.
JArcher1:- Alex you’re such a killjoy.
JArcher1:- And the only reason you outrank me is because I let you outrank me
LHMcco13:- Goddammit, I hate you all
ATHirrwood342:- Seconded.

Chris locks the PADD again with a deep sigh and reminds himself of all the reasons he didn’t follow through with Point 56 three weeks ago.

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61. Chris is slowly realising that Jim really does flirt as much as other people keep saying he does.
Jim’s in his office when he finally gets into it for the first time that day at 1532. He’s sprawled in Chris’ desk chair with his feet propped up the desk, and the puppy is in his lap.

“How’d you get in here? And get your grimy boots off of my folders.”

Jim shoots him a pouty look and rocks back in the chair, but does as he’s told before Chris has to get stern and ask him again.

“Sweet talked your Yeoman. He’s cute. Might take him for a drink one night.”

“You think everyone’s cute, so keep your paws off him. Good Yeomen are hard to come by.”

“He can still be your Yeoman even after I take him out ya’ know.”

Chris sighs and tells him no again, and then drags the lad out of his chair so that he can sit down himself. Jim pouts at him some more and flops onto the small couch against the sidewall instead, Planchet curling up on his chest. Chris resigns himself to doing his paperwork with an accompaniment of puppy snores.

"Well if you won’t let me wine and dine Mr Cute out there, could you at least recommend somewhere I can take that gorgeous engineering blonde bombshell I mentioned yesterday?" 

“No James, not happening.”

“But she’s got legs for days Chris, days and days!”

Chris really wishes Point 61 wasn’t true, because Jim suddenly seems to want his opinion on dating all the time and Chris really couldn’t be less interested in a topic.

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62. Jim Kirk is a genius, an overachiever, and a major theorem proposer

“Why aren’t you in class anyway. Shouldn’t you be in Astrophysics right now?”

“Commander Briggs is covering the basics of Warp Delineation Calculus today.”

“And that means you get to skip because?”

“Because I invented Warp Delineation Calculus?”

“Because you invented Warp- Wait, what!”?

“I maintain I should’ve gotten at least an MPhil for that. But no, apparently it just contributes to my Theoretical Physics Masters-”

“You invented Warp Delineation Calculus!”?

“-and I mean yeah, it was sort of an accident, and I was only 16, but still. I was playing with simulations for my Comp-Sci PhD proposal, and the math wasn’t doing what I wanted it to-”

“That’s another thing you do!? Just casually invent a whole new branch of Mathematical Physics!? Accidentally!”?

“So I fixed it. And thus; Warp Delineation Calculus. Totally worthy of an MPhil right?”
“nuch Hegh Jim, are you ever going to stop surprising me?”

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63. Jim should never be allowed to volunteer as a dog sitter ever again

Chris likes dogs. He lived on a ranch in the middle of the Mojave for the first twelve years of his life. They had livestock and animals, including farm dogs. And when they moved, his mom got one of those little spaniels with the really long fluffy ears and spoilt it rotten. And Chris loved it too, because he felt a little displaced and the spaniel would listen sympathetically to all his angsty teenage woes without being judgemental.

But Planchet? Planchet is a little terror.

The first night is not so bad. He stays in Jim’s room all night, apparently sleeps like a log at the foot of Jim’s bed, and doesn’t cause any real issues (besides getting them all in trouble with Admiral Marcus).

Chris wakes up after the second night though, to find that the entire contents of the shoe rack have been pulled out and slobbered over. And the kitchen cupboard full of Tupperware and sandwich bags and things has been emptied out all over the floor. And the third morning, the fluff-ball is curled up directly outside of his bedroom door; if he hadn’t managed to catch himself on the table, Chris would have ended up face-planting the floor when he stumbled over him. When Phil, Jim and McCoy also fall over him at various points throughout the day, it’s unanimously decided that Planchet is an unsuitable name, and that Trip is far more appropriate. Archer will just have to deal

The night immediately following the dog’s rechristening, McCoy falls asleep while watching Jim play Fleet Wars III, and then he can’t be bothered to move and instead decides to brave the couch and stay the night. For some reason, Trip apparently decides that this means the couch is fair game. Because of this, both Chris and Jim are awoken extremely early the next day when the doctor starts cussing and yelling at the top his voice, his accent so thick he’s barely understandable.

“What’s goin’ on? What’s goin’ on!? I’ll tell y’all what’s goin’ on! Y’all gone and got yourselves a hell-blazed damned demon dog, tha’s what’s goin’ on!”

“Young Chris, I think Trip may have eaten the couch.”

“…Yeah, so I see.”

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They eventually manage to extract McCoy from the splintered remains of the couch. Jim hypothesises that Trip pulled so much of the stuffing out, the frame couldn’t handle the strain of being laid on and collapsed in on itself. Chris comments that the damn thing never had stuffing in it to start with, that’s why it was so uncomfortable. Jim waves vaguely at the debris scattered all round the flat and points out that it all had to come from somewhere.

McCoy grumpily declares that he doesn’t frickin’ care and loudly stomps into Jim’s room and rolls into Jim’s bed.

Chris shrugs and turns to go crawl back under his own duvet, leaving Jim to organise his own sleeping arrangements.
“Archer will be back tomorrow.” Jim has a stylus tucked behind his ear again, and the hell hound is tied to his belt by a leash.

“Oh thank Nova. He owes me a new couch.”

“Yeah…. About that.” Jim looks sheepishly at him and hunches his shoulders.

“What? What did you do?”

“I didn’t do anything! I swear it’s not my fault!”

“What Jim!?”

“I may have mentioned that Trip destroyed the couch to Archer already. And he may have done what anyone would normally do in such situations, and possibly have contacted Commander Hadron. Maybe.”

“Oh goddammit Jim! We’ll end up with Satan’s own medieval rack now!”

“Wait wait wait! I may have also told Archer that that would happen and then explained why. And then he might have re-contacted the Commander and lost his temper a little bit, and I might have accidently gotten said Commander demoted a little bit.”

Chris feels himself freeze up with shock.

“Demoted a little bit?”

“He’s a Lieutenant again now. Archer is really gorram scary when he’s angry. Oh and we’re totally getting a new couch!”

64. Jim Kirk might be a routine destroying, office invading, walking trouble magnet, but he’s also quite possibly the greatest flatmate ever!

Chapter End Notes

*nuch Hegh* is Klingon for "coward's death" or "death of a coward", which I figure is something that Klingon's would use as a vile insult!

I don't remember exactly where my Mum got the name Trip Hazard from, but it's brilliant so I'm using it :) (plus it doubles up as a reference to Trip Tucker)

But he really is rather cute!

If you haven't seen it already, I added a load of new info to the Appendix last week
I’ve noticed while re-reading previous chapters that it’s easy to get confused between the small office in the flat, and Chris’ main work office on campus. Therefore, from now on, I’ll be referring to the former as the study; I’m gonna back and edit all the previous mentions to match this too. Hopefully that will clear up any confusion!

ps. Just updated the Appendix again!

“Hey ‘lil bro! How’s the ‘Fleet been treating you?”

“Emily hey,” Chris smiles at the Comm, “I’m fine; my afternoon meeting got cancelled today so I’m home early. How are the kids?”

“They’re good thanks. Usual amount of shenanigans. Jack still hates school. Grace has yet another boyfriend. The two tiny terrors are still tiny terrors.”

“About the usual then?”

“Yes about the usual!” Emily grins back at him. “So, Mom said you didn’t have any plans for Thanksgiving in two days? You’re staying in San Fran right?”

“No, no plans. Why you asking? Inviting me over? I could use a few free meals.”

“Ha, no chance. Besides, would you really want to risk eating my cooking?”

“I thought Andrew did all the cooking in your house?”

“Well it’s generally safer for everyone’s health if he does. But even if he were doing dinner -which he’s not- you still wouldn’t be invited.”

“Harsh,” he laughs, “what ever happened to sibling affection?”

“I murdered it and buried it under Mom’s hydrangeas after you stole my rollerblades when you were seven. But you’re definitely not doing anything for Thanksgiving on Thursday?”

“Not as far as I know. Why’d you keep asking?”

“Because we just landed in California. We’ll be at yours in an hour. See you soon brother!”

“What!” The Comm link shuts off with a click. “Emily dammit! Don’t hang up on me!”

Chris stares at the blank screen vacantly. His sister is going to be here in an hour.

Oh Seven Hells, his sister is going to be here in just one hour!
65. Jim turns into some sort of dazed, confused puppy when he’s tired

“Jim!”

There’s a clatter from across the flat, and a few seconds later his flatmate’s sleepy face is peering through the study door at him. Jim hums questioningly at him.

“Kid we need to childproof the flat. Like, right now.”

Jim gives him another sleepily confused look.

“In… fifty minutes now, my sister is going to barge in here with her other half and four miniature hellions in tow. Two of them are thankfully surly teenagers, but the youngest two are only three.”

Jim takes several seconds to process this, squinting and rubbing at his eyes several times.

“Errrm, what?” Apparently Jim needs more than several seconds to process what Chris just said.

“Oh never mind what! Just start moving stuff off of the shelves in the front room. And there’s a box of kitchen child locks in the hall cupboard that need getting out and screwing on.”

“Chris? I’m so confused?”

“Yes well, you shouldn’t have stayed up all of last night reading astrophysics journals when you knew you had PT all of today, should you?”

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66. Jim Kirk is weirdly immune to caffeine.

When pouring two mugs of strong coffee down Jim’s throat has very little effect on the lad’s state of alertness, in desperation he Comms both Number One and Phil for backup.

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“Amanda, you are an actual lifesaver. I owe you at least three lunches on me.”

Number One shows up precisely ten minutes after she receives his message. Thanks to Point 17, the flat doesn’t need much actual cleaning and tidying, but having spent nearly his entire career out exploring the black, Chris has accumulated a surprising number of HoloFrames, gifts, and knick-knacks. Most of these items are arranged on the two shelving units in the main room; the rest are either scattered around in the study, or are in Chris’ bedroom.

None of them are particularly child friendly. Which is why he and Number One are frantically moving them all into the study where they can be locked safely away.

Predictably, Phil saunters in just as they get to the last handful. Chris sighs in exasperation at him. Phil grins smugly back, which Chris realises means that the doctor specifically timed his arrival to avoid doing any actual work. Chris punishes him by sending him to help Jim install child-locks on all the kitchen cupboards.

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67. Jim Kirk is good with kids

The alert for the outside apartment block door starts buzzing just as Phil and Jim are arguing over
who should screw the last bolt in on the last cupboard door. Chris huffs, snatches the screwdriver up, and fixes the lock on before either of them can object. By the time he flicks the screwdriver off, Number One has already gone downstairs to escort the rabble up.

"Uncle Chwis!"

"Woah hey munchkin! Come on, up you come! Ughhhrrraarr, you’re getting big kiddo! Now where’s your terrible twin gotten to hey?"

Thumbing the flat door open, Chris is greeted by the sight of one of his two youngest nephews barrelling down the corridor with the startlingly speedy stomping that only a toddler can manage. Scooping Daniel up to sit on his hip, he cheerfully blows a raspberry against the small boy’s neck and is rewarded with a peal of hiccupping giggles.

“David Wif’ Mommy and Daddy! An’ Jack and Gwace too!”

“Oh look! Here they are!”

“Mommy! Mommy I found Uncle Chwis!”

“So I see sweetie! Hey Chris! Sorry to just drop in on you like this. Oh wait, no I’m not!”

“Yeah yeah, good to see you too. You menace.” Lowering Daniel back to the floor, he turns and lets his sister engulf him in a bear hug. “I have no idea what I did to deserve you, but it must have been something awful!”

“Oh, there were so many things Chrissy, so many, many things.”

“Oh gods no, do not start calling me that again. Just please, no matter what else you do, do not let Jim or Phil hear you calling me that.”

Emily steps back to regard him and raises one eyebrow challengingly. Having grown up with her, he’s well aware that that eyebrow never means anything good for him.

“Please Emily? Please?”

Yeah, he’s totally screwed.

It’s not until after he’s hefted David up into his arms too, shook Andrew’s hand, clapped Jack on the shoulder as the teen passed him, given Grace a one-armed hug, put David down, re-lifted Daniel, and been hugged by his sister again, that he finally manages to get back inside his flat. Given that he’d left Phil in charge of getting everyone in and settled, he was expecting chaos to have broken out during his short absence. Instead he finds a surprising amount of calm.

Despite still being dozy as all hell, Jim has managed to get Jack set up with the latest Sims: Universe game on his Atari Revolution VI. And he’s given Grace one of his PADDs and let her into his room so she can Comm her friends in relative peace, so she’s also happily settled down. Apparently following Jim’s suggestions, Phil and Andrew have both vanished into the kitchen to make cups of coffee for everyone, and Number One has distracted Emily with questions on her latest film project. Jim himself is sat on the floor leaning on Chris’ bedroom door, David curled up happily in his lap; both of them are nearly asleep.
Point 22 springs to mind again, so Chris ruefully shakes his head at himself and goes to collapse on his brand new, amazingly comfortable, three seater leather couch next to Jack.

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“You do know we’re staying for dinner tonight right?”

“I had presumed as much, yes Emily.”

“Oh good. I want Mom’s Spaghetti Bolognese. I know you can make it.”

“The twins are going to get tomato everywhere aren’t they?”

“Oh you bet they are brother.”

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68. Jim has no idea how to act around a family.

This point becomes particularly clear when Chris starts serving up dinner. He’s disappointed in this, but not really surprised. Not disappointed in Jim himself, just in the truth of the fact, and the circumstances that must have led it to be true.

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Even if Phil and Number One hadn’t decided to also stay for food, there would have been too many people to fit them all around Chris’ small dining table. So everyone has just taken a plate or a bowl and found a seat wherever they can. As a result, there’s a lot of seat swapping going on, and a lot of laughter, a fair amount of drinking, and a whole lot of general good cheer.

Jim is clearly baffled by the whole situation beyond what can be attributed to his tiredness. When Chris finally finishes serving everyone else and emerges from the kitchen with his own portion, he finds Jim sat by himself atop the shoe-rack. After a quick glance around to double check everyone else is sorted, he strides over and drops down next to him.

“Everything all right son?”

“Huh? Oh yeah, I’m fine. M’just tired.” Jim shuffles, obviously trying to hide how self-conscious he feels.

“Yeah, I saw you kipping against my door earlier. And I noticed that David seems to like you; following you around like a lost duckling he is.”

“He’s- He’s a lot quieter than Daniel,” Jim replies hesitantly, glancing over to where the two small boys are currently making a mess at the table.

“Mmm, polar opposites those two, despite being genetically identical.”

“Like chalk and cheese. Mom used to say that about Sam and I before- well. Before.”

Chris thinks back to Jim’s file and the section that lists family. Thinks back to that section and how Jim’s brother has been listed as missing since October of 2243; it’s been just over 12 years since he vanished without a trace. He thinks about it and doesn’t say anything; just budges up closer to Jim so that the young man can lean against his side.

They eat the rest of their spaghetti together in comfortable silence.
Jack and Grace may have the whole week off school for the holidays, but Chris, Phil and Jim still have Academy work to do and classes to attend on Wednesday and Thursday morning; they only get Thursday afternoon and Friday off as extra holiday days.

Being well aware of this, Emily and Andrew eventually gather up their brood and prepare to disappear off to their own rooms for the night. Phil volunteers to walk them over to the other side of campus where they’re staying and thus vanishes with them. Number One decides to walk with them as they’re all headed in the same direction and leaves too.

As soon as the door shuts behind them, Jim pretty much immediately collapses on his bed and passes out cold.

69. When he’s exhausted, Jim sleeps like the dead

Realising that everyone leaving has resulted in him being left to deal with the mess entirely by himself, Chris tries to wake Jim up for a good five minutes before giving up and stomping grumpily back out of his flatmate’s bedroom.

Muttering unhappily to himself, he starts gathering plates and cutlery up, banging about as loudly as possible in the vain hope the noise will succeed in waking Jim where he failed. He’s moved most it over to the worktop by the sink before he suddenly remembers **Point 17** again; if he leaves the clearing up and goes to bed himself, Jim will be so horrified when he wakes in the morning that the whole flat will be sparkling clean before Chris has even manged to down his first daily dose of caffeine.

Chris’ plan works spectacularly; there’s not even a fleck of tomato sauce to be found by the time he emerges from the shower on Wednesday morning!

70. Jim’s nicknames are so catchy, even Chris has started using them.

“Cadet McCoy! Can I have a quick word please?”

Chris had been planning to just Comm McCoy and speak to him that way, but seeing as they’re both currently in the foyer of the Admin building, he might as well collar him now and get it over with before he forgets again.

“Captain Pike, I’m completely at your disposal sir.”

“Good man. Follow me Cadet.” Once Chris has steered them both into an empty meeting room, they both immediately drop the formality.

“What’s going on Chris? Jim hasn’t done something stupid as he?”

“Not that I know of Bones. No, I just wanted to ask you what you were planning on doing tomorrow for Thanksgiving. You probably heard that my sister blindsided me with a spontaneous visit, so now we’re going out somewhere for a meal. Jim and Phil are obviously invited too so I was wondering if you also felt like joining us? Number One is going to her parents so I could use a dose of your
maturity to counteract Jim and Phil. Not that you wouldn’t have been invited anyway, but you know, I’ll take perks where I can get them.”

“Did you seriously just call me Bones?”

“…Crap. Yes. Sorry.” Chris roughly scrubs a hand over face, completely embarrassed.

“Goddammit, I’m gonna murder that kid for sticking me with that ridiculous nickname!”

“I really am sorry McCoy.”

McCoy grunts and waves his hand dismissively.

“By this point, I’d have more chance halting a rising spring tide than curbing people’s use of that gorram epithet, I am drowning that badly in its stupidity. But yes, I will join you for dinner tomorrow if that’s alright. On one condition.”

Chris tilts his head, inviting McCoy to continue.

“You have to stop calling me McCoy Chris. My name is Leonard. Or at the very least it’s Len or Leo. I don’t mind which.”

“Sure thing… Leonard?” Nope. “Len.” Also nope. “Leo. Let’s go with Leo. I will see you tomorrow for dinner Leo. I’ll Comm you the time and place this evening.”

“Sure thing. See you around Cappy!”

Bones slides out of the door before Chris can retort; he’s definitely going to stick to using “Bones” from now just as payback for that parting shot.

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71. Jim is surprisingly patient with tactless teenagers

It is decided that they will all walk to the restaurant together on Thursday evening, so nearly everyone reconvenes in Chris’ flat just after noon. Phil unexpectedly gets called in to the ER and decides to meet them downtown later. Chris himself doesn’t manage to escape his office until just after 1400, but he makes sure Jim is around to let everyone in.

When he finally does manage to get back, he arrives to find Grace and Jack in the middle of a screaming match. Andrew is between them, desperately trying to separate the two, and Emily and Bones are in the kitchen trying to calm two sobbing toddlers. Jim is stood with his back to the bathroom door doing his best not to look terrified, and only partially succeeding.

Chris’ and Jim’s eyes meet, and Jim smiles weakly when Chris rolls his. Then Chris puts four fingers in his mouth and whistles as loud he can manage.

If Daniel hadn’t still been quietly sobbing and hiccupping, you probably could have heard a pin drop in the resultant silence.

“Thank-you, much better.” He turns to stare down his nephew and niece. “Now. I don’t know why you two were arguing, and I don’t care what your justification for it was. All I care about is that you were doing it in my flat and that you were ignoring your father’s commands to stop. Andrew, do you mind if I…?”

“No no Chris, go ahead. Your flat, your rules.”
“Right then. Grace, you will go to my room, you will sit in silence on the end of my bed, you will not touch any of my belongings, and in half an hour you will come and apologise to Jack for screaming at him, to your younger brothers for upsetting them, and to your parents for ignoring them and for causing such a ruckus. Ah ah, no buts! Go!

“And as for you Jack,” he adds, swivelling to face the younger teen, “you can wipe the smug look off your face because you can go and follow the exact same set of instructions from Jim’s room.”

When the thirty minutes are up, both sullen teens emerge from their isolations, give the most insincere sounding set of apologies Chris has ever heard, and retreat as far away from each other as they can manage within the flat’s confines to sulk in silence.

Jack throws himself huffily down on the couch next to Jim and Bones. The coffee table has been pushed against the wall, and Chris is sat on the rug in front of them with David and a box of Lego bricks.

After Jack has huffed and muttered to himself a dozen more times, he suddenly narrows his eyes and turns to stare at Jim.

“So I heard you’re like, the actual Kelvin Baby.”

Jim only looks like a deer caught in headlights for about half a second before he manages to smoother the expression under one of calm approachability.

“That would be me, yes.”

“So like, you were born in space just before your dad blew himself up.”


“What? I was only asking. Everyone knows George Kirk killed himself to save everyone else.”

“Yes, but if you have to satiate your curiosity, you could be a lot nicer about how you go about doing so.”

“It’s fine Chris,” Jim interjects, sitting more upright from his slouch, “I’d rather he just be blunt about it; better than him dancing around the subject like I’m a landmine that’s primed to blow. So what do you wanna know kid?”

Jack shoots Chris a smug look, and Chris ruthlessly supresses the urge to growl at the boy again; he’d rather not cause yet another argument.

"So like I heard your eyes should be brown like your parents, but they’re actually really blue. Is that like a radiation thing? Did you get poisoned by space when you were born?"

Thankfully, Jim looks amused by the continued complete lack of tact, and starts explaining that that’s a myth and his dad’s eyes were actually blue too. When Bones leans over and begins explaining how genetic allele inheritance works, Chris allows himself to stop worrying and goes back to building Lego starships.

They’re stood as a group outside of the Carvery when Chris’ worst nightmare finally comes true.
Jim sidles up to him, smirking for all he’s worth.

“What?” Chris asks, immediately on guard.

“Nothing Chris. Nothing at all.”

“What!” he asks again, becoming more worried by the second.

“Well I was just talking to your sister you see. She has some interesting stories.”

Chris swallows hard.

“Stories?”

“Oh you know. Just some stuff about climbing a tree, and a squirrel, and a bag of nuts.”

“Shit.” Chris drops his face into his hands.

“I’m disappointed in you Chrissy! How could you keep such an awesome nickname all to yourself!?”

72. Jim Kirk should never have been allowed to meet any of Chris’ friends or family. Ever.

Chapter End Notes

Everything I know about Thanksgiving comes from watching American TV shows and one hasty googling session. I hope what I’ve written is accurate, but I apologise if I’ve gotten something horrendously wrong.

And to the people who keep asking 'When is X gonna happen?'. I'm doing my best to be as realistic as possible with the pacing, but I promise all the things you're waiting for will occur eventually :) (especially as I can't wait to write them!)

And I'll also take this moment to thank everyone who comments, kudos’ and bookmarks etc. Reading new comments is always the highlight of my day :D
Chapter 10

Jim is bright blue.

Literally bright, Smurf blue. Head to toe, as far as Chris can see. And he’s only wearing a short sleeved t-shirt and a pair of sports shorts, so Chris can actually see both his head and his toes.

“Okaaaay? Dare I ask kid?”

Jim must not have heard him come in, because he jumps about six-foot in the air when Chris speaks. As he was leaning on the inside of the bathroom doorframe, he manages to smack his head on the lintel impressively hard.

“Jesus Chris!” he yelps, rubbing at his crown, “You scared the hell out of me! What the hell are you even doing back? You never come here over lunch.”

“Sorry kid, didn’t mean to make you jump. I accidently left a PADD that I need here this morning. Just came to grab it. But seriously, why are you blue?”

“Because,” comes Leo’s half shouted growl from inside the bathroom, “Upperclassmen are pathetic, immature, insecure, childish little bastards, that’s why! They hacked into my room and screwed with my shower! I made sure I got a damned single with an en-suite precisely so that I wouldn’t have to deal with this kind of school-yard horseshit! I’m twenty-seven and a doctor dammit, not a hormonal prepubescent frat-boy like most of the other students; I don’t have time to deal with such juvenile delinquency!”

**73. Not even Jim and Bones are immune to the horrors of Plebe-year pranks**

By the end of Leo’s tirade, Chris has managed to make his way over to Jim and manoeuvre his head down to check for cuts and swelling. Thumbing carefully through the back of the lad’s hair, he doesn’t find anything concerning, but he is amused to realise that even his hair follicles have been stained blue.

“They unscrewed the shower head and filled it with Cardassian dye pellets,” Jim mutters sulkily, “I went to use Bones’ shower like I always do after Hand to Hand –’cause I don’t have to walk as far to his room as I do to get back here- and I came out blue.”

“Alright Jim, the water’s fine now. So come and get that damn stuff washed off before you break out in even more hives. Trust you to be allergic to one of the most goddamn common colourants in the universe!” Leo emphasises his order by reaching over and tugging on Jim’s arm. Chris lets him go with a snort and retreats back towards the study to find that PADD.
Jim is still a pale icy blue when Chris returns to the flat at 1720 that evening. Again, he’s dressed in only a loose pair of shorts and an equally baggy t-shirt (a shirt that actually belongs to Leo, Chris notes amusedly, if the U-Miss logo on the front is anything to go by), and he’s nearly completely slathered in hydrocortisone cream.

He also looks miserable as sin.

Accordingly, Chris bites down on the Andorian joke he was about crack, and claps him gently on the shoulder instead as he passes by where he’s sat at the dining table. Jim huffs exaggeratedly at him, smiling weakly, so Chris tweaks his ear as well before vanishing into his room.

“Bones go home?” Chris calls out as he sheds his uniform and grabs an old worn pair of jeans instead.

“No, back to work,” Jim replies through a sigh. “Got his usual double ER shift over at Medical today. He was only here at lunch because I called him about his shower.”

Chris frowns at his reflection in the mirror on his wardrobe door and tugs his jumper sleeves straight.

“I thought his double was on Tuesdays?”

“Nah, he swapped with Dr Bulliens in the first week of November. He does Thursday nights now so that he doesn’t have to deal with the aftermath of the Upperclassmen Tactical Sims.”

When Chris strolls back into the main room, Jim has stacked the PADDs he was working on into a pile on the middle of the table and stretched out into a slouch. And he’s scratching at his arm.

“Oi, stop picking at them! You’ll end up bleeding everywhere and scar,” Chris reprimands him, pushing Jim’s fingers away from the collection of spots he was poking at.

“But they’re so frikin’ itchy!” Jim whines back, pouting something fierce.

Chris shakes his head fondly and internally debates amending **Point 4. No, I’ll leave it as it is until I have further evidence** he decides.

“You want a beer kid?” he asks instead, hoping to distract him from his discomfort.

“Oh god yes. And what’s for dinner? I’m flippin’ starving and there’s no way I’m going to the Mess looking like this!”

**74. Once you’ve gotten to know him, Jim is a surprisingly predictable individual.**

It’s pretty simple really; give him good food, good drink and occasionally reciprocate his tactility, and he’ll be happier than a kid in a candy store!

-------------

By the following Sunday, the last of the blue has leech out and the rash faded.

By the beginning of Tuesday lunchtime, Jim’s been dyed bright green instead.

-------------

**75. Jim can spin practically any situation to his advantage.**

Chris is impressed to discover this when Commodore S’rzroa drags both Jim and an Upperclassman
to his office. The Saurian flag officer is clearly not best pleased. Jim and the other Cadet are also glaring at each one another hard enough to burn holes in each other. Both have cuts and bruises on their face and hands, Jim’s looking particularly nasty against the contrast of his green skin.

Phil, who had arrived not five minutes before to share lunch with Chris, takes one look at Jim and sighs deeply.

“I’ll go find some more hydrocortisone shall I?” he asks rhetorically as he brushes past the newly arrived group and out the door. Chris scowls at the doctor’s back, silently cursing him for leaving him to deal with the unhappy trio alone. Then again, Jim is already starting to rub viscously at his neck and arms.

“Captain,” S’rzroa starts in his usual hissing rumble, “I’m sssorry to dissturb your afternoon, but I ssurmised you’d want to deal with these two personally. I caught them trying to batter each other into the floor in one of the Cadet locker roomss in the sportss-centre. Some kind of disssagreement over a bottle of shower gel apparently.”

“Shower gel.” Chris repeats back flatly, not even having to fake the disapproving tone in his voice. Jim at least, has the good grace to look mildly contrite. The other Cadet merely glowers at Chris’ desk.

“Yesss, someone mixed a handful of dye pellets into Kirk’ss bottle and Kirk believess Finnegan resposssible. You can see the results of their disssagreement over the matter.”

“They resorted to physical violence. How very mature of you boys. Thank-you for bringing the incident to my attention Commodore.”

“No problem Captain. Do feel free to Comm me if you need any further information on the matter.” Once the Commodore has nodded at Chris and left, Chris turns back to the two young men, making no attempt to hide his displeasure.

“Fighting,” he growls at them both. “I would have expected better from both of you. Kirk, I know you are more mature than this. If you have a problem with pranks getting out of hand, then you come and tell me, you do not go getting into goddamn fistfights. And you Finnegan. You’re an Upperclassmen; this juvenile behaviour should be so far beneath you by now, the level of shame you should feel over your actions ought to belie belief.”

Jim, he is pleased to note, really does look ashamed now. On the other hand Finnegan just looks more indignant. Chris narrows his eyes at him some more.

“So what do you suggest I do with you both hmm? Because technically I ought to suspend both of you for at least a week.” Normally, Chris would do exactly that, but as much as he’d relish doing so to Finnegan, he’s reluctant to inflict that punishment on Jim. And he can hardly hand out different penalties to both of them for the same incident.

“Well?” he asks sternly when both remain silent.

“The sports centre,” Jim volunteers sullenly. “Our… altercation left the locker room in a bit of a state. Perhaps we should spend our evenings clearing up after ourselves and the other Cadets?” Chris smiles inwards, but doesn’t let it show on his face; he knows that Jim, neat-freak that he is, actually kind of enjoys cleaning and fixing things. But judging from the awful face Finnegan pulls, the other young man very much hates it.

“I’ll let Commander Garron know to expect you every night bar Sundays for the next two weeks
then, starting this evening. As the head of sports centre maintenance crew, I’m sure he’ll be thrilled to have your full assistance. If I receive anything other than glowing reports on your performance from him, I’ll rescind my decision to be merciful regarding suspension. Kirk, you stay here and wait for Doctor Boyce to return with that cream. Finnegan, you’re dismissed and I better not see you back here for anything other than a commendation.”

Finnegan throws him a borderline disrespectfully sloppy salute and stomps out, still glowering. Chris waits until Jim’s attention is back on him and then rolls his eyes as dramatically as he can manage.

----------------

76. **If Jim tells you someone is an asshole, then in all probability, they are an asshole**

“So that’s Jake Finnegan then? I know you said he was a total dick, but honestly kid, I think you understated a little.”

Jim huffs a laugh, still looking more than a little wary.

“Yes alright son,” Chris continues, “you can stop looking at me like that now. You’ve had your dressing down, I’m not gonna bite your head off.”

“I really am sorry Chris,” Jim mumbles, fiddling with the Newton’s cradle on Chris’ desk. Fed up of watching him shuffle, Chris gestures at the chair on the other side of the desk until Jim takes the hint and settles into it gingerly.

“I know kid. You wear your emotions on your sleeve. Don’t think I’ve ever seen a set of more remorseful facial expressions. Nova, you’re making me feel like I kicked your puppy every time I look at you.”

“Well,” Jim replies with a watery smirk, finally letting some of the tension bleed out of his frame, “you did kick Trip that one time.”

“I did not!” Chris gasps with mock indignation. “The little furball got himself tangled up under my feet. Hardly my fault I stepped on him!” Jim starts to chuckle and Chris grins back at him. “But seriously Jim, you should have come talked to me. How long as Finnegan been targeting you? And don’t try and tell me it’s a recent thing because I know you; if he got you to lash out like that, it’s been going on a while.”

Jim sighs and drops his eyes to the carpet.

“Since the first week of term,” he mumbles to his feet.

“Since the- Since the first week of term!?” Chris exclaims in a strangled voice. “James! It’s the fourth of December goddammit!”

“I thought I could handle it! You hadn’t even noticed until Thursday!”

77. **Jim is absolutely bloody useless at asking for help when he needs it.**

Chris could strangle him. Leo probably will when Chris tells him. And Chris will tell him; he’s going to need a hand watching Jim’s back.

On second thoughts, Leo probably already knows. They’re thick as thieves those two. Chris decides to strangle them both.
Jim escapes having his neck wrung by virtue of Phil choosing that moment to reappear.

“One flannel cloth, one bottle of rubbing alcohol, and one tub of industrial strength E45. Oh, and one dermal regenerator because you’re a total muppet. Come on, let me sort those cuts and grazes out Jimbo.”

Phil crouches down in front of Jim and starts inspecting his hands for cracked knuckles, carefully running his own hands over the kid’s. Phil, Chris has noted over the years, has a habit of foregoing the use of a Tricorder in favour of making diagnoses the old fashioned way. More recently, he’s noticed Leo’s habit of doing the same. Chris takes it as a sign of them both being damn good doctors.

“Alright. Luckily nothing seems broken. Now, did you already get the worst of the dye off, or do I have to escort you to the staff bathroom down the hall?”

“No I- I was in Bones’ room again. The pellets were in my shower gel this time rather than the actual shower, so I got most of it off there and then. I didn’t go looking for Finnegan until after I’d washed it off.”

“Well at least we know you’re only half stupid and not dumb all the way through,” Phil smirks, switching the regenerator on. Chris chuckles too and pulls an apple out of his jacket pocket.

Jim perks up as soon as he hears Chris take the first crunching bite.

“Hey Chris, have you got another one of them?”

Chris is going to strain his eyes if he continues to roll them so frequently; Point 72 may be the most accurate point yet!

78. Chris’ friends are as loyal to Chris as Jim’s are to Jim. i.e. very.

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“Number One, I may need your help.”

Number One looks up with an eyebrow raised when Chris barges into her office later that afternoon.

“Knocking Christopher,” she says dryly, “I’m almost certain I taught you how to do that the first year of your captaincy.”

“Sorry,” he grins sheepishly, “But Jim’s been being an idiot and now I have to fix it.”

“Oh course he’s been an idiot,” she continues in the same dry tone, “he’s your carbon-copy after all.”

“You’re hilarious Amanda. You make me feel so loved.”

Number One smiles at him sweetly. Chris takes that as an invitation to round her desk and sit atop the filing cabinet next to her.

“Your office is tiny,” he complains, pushing a stack of paperwork out of his way.

“Well not all of us can be a Fleet Captain and a Division Head dear. So what’s your latest Jim-related problem then?”

“Have you ever heard of a Cadet named Finnegan?”
“Sure, he’s one of Komack’s pets.”

“Now you see, that is precisely my problem….”

----------------

“Oh, hello Pike! What can Porthos and I do for you this fine afternoon?”

“Archer,” he smiles. “It’s about Jim.”

“With you, when is it not?” the Admiral grins back.

“I feel as if I should resent that.” Chris scowls playfully.

“Yeah but you don’t because it’s true. Jim?”

“Ok, so. I’m assuming you know one Cadet Jake Finnegan? He’s–”

“Say no more Chris,” Archer cuts across him with a genuine scowl, “whatever it is you’re planning, I’m in. Pissing Komack off is my number one favourite activity.”

Chris pauses and tries to gauge Archer’s sincerity.

“What makes you think I’m planning anything?” he goes with eventually.

“Oh please Chrissy. I remember your Academy days. You might have fooled most people into thinking you were a serious and mature individual, but I knew better.”

Chris winces at the use of that nebula-damned nickname, but starts to explain his problem anyway.

----------------

79. Jim Kirk is capable of bringing out Chris’ ruthlessly vindictive side

Not aimed at him obviously, but definitely on his behalf.

“You do realise this is borderline protective parental-rage right?”

“Oh for the love of-! Not you too Phil! He’s not my kid!”

“Oh so someone else has said the same thing to you today then? That’s just proving my point. Let me guess, it was Archer.” Chris remains stonily silent. “Archer and Amanda!? Well that settles it then; if all three of us are thinking it, issuing further denials would be a total waste of your breath.”

“He’s not my kid!” Chris hisses at him, snatching the spanner out of Phil’s hands. “He is twenty-two. He is a genius. He’s a very independent, mature, sensible young man, so he does not need a goddamn father figure. Not to mention that I have only known him three frackin’ months!”

Phil sniggers at him and clips another wire back into the ceiling. Chris smacks him hard around the head with his free hand.

“Shut up Phil! At worst, I am his kickass older brother!”

“Ohh, you are so gonna end up adopting him.”

“I am going to tear your arms off and bludgeon you to death with the soggy ends Philp Boyce. Three! Months!”
Phil’s giggling fit is so loud, Chris starts worrying that they might get caught.

-------------

**Group Message System; initiated by: JArcher1**
**Stardate: 2255.93; Earth-time: 1807PST**

PBoyce83:-- Alright we’re done >:D
PBoyce83:-- But I’d steer clear of Chris for a few hours
PBoyce83:-- My ears are still ringing from the beating my head just took

CPike177:-- That’s because you’re a total goddamn asshole
CPike177:-- But yes, we’re done

AThirwood342:-- Are you definitely clear?
AThirwood342:-- I’m unlooping the HoloCam Footage now

PBoyce83:-- Yeah, we’re nearly back at Archer’s office

JArcher1:-- They just walked in Amanda
JArcher1:-- We’re all clear at this end
JArcher1:-- Your alibis should be completely watertight

AThirwood342:-- I’m going to delete all trace of this message system then.

JArcher1:-- Make it so, Number One!

-------------

On the morning of December the 5th, Chris is walking back from the Admin building towards his office. He’s making his way passed the Turnkike Fountain when Jim come flying towards him like a bat out of hell, Leonard ‘Bones’ McCoy hot on his heels.

“Oh my god Chris! Chris!”

“Blazers Jimmy, slow down!”

Jim skids to a stop in front of him, grinning like a lunatic and practically vibrating.

“Chris!” Jim laughs breathlessly “Someone- Someone got into Finnegan’s room last night. Oh god, they- the whole place was wired up like a giant booby trap! Bucket of water above his door and a glitter one too. Itching powder in his bed and all his clothes! Rewired his sonic dampeners to blast 20th century Aqua songs none-stop. All of his shower bottles had been emptied and refilled with lube! Screwed with his door so that it opens and closes at random intervals and rigged his lights to flicker on and off! They even did the dye trick to his shower!

You should have seen him in the Mess this morning! He’s absolutely furious! And bright orange! Shame he’s not allergic to the dye, but whatever! Orange!”

“And the best part, if you ask me,” Leo interjects with a viscous smirk, “is that there’s no way he can blame Cadet Dunsel here for it. Jim was with Finnegan in the sports centre the entire time and there’s a dozen people who can confirm it! And I’m safe because I was in surgery all evening.”

“So he got what was coming to him then?” Chris laughs back.

“Oh and then some!” Jim answers with yet another burst of laughter. “Admiral Komack is going
nuts. Apparently there’s not a scrap of evidence to indicate who the culprit might be. He even requisitioned all the hall security footage and there’s not so much as a blip to suggest it's been tampered with.”

Jim pauses, his smile calming and becoming very sincere.

“No but- Chris I- Oh screw it!” he lurches forward suddenly and wraps his arms around Chris’ middle. “Just. Thanks Chris. No-one ever did anything like that for me before.”

“Don’t know what you mean son,” he replies gruffly, patting Jim’s back, “I was in Admiral Archer’s office all evening. There’s even HoloVid footage as proof. I know that because Komack has spent all morning checking. Repeatedly.”

Jim doesn’t reply again, just squeezes Chris a little bit tighter.

80. Ok so maybe he is a little bit over protective, but Chris thinks it’s totally worth it when the result is Jim being this happy!

Chapter End Notes

I like to think that Archer already had all the equipment Chris needed for his pranks just lying around ;)

After doing a lot of research and fiddling with a calculator, I decided to go with the AOS Stardate system because
a) it's by far the most simplistic and straightforward system, and
b) pretty much all of the other systems result in a very large negative number for the date.
“Jim! What the hell!” Chris yells, dropping his book onto the couch beside him.

“What! I’ve been trying to get your attention for over a full minute now!”

“You didn’t have to throw a cushion at my face!”

“Yeah well, shouting and waving wasn’t getting me anywhere! You get your head in a novel and you zone the rest of the world out entirely! A bomb could go off across the room and you would barely notice!”

Chris mutters under his breath, annoyed that he’d be lying through his teeth if he tried to dispute Jim’s claim.

“Well, I like reading!” he grumbles back instead.

“Oh really? I never noticed! It’s not like you practically have the resurrected version of the Library of Alexandria in your study or anything! You and your damned paper books! Couldn’t you just download stuff on to your PADD like the rest of sentient life in the galaxy!?"

“Electronic books are not the same and you know it! You borrow my paperbacks all the time!”

“I do not!”

“You’ve got my copy of A Tale of Two Cities sat on your bed-side cabinet right now! And you’ve got The Fall of The Darkovice System in your messenger bag! So don’t even try and deny it!”

This time it’s Jim who pulls a face and falls silent. Chris smiles at him smugly.

“What did you want anyway kid?” he asks eventually, “And it had better be important enough to justify the pillow to the head.”

“Oh yeah. Your Mom’s on the Comm unit. Uhura’s talking to her while I came to fetch you.”

Chris frowns and starts peering round for his bookmark.

“Uhura’s here? And come to think of it, when did you get in?”

Jim shoots him a sarcastic and unimpressed look.
“We’ve been in an hour Chris. You even grunted a hello at us when we first arrived.”

“Well I like reading!” Chris repeats, cursing the heat he can feel crawling up his neck and face.

81. **Chris never had to defend himself so much before Jim came along**

Not that he’s insecure or anything, but you know, it’s just *not fair!*

When he does eventually find his bookmark and make it to the study, he has some difficulty getting the two cadets to leave; every time he tries to shoe them out, either they or his mother will suddenly mention something else and they all get wrapped up in yet another conversation. And then when he finally does manage to achieve his desired privacy, he has to listen to a full five minutes of his mother admonishing him for chasing them both out!

By the time they actually start discussing the reason she called in the first place, Chris feels like he’s five years old and just been caught putting Fringe-toed Lizards in the breadbin all over again.

“So what is it again today dear? Wednesday the seventeenth? Eighteenth?”

“Nineteenth Mom.”

“Close enough.” she waves. “And you’re arriving on the twenty-first yes? So that’s this Friday”

“Yeah, shuttle lands in Leeds dock-port at 1500.”

“And you’re taking an airbus across here to York. Are you sure you don’t want Edward and I to come collect you honey? It wouldn’t be any trouble, and I know how much you dislike the Coastliner service.”

Chris considers. It *would* make his life easier. He really does hate those airbuses; they’re always so crowded, especially at this time of year.

“Maybe,” he concedes with a huff, “but only if you really aren’t going out of your way.”

“I wouldn’t offer if it was that much of an inconvenience. I do wish the Federation would hurry up and fix our short range Transporters. Having them out of service is such an inconvenience! Are you sure you can’t talk to someone about it? That older friend of yours perhaps, the one who used to be President?”

Chris shakes his head in amusement.

“I think Archer has more important things on his plate to worry about than the Yorkshire Region’s public transport system Mom.”

“Oh what use are you then boy?” she smiles jokingly at him. “What’s the point hey? Being a successful and accomplished Starfleet Officer and still unable to help your poor old mother out with such a simple problem. Terrible state of affairs.”

“Mmm, how awful for you,” he laughs back.

“It really is. Now. If you’re bringing that boy of yours with you I need to know whether or not to put you and Philip in the same spare room, or whether you would rather share with young James and
give Philip his own room.”

“…What?! I wasn’t planning on bringing either of them Mom!”

“Oh don’t give me that nonsense! Philip comes every year! And you are not leaving that young man in San Francisco on his own for Christmas!”

Chris splutters, completely lost for words.

“Phil does not come every year!” he eventually blurts out, deciding not to touch the “your boy” comment with a ten foot barge pole.

82. Chris is utterly fed up of people insinuating that Jim is somehow his kid!

----------------

Chris decides not to mention his mother’s assumptions to Jim until after he’s managed to speak to Leo; until now, he’d been assuming that Jim and Bones had already made their own plans, given that neither of them had mentioned anything.

If they are planning on going off somewhere together, he doesn’t want to make Jim feel guilty for having to turn down his mom’s invitation.

----------------

Phil on the other hand, Chris discovers the next morning, had apparently decided that he was accompanying Chris to the UK for Christmas whether or not Chris invited him.

“Of course I’m coming with you! Your parents Comm’d me about it more than a week ago Chris. Besides, where’d you think I would go? My only other options are to stay here in San Fran by myself, or tag along with Number One. And Amanda’s parents terrify me, so that isn’t happening!”

“Did it occur to you at any point to inform me of this?” Chris asks him resignedly, jumping up to sit on the kitchenette worktop next to him.

“I thought it was obvious! The only years we haven’t gone to your parent’s for Christmas are the years we were shipboard, and that one year when we- well when we spent the holidays in NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital with my father. And even then, we’ve always been together!”

When Chris actually stops and thinks back, he realises to his surprise that Phil is right. Every year since they were first posted to the same ship, they’ve spent the Twenty-fifth in each other’s company. Without fail. Including that time they were held hostage for thirteen days by the indigenous species of the Class M planet they were surveying; they’d been together in the same gaol cell the entire time.

Great, that means he definitely owes his mother an apology then.

“We’re taking Jim with us right?” Phil asks, breaking Chris’ contemplative silence. Chris sighs, and eyes Phil sideways.

“I haven’t actually asked him yet.”

Phil eyes him sideways back and snorts.

“So that’s a yes then.”

----------------
Phil eventually kicks Chris out of Medical, claiming that he does actually have work to do. Chris rather doubts that claim given that the doctor saunters up to the reception desk and starts taking coffee requests from all the staff, rather than heading off to see patients or pulling up paperwork on his PADD. But Chris heads back to his office anyway; last day of term or not, there’ll no doubt be a stack of paperwork waiting for him.

----------------

83. Leonard McCoy is perhaps the best friend Chris could ever wish for Jim to have

At about 1115, Chris’ Yeoman lets Bones into his office.

“Phil said you wanted to talk to me,” he opens with, stopping in front of Chris’ desk.

“Uh, yes Leo. Nothing serious, just holiday plans. You and Jim have sorted what you’re doing right?”

“Goddammit!” Leo suddenly growls, “I told him to talk to you! I have plans yes, but Jim doesn’t. I told him to talk to you about it and he told me he had! Stupid fool boy thinks you won’t want him around over Christmas, says he impinges on you and your time enough as it is. I said to him, I said “Jimmy, that’s a total load of codswallop”, but does he ever listen to me!!?”

“So he really is planning on staying here at the Academy alone? I honestly thought he’d be going with you.”

“He can’t,” Bones’ sighs. “Much as I’d like to take him to ‘ole Georgia, it just wouldn’t end well. What with Jocelyn still doing the evil-ex routine, and my sisters threatening to take my head off if I so much as show my face… well let’s just say that the only reason I’m risking going back myself is ‘cause my Grammy literally got down on her knees and begged me to come home for a few days. Said she’d give anyone who threw a hissy fit a good hidin’, bless her heart. So I can deal with the tension for a few days for her sake, but like hell I’m exposing Jim to that.”

Well that’s that decided then, Chris thinks.

Looks like Jim is coming with him and Phil.

----------------

Chris takes a deep breath and strides up to Jim’s bedroom door.

“Jim! Get packing!”

Jim looks up at him startled.

“Now kid! We have to be at the shuttle-dock by 0930!”

“But-”

“No, no buts!” Chris cuts across him, “You need a week’s worth of clothes, your washbag and towels, and whatever presents you have hidden in your wardrobe. Come on, stop looking at me like that and get a move on!”

84. If you can take him enough by surprise, you can get Jim to do all sorts of things without question
“….We’re going to England?”

“My parents live in York.”

“But I thought you were from the Mojave Desert? Born and bred Californian boy you told me!”

“I am Californian. I just moved when I was twelve.”

“To the UK?”

“Yup.”

“…Why?”

“Because my Mom moved in with my Stepdad.”

“Your Dad is actually your Stepdad? And he’s English? Why has no one told me these things! Wait. This why you say random British things isn’t it? Like duvet. And full stop instead of period.”

“You know as well as I do Jim, that teenagers are total and utter cruel assholes. I picked up some English phrases and a British accent as a defence mechanism. Never did get entirely out of the habit.”

“Wow… Starfleet’s poster boy was bullied at school for sounding American. You learn something new every day.”

Both Phil and Jim turn on the charm as soon as they land, and within minutes of exiting the arrivals terminal they have both of Chris’ parents wrapped around their little fingers. Chris silently curses them both for it as they walk to the car, as the result is that he’s somehow ended up with all the bags.

To Chris’ surprise, Emily, Andrew and the kids are already at the house when they arrive in York. Chris morosely resigns himself to a holiday full of merciless teasing from all quarters.

85. Jim becomes a hyperactive eight year old at Christmas

“Chris! Chris wake up!”

Chris groans into his pillow.

“Oh come on old man! It’s Christmas day!”

Chris pulls the pillow over his head.

“I want my presents Chris! Come on, get up!”

“No. S’too early.”

“Like hell it is Cappy! Even Phil’s up already. And everyone knows you get up at the crack of dawn
on Christmas morning and it’s way past that!”

“Don’t care. Need more sleep.”

“If you don’t get out of bed within the next two minutes, I will go get Daniel and David and let them climb all over you.”

“Imma kill you. Slowly.”

“Two minutes and counting Chris!”

**Point 8** is so, so awful.

----------------

He just about manages to drag himself downstairs fast enough to avoid being bounced on. Which is good, because Christmas day or not, he really would have had to execute **Point 56** in retribution.

“Oh my dear boy, you really aren’t a morning lark are you?” his mom commiserates with him, pulling him into a hug.

Chris grunts into her shoulder.

“Yeah, but he’s definitely not a night owl either,” Jim grins, appearing next to them and bouncing on his toes. “He’s always in bed before midnight and he falls asleep on the couch before he even gets that far most nights.”

“So what does that make him then?” Phil rumbles sleepily from somewhere across the kitchen.

Chris hears Emily snort.

“Don’t you dare,” he growls at her, looking up to glare in her direction.

“Oh Chris?” she smirks, “Chris is some bedraggled form of permanently exhausted pigeon.”

Jim and Phil burst out laughing. Chris hates them all.

On the plus side, Emily gets thwacked around the head with a tea towel and told to go make him a mug of coffee. At least his Mom loves him.

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**86. Jim Kirk really likes presents**

“One at a time boys!” Edward shouts over the chaos that erupts when they all pour into the front room. Chris chuckles and claims the big leather chair in the corner before anyone else can. Jim, he notices, dives straight for the pile of presents stacked under the tree with just as much enthusiasm as Jack and the twins.

"But Grandad!” Jack whines.

“One at a time kiddo, or you get none at all.” Jack huffs, but does drop all but one of the brightly wrapped packages. Jim also looks upset, and starts unloading his arms too.

Chris doesn’t manage to see if the youngest two are also made to put down all but one present each, because Phil chooses that moment to squeeze his way into the arm chair next to him.
"Blazing heck Phil! Do you have to!? There’s plenty of other places to sit!"

"Shush you. It’s Christmas so I’m being companionable. And you’re skinnier than a drowned rat anyway, so there’s masses of room."

Chris glowers at him and then jabs his elbow in Phil’s side.

Phil slaps him back.

Chris twists sideways and grabs Phil’s head in a lock.

“Oi! Behave you two! You’re setting a terrible example for the kids! Honestly, no-one would believe you’re both in your forties.”

“Sorry Anna,” Phil mumbles in apology, sounding for all the world like a kid with his hand caught in the cookie jar. Chris just looks at his mom sheepishly and lets go of Phil slowly.

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87. Jim is really quite good at gift buying

“Heads up Uncle Chris!”

Chris catches the red-wrapped parcel that Jack launches in his direction with both hands. It’s rectangular, box-like and fairly heavy. It also has “To Chris, from Jim” scrawled in black marker across one side.

Jim, who’s currently sat leaning on the front of the armchair by Chris’ feet with David in his lap, glances up at him and promptly goes bright red. Chris smiles at him and starts picking at the tape.

Once he’s gotten the paper off, he finds a plain wooden box with brass hinges. He turns it back and forth, inspecting it from all angles before he finally flicks the latch up and opens it.

“Woooah, what’s that Uncle?”

“It’s an old Earth Astrolabe.” He eventually manages to breathe, “Novafire Jimmy, where they hell did you find this!? And how in God’s name did you afford it!”

Jim shuffles nervously, glancing up at him again. Chris carefully picks the antique up and flips it over; the bottom is engraved with ancient mariner charts, complete with sea monsters.

“I know a guy who knows a guy.” Jim gulps. “And I kinda… threw my surname around a bit. And as for the credits... well Commander Garron… he um… he paid me for all the work I did at the sports centre. Don’t be mad! I tried to stop him! Honest! But he insisted because I rewired the whole holodeck system in the officer’s floor for him. I was gonna donate all the credits, because it was supposed to be a punishment right? But then I heard about that,” he waves in Chris’ direction, “and I just… Chris I’ve never really done Christmas before and I wanted to do it right!”

Chris looks down at him, his heart clenching in his chest.

“Come here son.”

“Chris…” Jim replies, looking excessively nervous.

“I can’t hug you while you’re down there kid, so come here.”
It’s an awkward angle, and Phil’s in the way and Daniel keeps trying to climb in between them, but Chris wouldn’t change any of it for the world.

"You do realise that my present is going to look rubbish in comparison now kid?"

"Chris, it’s from you. You could have wrapped half a carrot and I would still think it was a good present."

"Flatterer. I’ll remember that for next year."

Chris’ Marvel socks still go missing on a regular basis.

Considering that, Chris thought it was a good idea to buy the lad his own pair. But a single pair of socks doesn’t make for a particularly impressive present. So he also went out and bought a pair of long Space Invaders sleep pants, an Autobots pendant and a long leather cord to go with it, and a black t-shirt with a small white outline of Pylon and Rig on the left breast. And because he’s noticed Jim eyeing his up recently, and knows that any day now he’s going to get brave enough to start nicking it, he also bought him his own fleecy grey pullover hoody.

Jim grins like a loon and starts pulling it all on over the top of his pyjamas. Chris decides he didn’t do too badly after all.

“Chris, s’Christmas always like this here?” Jim mumbles sleepy from where he’s laid on the couch next to him.

“Hmm?” Chris rumbles back, dozing in his own food coma. “Usually yeah.”

“Oh good. So we can do it again next year right?”

Chris squints sleepy down at him.

“Yeah, course we can son,” he yawns, “might even let you bring Bones next time.”

“S’is the best Christmas ever. Right Phil?”

Phil replies with a muffled snuffling sound and burrows his face further into Chris’ side.

Chris smiles at them both and closes his eyes.

**88. Jim’s right, this is the best Christmas ever.**

Chapter End Notes

It's okay Chris, I'm a permanently exhausted pigeon too!

sorry guys, I'm in London all weekend. So unfortunately comment replies are going back to the usual 'only if you ask me a direct question' and you won't get another
chapter for at least another week :(
Chapter 12

Chapter Notes

I LIED! IT WON'T BE A WHOLE WEEK BEFORE CHAPTER 12, IT'LL BE THREE DAYS!!!!!

So London was awesome and Summer of Sonic was Amazing!!! (huge shout-out to the other staff!) Thanks to everyone who wished me well on my adventures! (there's a live stream on The Sonic Show's twitch channel if your interested)

In case you haven't seen the new message in the Chapter One start notes:
I've added some new html to this fic, which means that if you hover over any of the points embedded in the text, a little box will appear telling you what the point is.

e.g. ISpth is surprised at how much Point 3 is relevant to this entire chapter!

Unfortunately, it won't work on Touch Screen Devices, but there's not a lot I can do about that given that AO3 doesn't let you use style tags :(  

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chris has a feeling that Point 48 is going to get thrown well and truly out of the window tonight.

If it does, it will be his own stupid fault for letting Phil and Jim organise everyone’s New Year’s Eve plans. Of course they would organise a pub crawl; it’s Jim and Phil after all! At least this time, he supposes, he’s gotten a ten hour warning.

"So we’re all meeting at the east gate at about 2000 and then walking as a group to O’Riley’s. Bones and I are going across to the Bedivere Dorm for about an hour before-hand for a couple of pre-drinks, and you, Phil and Number One are going to Phil’s and then making your way to the east gate from there. Once we arrive at O’Riley’s, we have no more than one drink each and then move to our next venue, The DawnBreak Arms. We have another pint, then go onwards to Boycott. Repeat at Boycott, and then again with The Lion Bar and Club Haze. From Club Haze, we will make our way back to Campus to join with the other Starfleet Officers and Cadets and take part in the annual midnight countdown. Further bar crawling is then optional but highly encouraged. Any questions?"

Chris continues to look at Jim incredulously.

“I’m going to really regret agreeing to this, aren’t I?” he sighs.

“Of course you are!” Jim enthuses. “Everyone knows it’s not really a great night out unless you hate yourself the next morning!”

Chris nods reluctantly, realising that Point 18 must be at play again; that means Jim’s going to get his way no matter how much he protests, so he might as well save his breath.

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89. Jim doesn’t even have to be physically present to goad Chris into doing things he normally
wouldn’t

When Chris slides into the turbolift in Phil’s apartment block at 1915, Leo has already sent him three HoloPics of Jim. In all of them, Jim has a different drink in his hand and his arms around someone else’s shoulders. In the second Pic, he’s also sat on a table, using his free hand to pour beer into the open mouth of another cadet lying on the floor underneath him.

When Phil opens up his flat door a couple of minutes later and ushers Chris in, he receives a fourth. This one is Bones pulling a face at the HoloCam with Jim piggy-backing him, Uhura leaning against his side and her arm around the waist of an Orion with bright red hair. Leo has added an on-screen caption which reads “This was a terrible idea”.

“True that,” Phil laughs, peering down at the PADD Chris is holding, “but then the best ideas always are!”

Chris shoots him an amused look.

“I’ll remind you that you said that next time I end up in your Medbay.”

Phil looks horrified. Chris counts that one a win. Number One shakes her head at both of them and hands Chris a glass of something bright orange.

“Get that down you,” she says, glancing at the PADD with a smirk, “because it looks like we’ve got some catching up to do.”

“I’m not sure I want to catch up!” he exclaims, eying the strange liquid suspiciously.

“Are you really going to let a bunch of wet behind the ears, snot nosed cadets drink you under the table Chris?”

Chris tips the glass back and then holds it out for another one.

“I thought as much.” Number One laughs, reaching for the bottle.

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90. If you go bar hopping with Jim Kirk, be prepared follow the “Go Hard or Go Home” philosophy

They make it to the east gate by ten-past-eight. Jim and Leo are already ready and waiting, Uhura and the Orion from the HoloPic standing with them.

The edges of Chris’ vision have already started wavering, and Phil has started doing the stare into the middle distance thing he does when he’s trying to pretend he’s more sober than he is. Number One currently looks completely fine, but given she’s already had at least three large glasses of Risian wine and two shots, Chris bets she won’t stay that way long.

Similarly, Jim also looks pretty steady on his feet. He’s only being a little bit louder and more talkative than usual, and he’s grinning from ear to ear, but other than that he seems mostly sober still. Chris mentally bemoans Point 3 again.

“What time do you call this?” Jim shouts, sauntering towards them with his hands in his jeans pockets.

“There were Dryaxian Whiskey shots. They had to be drunk before we left. Twice.” Chris smirks at
him, nudging his shoulder with his own.

“Alright that’s totally a legitimate excuse,” Jim concedes with a chuckle, “But can we go now? Poor Bones is freezing his soft southern ass off!”

----------------

The Orion turns out to be called Gaila. Apparently she’s Uhura’s roommate and is on Engineering Track. And as Phil finds out to his detriment, she can also drink Saurian Brandy like its water. Of course, he doesn’t actually find this out until after he’s challenged her to a speed shot challenge. Chris has a feeling he’s going to have to carry Phil to the next bar; so much for the one pint per bar rule!

----------------

“Aaaaayyy!! Man down, man down! The doctor has hit the deck!”

Phil trips over his own feet and tumbles to sidewalk, giggling himself to the point of oxygen starvation as he goes down. Bones tries to grab him as he falls, and almost ends up on the floor with him as a result. Jim and Number One cheerfully mock them both loudly, while Chris leans on the nearest wall with Gaila and Uhura and laughs himself to tears.

----------------

“Admiral Barnett! Fancy seeing you here! And Admiral Nogura! Can I buy you gentlemen a drink?”

The two flag officers are sat on stools at the back of the Lion Bar with a pint of beer each. Both have that loose and relaxed look about them that tells Chris that they’ve been knocking back the beer for quite a while now. Chris comes up behind them and claps them both on the shoulder.

"It’s Richard, Christopher; I think given the informal setting and the general lack of sobriety, you can drop the titles and surnames," Barnett chuckles. “And I will absolutely have that drink!”

Chris grins back and stumbles sideways to lean on the bar next to them.

“What’s your poison then?” he asks them, flagging down the barkeep.

“Another pint of bitter for me. John’s Smith or Doom Bar preferably. ‘Chiro? More Corona Classic?’”

“Please.” The Japanese Admiral smiles, draining the last of his existing glass. “How’s your boy Kirk doing Chris? I admit I had some pretty strong reservations at first, as you well know. But I’ve heard a lot of good things since then, Komack’s ranting aside.”

91. Jim Kirk can change even the most stubborn of people’s opinions

“He’s here in the bar somewhere actually.” Chris replies, extremely relieved that Heihachiro seems to have mellowed out concerning Jim. “Disappeared with Phil Boyce when someone mentioned the pool table. Not that either of them are in any condition to actually play.”

“Well send him my way when you find him. His father was a good friend of mine and I bet he’s never heard much about him that wasn’t tainted with either his mother’s grief or with hero worship.”

Chris isn’t sure if it’s just the alcohol in his system doing the talking or not, but he thinks that sounds like an excellent plan; kid could do with hearing some genuine stories about George for a change.
Would probably humanise him for the first time in Jim’s life and start to show him that he doesn’t actually have to live up to his father’s legacy.

“Will do ‘Chiro. See you both for the countdown later?”

“That’s the plan Chris.”

Chris tries to throw them a salute as he walks away, but he gets his legs tangled in a bar stool and crashes back into the side of the bar instead.

“So like, Admiral Nogura jus’ told me all this stuff ‘bout this time when my dad got ‘imself stuck in a Jefferies tube in jus’ his boxers. ‘pparently Mom laughed at him for hours while the other Engineers tried to get him out. And, and he once went on Shore Leave on this pleasure planet and he got him an’ Mom accidently married to a third person while really really drunk. Is’ so cool Chris. My Dad did normal people dumb stuff, just like we do.”

The two of them are sat on the front step of Haze Club, ignoring the bouncers repeated requests to move. They’re not actually blocking the door or getting in the way of people trying to get in or out, so the bouncer can stuff it in Chris’ opinion.

“We don’t do dumb stuff Jimmy!” Chris gasps. “We’re too awesome for dumb stuff!”

“But we’re sat cuddlin’ on the steps outside a dive bar, drunk off our asses again, gettin’ yelled at by a silly security man while Bones an’ Phil are laid in a puddle of drunkness by our feet gigglin’ over space diseases. I don’ even know where Numer- Number One an’ the girls went.”

“S’not really cuddling though is it? S’more like, like sideways hugging with you smushing your face into my shoulder. This is cuddling!”

The Bouncer’s patience finally snaps when Chris grabs Jim in such a way that they end up leaning back against his legs, Jim giggling uncontrollably into Chris’ neck.

Needless to say, they don’t get to stay on the steps for very long after that.

To Chris’ complete surprise, they do actually manage to make it to the gathering on the campus fields on time. The ‘Fleet’s PR and Events Department have worked their usual magic and gotten two very large HoloScreens projected up against the side of the Admin and Daystrom Buildings, both of which are currently streaming footage of the stage that’s been set up at the front.

The crowd, as it is every year, is massive.

And very drunk. Very, very drunk.

Chris grins and starts dragging his small group towards the stage

92. Chris should have introduced Jim and Spock months ago

“Captain Pike. I was not expecting to have the chance to converse with you this evening.”

“Spock! Oh my god hey! And of course I was gonna be here! It’s New Year’s Eve Spock!”
If Spock were any species other than Vulcan, Chris suspects he would be frowning right now. Instead, there’s the merest twitch of his right eyebrow.

“I was simply speaking statistically Captain. Given the size of the gathering, it was unlikely that we would converge on the same location within a time frame narrow enough to allow a meeting of our persons to take place.”

Chris looks at Spock blankly.

“You talk in really long sentences. It’s ‘cause you’re really smart isn’t it? Vulcan’s are always so clever. S’probably the pointy ears or something.”

Spock does his not-frown eyebrow twitch again.

“Captain, I surmise that you are severely inebriated. It would seem that your usual good judgement has been impaired and that your vocal sensitivity has suffered as a result.”

“Course he’s drunk,” Jim interrupts, draping himself heavily over Chris’ shoulders, “Chris is amazing like that. He dunt even get mad that I have to live in his flat.”

“Fascinating.” Spock breathes, tilting his head slightly to observe Jim better.

“Spock, this is James Kirk. Jim, this is S’Ch- S’chan- Oh hell, I can’t say your first name for shit. Jimmy, this is Spock. S’my XO.”

Jim tilts his head to match the angle of Spock’s. Then he very loudly and unsubtly whispers in Chris’s ear.

“He’s got pointy ears Cappy! And Bones says I should call him a Hobgoblin!”

93. Drunk Jim has all the cultural sensitivity of an angry Xindi-Aboreal

Chris realises his own sensitivity can’t be that much better when it finally registers that he’s laughing too.

“Fascinating indeed,” Spock says again.

---------------

“Ten! Nine!”

Phil has his back pressed up against Chris’ chest, and Chris is holding him upright by hooking his arms under Phil’s and crossing them over his chest.

“Eight! Seven!”

Number One is leaning against the back of Chris’ shoulder, effectively stopping Chris from collapsing under Phil’s weight.

“Six! Five!”

Spock is stood with Uhura and Gaila, having spent the last five minutes chatting away in Orion with the two young women.

“Four! Three!”
Jim is sat on the grass in their small clearing, Bones’ head in his lap and waving a can of pre-mixed Jack and Coke around.

“TWO! ONE!”

Admiral Marcus finishes leading the countdown from the front stage and a huge wave of cheers and clapping engulfs the crowd. From the corner of his eye, Chris notices Jim leaning over to kiss Bones’ forehead as he shouts himself hoarse along with everyone else. Then his attention is taken up by Phil twisting to the same to him and Number One.

When the fireworks start a handful of seconds later, arching over the Golden Gate Bridge and glistening over the water of the bay, he allows himself to collapse to the floor next to Jim. Phil and Number One come down with him, so they end up sprawled in a pile with Bones and Phil in the middle.

94. Chris has the best group of friends ever. Jim and Co included.

“Happy New Year guys!” Chris yells cheerfully.

“Happy New Year!” comes the chorus of replies.

---------------

“More drinking!” Phil declares loudly, trying to stagger back to his feet.

“I do not believe that to be a wise idea Doctor.”

Phil looks up at Spock consideringly.

“More drinking!” shouts Jim, pulling Bones up with him.

“What he said.” Phil tells Spock, smiling drunkenly at him.

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95. Chris should probably listen to Jim more often.

And Spock too. Definitely should listen to Spock more as well.

“Nope. We have to go to a different bar.” Jim pivots on the spot from his place in the door and tries to crowd the rest of them back towards the street.

“What? Why?” Bones asks gruffly, holding his ground.

“Finnegan and his cronies are in there.”

“Oh screw him. I’d like to see him try and start something while we senior officers are here,” Chris rants, “And Spock can do his nerve pinch thingy if he does try it on.”

“Captain, perhaps the Cadet is right. It is more logical to avoid conflict before it has begun than to rely on my abilities to escape from it once it has.”

“It’ll be fine Spock! Come on, I’ll find you something with refined sugar in it to munch on.”

“…That will not be necessary Captain.”
Finnegan notices them as soon as the eight of them begin to stumble towards the bar. Chris scowls at him when the Cadet starts to move towards Jim, and he swiftly seems to change his mind and turns his back on their group.

Chris smirks viciously and sets about ordering everyone a round of Ferengi Black Holes.

“Back off Finnegan. I’m not doing this with you!”

Jim staggered off to the bathrooms about five minutes ago and it seems that Finnegan and Co have cornered him on his way back. Jim has both hands thrown up and is trying to back away back towards Chris and the others. But every time he takes a step, one of Finnegan’s mates blocks him and shunts him back into the centre of their group.

The barman nearest the troublesome group catches Chris’ eye and gestures him over with a wave. Tapping Number One and Spock on their arms as he passes, he sighs and stumbles over as steadily as he can manage.

“Blondie is one of yours right?” the barman asks as soon as Chris is within hearing range, nodding towards the increasingly loud group.

“Yeah, he’s with me.” Chris replies.

“Well it’s pretty obvious that your guy doesn’t want to cause any trouble, but I can tell a when a fight’s brewing. And that keg is going to blow any second now. So I suggest you pull him out of that mess before it does, because I will call the police the instant the first punch is thrown. And the SFPD won’t give a damn who was an instigator or who just got caught in the crossfire; the whole lot of you will be arrested regardless.”

Chris nods his understanding, and after taking a deep breath and mentally switching to Command mode, strides over to the group, Spock on his heels.

“Jesus Finnegan, get it through your thick skull! I. Am. Not. Fighting. With You! Just let me leave for frack’s sake!” Jim is snapping out, beginning to push back against the guys hemming him in.

"You heard him boys. I think it’s time that you either went home or left to find another bar.”

Finnegan lurches round to face him, swaying violently from side to side.

“I ain’t afraid of you Pike!” he slurs drunkenly, “It’s you an’ your pet projec’ that needs t’ leave. We were ‘ere first!”

“Cadet Finnegan, I strongly suggest you remove yourself from the premises, lest I be forced to take action on my Captain’s behalf. And I will not hesitate to report you for conduct unbecoming of a member of a Starfleet should you fail to heed my advice.” Spock inserts calmly, stepping up next to Chris.

“Shurrup you stupid pointy eared bastard! Go back to your own damn planet!”

“Finnegan! I will not tolerate such xenophobic lang-”

Chris takes a punch square to the nose and is slammed backwards towards the bar. He crashes into
the empty barstools behind him, falling hard onto the floor as they tumble down on top of him. Groaning in agony and smearing blood from his face all over his hands, he rolls over onto his side and pushes his knees up under himself to start to lever himself back to his feet.

He sees the boot coming flying towards his head and scrabbles desperately backwards, trying to duck and-

"Chris. Chris come on buddy. Open your eyes, that’s it.”

Chris blinks rapidly, cursing the blinding white light searing his retinas and worsening the stabbing, throbbing agony pounding in his skull.

“Phil?” he asks hoarsely, sounding like he swallowed a bunch of razor blades.

“Yeah Chris, it’s me. Can you tell me how many fingers I’m holding up?”

“S’four right?”

“Okay good, that’s right.”

“Where the hell are we Phil? S’really cold.”

“Errr we’re kind of in jail.” He replies, pulling his jacket off and tucking around Chris’ shoulders.

“Jail!?” Chris exclaims, immediately becoming more alert. Phil stops him from sitting up with a hand on his chest, and starts shining a small light into Chris’ eyes, probably checking pupil dilation.

“Don’t worry, it’s only you and me! Everyone else got out of the bar before the police started slapping the handcuffs on. But fret not, Archer’s in the lobby right now sorting our release out; this won’t even go on our records once we’re free, Starfleet or otherwise. And the others are fine. Jim and Bones both got matching black eyes, same as you, and Amanda cracked a couple of knuckles, but other than that, they’re all injury and punishment free.”

“Finnegan?”

“Ahhh, that’s the not so good news. Spock and Uhura got the security footage from the barmen and took it to Archer, who made sure Marcus and Nogura saw it. So we have a Vid of Finnegan throwing the first punch unprovoked, and throwing it at a senior officer none the less. But he managed to avoid getting arrested somehow and we didn’t sooooo….”

“So?”

“So Komack used that fact to level the playing field a little. Finnegan’s going to get a three month academic suspension, but he’s not getting expelled. You can imagine how unhappy Jim is with that.”

“Shit. I hate that kid.”

“Don’t we all Chrissy, don’t we all. You and Jim especially.”

96. Chris is going to beat Finnegan’s face into the floor for Jim at the first plausibly deniable opportunity
A wild Spock finally appears! ('bout time right lol?)

I blasted this whole thing out in about nine hours, so there's probably more typos than usual.

Pretty sure there was something else I was supposed to mention, but I have no idea what so... yeah, is good :)
Chapter 13

Chapter Notes

three things:

1) A lot of people have been asking me the same thing, so I decided to run an opinion poll on it. Details are in the endnotes

2) I've added some new features and art to the Appendix again :)

3) Please remember that Marcus' bad-guy status was a complete and utter surprise to all of the characters in ST:ID. Which must mean that before then, he was a pretty respected guy. Maybe not everyone really liked him, but they all respected him and his decisions. That's the angle I've tried to write from regarding his characterisation.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Well Marcus can stuff it Archer,” Chris growls. “Starfleet have never dedicated an entire day to the Kelvin disaster before, so why the hell should there be one now? What’s wrong with the Kelvin Memorial Ceremony during Starfleet Remembrance Day in May that we need this too?”

“Chris, I don’t like it any more than you. It’s a blatant PR stunt and the whole world is going to be able to tell.”

“So why the hell has nobody put their foot down and stopped it!”

“You think I haven’t tried Christopher! Nogura is furious, you’re furious, I'm furious! Hell, half the damn Flag Officers aren’t particularly happy! But Marcus gets what Marcus wants, and what he wants is a flashy ceremony and an expensive officer’s dinner.”

“But why the hell does he have to drag Jim into this mess? It’s the kid’s birthday for crying out loud! He doesn’t need the fact that his father died for him shoving even harder in his face than usual tomorrow of all days! When I had to tell him about it this morning he was physically sick and nearly passed out!”

“I know! But there’s nothing I can do that won’t involve outright mutiny against Marcus’ direct orders! Anything short of a genuine medical emergency isn’t going to cut it!”

Chris pauses in his tirade.

“No Chris!” Archer says sternly, “I don’t know what you’ve suddenly thought of, but you’re not doing it!”

97. When Jim is involved, some risks are worth taking

“...You want to what!? Like hell you’re doing that Christopher! Need I remind you that you woke up in jail only two mornings ago with a very serious concussion!? You still have two black eyes for god’s sake man!”
“I’m fine! This’ll work!”

“You’re only fine because I let myself get tossed in jail alongside your sorry ass!” Phil yells back at him. “And because Spock’s quick thinking ensured Archer could get us out of that damned ice cold cell quick enough that I could get you to a hospital and un-fracture your skull before it became a problem!”

“And I thank you very much for saving my sorry ass, but I’m still going to do it!”

Phil closes his eyes and knocks his head against his desk half a dozen times.

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“I can’t believe I’m letting you do this,” Phil grumbles, checking for the fifth time that he has all the correct antidotes and antivirals in stock.

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98. Jim is just as reckless as Chris is

Right now, that’s working greatly in Chris’ favour, but he has a feeling it’s going to cause problems later in both their lives.

“Chris that’s insane! Let’s do it!”

“What do you mean ‘let’s do it’?” Leo barks angrily, “do either of you know how goddamn dangerous this idiocy is?”

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“Captain, I am unsure why you feel my involvement is necessary. Captain Thirrwood’s computer coding skills are exemplary and thus more than adequate for the task you have just described to me; if you wish to keep this endeavour a secret, then surely the logical decision would be to inform as few people as possible?”

“That wasn’t a no Spock.”

“You are my Captain, and while I make no qualms voicing my severe disapproval of your plan, I will of course, as you human’s say, ‘have your back’.”

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“This is the dumbest thing I ever heard of.”

“Bones you’ve said that two dozen times now. Chris and I heard you the first time.”

“Yeah well, apparently it bears repeating. Because this is the goddamn dumbest thing I ever heard of!”

“The Doctor makes a valid, if somewhat emotive, point. This is not a wise course of action gentlemen.”

“See! Even the green-blooded Hobgoblin agrees with me!”

“Oh shut up winging Bones and get those hypos prepared already.”
Chris’ plan is reckless yes, but actually fairly simple in concept:

If there has to be a medical emergency to get Jim out of this trick and pony show, then Chris will give them a medical emergency.

“Okay, let’s just go over the plan one more time.” Chris says loudly over Leo’s continuous stream of grumbling.

“Plan! Plan! This ain’t a plan! It’s an exercise in gross stupidity!” Bones rants.

“None the less Leo, it’s happening. So pay attention thank-you. Right. In precisely one hour, all of you except myself, Jim and Phil are going to return to your own rooms and apartments. Half an hour after that, Phil is going to induce a minor allergic reaction in Jim and then insist that he be admitted to Medical for observation. Jim your job is to play up enough that being admitted to hospital doesn’t look like an overreaction. And make sure you whine like hell over having to be in the hospital. Convince everyone that you don’t want to be there. Then, once Jim’s set up on the ward in a private room, Spock and Number One, you’re going to hack Medical’s security system. Very carefully! For the love of stars, do not leave anything the slightest bit traceable. Once you’re in, remove all trace of what Phil does next and replace it with looped footage. Once Phil has switched the chairs and set the test-tubes out, you two can let the security footage run live again. Any questions so far?”

Chris gets a round of murmured replies to the negative.

“Good,” he continues. “The next bit is the dangerous and complicated bit. Phil is going to leave the room and I am going to sit down next to Jim’s bed. At some point my deliberately sabotaged chair is going to give way, and I’ll catch myself on the medical trolley next to me. And in the process, I’ll break the test-tubes that were “accidently” left on the bottom shelf of it. Cue massive biohazard. Jim and I will obviously be infected, but we’ve chosen a pathogen that is easily treatable and has the needed isolation period. Yes, we’ll be sick as dogs for a couple of hours, but it will only be a couple and we’ll have to stay in isolation for at least 24 hours afterwards. By the time we’re free to go, the ceremonies will be over and there’ll be nothing Marcus can say or do.”

The end of Chris’ rundown is met by grim but determined faces.

“I still think this is the most goddamn ridiculous stupid baloney I ever heard off.” Leo growls.

99. Jim’s previous birthdays must have been awful

“All you sure you want to go through with this kid? There’s still time for you and I to just vanish without trace for a few days instead.” Chris asks Jim once everyone else has cleared out.

They’re sat at the dining table, both with a mug of coffee. Chris has his feet stretched out and propped up on the opposite chair. Behind them, Phil is clattering about in the kitchen, ostensibly making sandwiches, but in reality trying to decide the best way to safely trigger Jim’s immune system.

“As appealing as that sounds, the amount of trouble we’d both be in would be beyond belief.” Jim replies dryly. “Marcus would deny you the Enterprise at the very least.”
“Oh let him try. I respect the guy mostly; he’s a fair and competent Head of Starfleet and I don’t envy him the position, nor the stress that’s part and parcel of it. Whatever else you think of him, he does a good job. And I know he’s only pushing for this event because the Faragutt attack was finally confirmed and the ‘Fleet really needs some good press. But regardless of his motivations, I will go toe to toe with him over this for you if I need to. In fact, I’d be doing that right now if Archer hadn’t warned me I’d only end up in the Brigg for it.”

“Chris…. You don’t have- I’m not worth-”

“Don’t you finish that sentence James Tiberius Kirk.” Chris cuts him off sternly. Then, more softly, “I just want to know that you’re definitely sure you’re okay with my crackpot plan, because you are going to have to spend your entire birthday trapped in a small hospital room being miserable with me. And I’ve been reliably informed that spending that long around me in close quarters is detrimental to one’s mental health.”

The joke must fall a little flat because Jim is looking at him disbelievingly.

“Honestly Chris,” Jim rasps eventually, taking another sip from his mug. “Compared to most of my previous birthdays that sounds positively thrilling.”

Chris doesn’t like the honesty that comes through with that statement, but he decides not comment; he’s known Jim long enough now to know anything even remotely resembling pity won’t be appreciated.

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100. Chris will never get used to seeing Jim in pain.

Even in a controlled situation when the pain is deliberately induced, watching it is awful.

Jim is sat on the kitchen floor leaning against the cupboards, gasping quietly. His hands are slowly clenching into tighter fists, and his brow becoming more pinched by the minute. Chris is kneeling next to him rubbing his hand slowly up and down Jim’s arm and murmuring to him, while Phil is pacing endlessly and barking at the Medical Response team through his PADD.

Eventually, Phil slams the PADD down on the worktop and joins Chris and Jim on the floor, using a clean damp dishcloth to gently pat beads of sweat off of Jim’s forehead.

No, Chris really never will get used to seeing Jim like this.

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“The pathogen samples are in place and no one is going to be able to trace them back to me. McCoy has just been and checked the front desk and corridor and no-one saw anything. Now is your last chance to walk away Chris.”

“No, I can do this.”

“Well if you’re sure.”

“I’m sure. If only because sticking it to our bosses feels so good.”

“And yet you deny being a maverick.”

“No comment.”
“Yes dear, whatever you say dear. Just, for the love of god Chrissy, no complications alright? Do not die on me.”

“You’d never let me Phil. And even if I did, you’d only resurrect me so that you could kill me yourself.”

“Too damn right I would.”

Phil slides out of the room with a single glance back over his shoulder. Chris smiles tightly at him, and then paces back and forth in the small hospital room a few times. Eventually he hears the door click all the way shut and he looks back over to where Jim is dozing on the bio-bed. Phil had dosed him up with a mild sedative before he left, so hopefully he would sleep through the worst of the virus’ effects.

Chris, on the other hand, would have no such luck; if Phil had shot him up with sedatives too, it would have looked mightily suspicious.

So Chris is going to have to go without.

He takes a deep breath, pats Jim’s hand over the covers, and turns to sit in the chair next to the head of the bed.

101. Chris should never let Jim agree with his crazy ideas ever again

He has glass embedded in his hand. And somewhere he can hear banging?

And Phil?

Is that shouting?

Oh god it’s so hard to breathe.

He’s gonna be sick.

Really, really sick.

Oh god, oh god, why is it so damn hot?

And someone please stop the screaming lights!

Fuck.

Chris is vaguely aware that he’s now on a bio-bed. At least he thinks he is? It doesn’t feel as hard as the floor did earlier at least? And something is beeping steadily. And oh yeah wow, those are the
good drugs; everything feels so light and fluffy!

It’s almost like the dull throb of pain that he’s distantly aware of has been surrounded by a giant cottony cloud of hazy bliss. It’s so good!

Oh yeah, he’s definitely high.

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“You’re an idiot Chris.”

Chris turns his head to frown at the giant blue beekeeper stood next to him.

“Whaaa-?” he coughs at it.

“Trust you to fall on a rack of lab specimens that never should have been removed from the research wing in the first place!”

“Wait! You’re Phil!”

The beekeeper is Phil.

“Our course I’m Phil! Who else would I be? And did you just call me a beekeeper?”

Well it’s hardly Chris’ fault that he’s dressed like one.

“It completely is your fault Christopher Pike!” Phil snaps. “I leave you and Jim alone for five damn minutes and I come back to find that you’ve triggered all the Biohazard alerts and gotten the two of you infected with goddamn Bolian heat flu! So yes! It is your fault that I cannot come into this room without first donning a full gorram Hazmat suit!”

Phil can read his mind. That’s incredibly creepy. Awesome, but creepy.

“I’m not reading your mind you idiot! You’re saying everything out loud!”

He is? Oh, that makes a lot more sense. But then, Phil is always quite good at talking sense, even if Chris knows better than to ever admit that he thinks that.

“You’re still talking out loud Chris.”

Dammit!

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102. Jim Kirk is pretty good at acting

It’s been twelve hours since Jim was initially admitted into Medical. Which makes it about eleven hours since Chris “accidently” got himself admitted too.

In all that time (and the run up to it), Jim has not in any way indicated that the whole ordeal is in anyway staged. Granted, neither he, nor Phil or Bones have given the game away either, but Jim is the one who’s been drawing most of the attention. He’s whined, moaned, pouted, shook, flinched, cowered and sulked his way into initial believability. He’s sweet talked his way into all the nurses good graces and gotten them cooing over him. And he’s silently toughed it through the post-infection period with a resolve strong enough to earn the rest of the ER staff’s respect.
And he’s now busy wrapping Admiral Marcus around his little finger.

Marcus, Nogura and Barnett showed up at about 0730, just when Chris was finally starting to wake up properly. However, he opted for the easy way of dealing with them and continued to act like he was still mostly asleep, leaving Jim to work his charm on them.

Obviously, as he and Jim are still technically in isolation, the three Admirals are not actually in the room, but are on the other side of the observation glass. Upon arrival, Barnett briefly tried to get Chris’ attention, but Chris very carefully didn’t respond beyond glancing unfocusedly in his direction and mumbling a little, so the head of the ‘Fleet JAG division quickly gave up and let him be.

Currently, Jim is doing an excellent job of looking despondent and miserable without crossing the line into being annoying and childish. Even Chris feels a little sorry for him and he knows that Jim is completely fine now.

Marcus has obviously fallen for his act hook, line, and sinker.

Within ten minutes of their arrival, the three Flag Officers are nodding respectfully at them both, ordering them to rest up and recover, and retreating back the way they came. And all three of them do so with what Chris gleefully realises are palpable waves of sympathy radiating from them.

As soon as their backs are turned, Jim catches Chris’ eye and winks.

Chris smirks back and pulls his sheet back up round his shoulders.

103. Winding Jim up is one of the most amusing things you can do

“Got any threes?”

“Nope, go fish.”

“Are you sure you don’t have any threes?”

“Go fish Jim.”

“Chris you must have at least one three.”

“Go fish!”

They’re sat on opposite ends of Chris’ bio-bed facing each other. Leo brought them a pack of cards about an hour ago. Jim is only just now beginning to realise that Chris has been cheating outrageously the entire time.

“I know you have at least two sixes Chris!”

“I do not!”

“You so do!”

“Are you card counting son? Because that would be cheating.”

“You are the biggest hypocrite ever since Magdownnan Cl’ir flew to Risian IV in the 20’s.”
“That’s a low blow Jimmy.”

“Shut up and hand me my sixes old man.”

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The cards end up thrown all over the floor and Chris ends up pinned on his stomach laughing, Jim demanding his surrender.

Chris considers himself victorious.

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Chris has always been aware that doctors tend to have rather morbid senses of humour, but Leo’s must be particularly inappropriate because the next thing he brings them is a classic monopoly board game.

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Jim finally gets his revenge by embarrassing Chris playing chess. Being a tactical genius in his own right, Chris isn’t exactly bad at the game -not by a long shot. But all that means is that it’s even more humiliating when he loses in five moves or less three times in a row.

Jim has definitely earned his Grandmaster title, that’s for sure.

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“Alright, it’s just gone eight, the room is pathogen free and you both just tested clear. You are free to go,” Doctor Batch tells them with an air of relief. Phil and Leo are both peering over his shoulders, reading the data off of his Medical chart PADD for themselves.

Jim practically launches himself off of his bed and throws his arms around Bones’ shoulders.

Chris rather more calmly goes and leans his side against Phil’s.

All four of them are smiling.

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Archer is waiting for them just inside Medical’s main entrance.

“Next time I say no Mr Pike, I mean no,” he scowls at Chris, tapping his cane none to gently against Chris’ shin. “If I ever find out you’ve deliberately done something so reckless with your health ever again, I will ground you permanently and make you spend the rest of your career babysitting the new security track Cadets.”

“So I’ll be fine so long as I make sure you never find out?” Chris chuckles.

“For the sake of your continued breathing, I will pretend I did not just hear you say that. Now come on you rascal, T’Pol and Amanda teamed up to make your boy a birthday dinner. My poor kitchen looks like a warzone.”

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“Oh my god! You made me cake!”
It’s a little lop sided, and a couple of the candles are on the verge of falling over, but Jim is grinning ear to ear regardless. Chris laughs and sings alongside everyone else, joins in the three cheers when Archer shouts Hip Hip, and returns the enthusiastic hug when Jim finds Chris’ present amongst the pile placed in front of him.

Chris’ plan may have meant that Jim’s birthday was a little unconventional by most people’s standards, but Jim seems to be having a whale of a time regardless.

104. If Chris can give Jim a birthday like this every year, he’ll die a happy man

Chapter End Notes

Ok so. Opinion poll. This will remain open for voting for quite a few chapters I think.

Basically, more than a half a dozen people after been asking after Chris/Phil shipping, and another handful have made "so cute!!!" etc. comments. Honestly, this was not my plan when I started writing, but I am more than happy to take it that direction if that’s what people want; I was aiming for Epic Bromance, but Epic Romance is equally achievable.

I do not mind either way!

Just please be aware that the rating of this Fic will not be increasing from T rated no matter what your decision. :)

Thanks for all the comments etc. guys and I hope you continue to enjoy my writing :D
Chapter 14

Chapter Notes

Current Poll Tally in end notes

It was quite nice to sort of have my headcanon regarding Jim's music taste mostly kind of confirmed by Beyond :) I've been trying to work that into this Fic for a while now and mostly succeeded finally :)

experimenting with using hr tags rather than my usual ----- section dividers. Better or worse?

See the end of the chapter for more notes

105. Jim Kirk can wrap anyone around his little finger

“And to think that only five months ago, he was so nervous about meeting you for the first time, I had to send Leo round just to get him dressed! Now he’s confident enough around you that he doesn’t hesitate to ask you for anything!”

“I remember you quaking in your boots too the first time you met me Christopher Pike.” Archer replies with a smirk.

“Well maybe! But you don’t do anything I ask you to no questions asked, and never have!”

“I don’t do anything Jim asks of me!”

Chris raises an eyebrow at Archer and then glances down at the request form in his hand.

“Do not look at me like that Christopher! I am 142 years of age; I have had plenty of time to immunise myself to the pleading stares of Command Officers and Cadets, Jim’s included!”

“And yet you signed this for him anyway.” Chris tells him, waving the form around.

“He asked me to in a very polite and considerate manner!”

Chris sighs.

“And people accuse me of being a little under Jim’s thumb,” he grumbles with another pointed look at the Admiral.

“Please.” Archer snorts, “You’re at that boy’s complete mercy, and everyone knows it.”

Jim’s request form concerns extra piloting lessons and shuttle craft access for him and one Leonard McCoy. Usually, such a request wouldn’t be granted for anyone who wasn’t an Under or Upperclassmen majoring in Helm and Piloting, but apparently these rules don’t apply to Jim.

Chris wouldn’t mind overly much, but Archer has nominated him to be one of the two instructors that has to take the two young men out on Tuesday evenings.
And the other is Commander Spock.

“So Archer signed off on the forms then?”

Chris has barely walked in the flat’s front door when Jim shoots up to him and asks his question.

“Yes he did,” Chris tells him wryly, sliding around him to hang his jacket up. “Though why you had to drag me into it, I don’t know.”

“But you’re an awesome pilot! Bones will totally trust you not to crash and kill us all!”

“Is that what this is about then? Still trying to help Leo with his aviophobia?” Chris asks, now unbuckling his boots.

“I figure the only thing that’s going to work in this case is exposure therapy. Dragging him to the group sessions that the ‘Fleet organises is having very little effect to be honest. And the one time I got him to go see an anxiety-panic phobia specialist, he got so stressed out that he used his own psychology qualifications to turn the session around on the psychiatrist and freaked the guy out so badly he was asked to not go back.”

“Hmm, I remember you telling me. And alright, I can see your reasoning for asking me to do this, but why on Earth did you request Spock as well?”

Jim shuffles sheepishly, dropping his eyes down to the floor.

“Well you know how we noticed that since they met for the first time last month, Spock and Bones can’t be in the same room together for more than five minutes without starting to bitch at each other?”

“I’m pretty sure Vulcans don’t bitch Jim.”

“Spock’s more dryly sarcastic than a British man faced with a catastrophe. He totally bitches all the time; you just don’t notice.” Jim smirks cheekily. “But anyway,” he continues before Chris can protest, “I asked for Spock because I’m hoping that Bones will spend most of his time griping at him and forget that he’s supposed to be panicking about flying.”

“Alright, maybe that’ll work,” Chris concedes, “but I’m pretty sure it’s a long shot. A very long shot.”

“Have a little more faith in me! It’ll totally work, you’ll see!”

Chris takes Jim and Bones up on a basic orbital flight for the first time on the evening of February 5th. As soon as Chris starts to approach the hanger doors after initial take-off, Jim leans over and taps the media player on.

106. Jim Kirk has a really good taste in music

Yes of course Chris is biased; Jim likes basically the same things as he does after all. Phil and Number One sigh at them both endlessly for it and call them old fashioned and antiquated. Bones never complains because he doesn’t have a leg to stand on; he tends to prefer old country and jazz tunes, particularly those from the late 21st century.

“Is this original Guns n Roses?” Leo asks from behind the co-pilot’s seat, sounding breathless and
nauseous.

“Hell yes it is!” Jim grins, manipulating the rear stabilisers for Chris expertly. From the corner of his eye, Chris sees Bones exhale shakily and close his eyes, gripping his seat arms tightly.

“I thought you liked the less heavy stuff Chris? What’s-his-name Faulkner and that.” Leo asks several trembling deep breathes later.

“Yeah, I tend to prefer the acoustic tracks,” he replies, deliberately injecting as much calm into his tone as he can manage, “but my taste is pretty eclectic so this is damn good too.”

“Oh god, I can’t do this sober. I’m gonna throw up.” Bones gasps, tensing against his harness.

They manage two full orbits around Earth before Leo does actually throw up. Chris sets the shuttle onto autopilot and then peers out of the cockpit to see if Jim needs help with Bones, who’s kneeling in the small bathroom still retching.

“I hate you both for making me do this,” he hears Leo groan between Jim’s shushing noises.

Chris decides to stay out of the way and retreats back to his seat.

107. Predictably, Jim has a serious mother hen mode

When they finally dock back in the hanger later that evening, Bones is white as a sheet and close to entering a dissociative state. Jim, understandably, insists that he come home with them for the night. Chris Comms Phil, asking him to meet at them at the flat so he can check Leo over, and then they both hook their arms through Leo’s and set off walking.

“He’s fine guys. You just need to get some liquid in him, make him sleep and keep an eye on him.” Phil tells them twenty minutes later.

“Are you sure?” Jim asks worriedly, “he’s barely registering that we’re here and he only talks if you ask him a direct question.”

“Kid, he’s fine. It’s just a mild post-anxiety reaction. Just be there for him okay? I bet within fifteen minutes he’s back to usual grumpy self.”

Jim pulls a face, but does tug Bones to his feet and then disappears into the kitchen with him, muttering about glasses of water under his breath.

108. Jim has a habit of leaving his bedroom door half open while he sleeps

Chris has been aware of this habit more or less from day one, but he makes a note of it now because he’s particularly glad of it this morning. Having just dragged himself out of bed, it’s not until after he’s retrieved a mug off coffee that he realises Jim is nowhere to be seen. And given that his sneakers are still shoved sideways in the shoe rack, he’s not just late back from his run.

And then he notices that Jim is not the only one who’s vanished; Bones is not asleep on the couch like Chris was expecting him to be. In fact, the pile of bedding that Chris handed him last night is still neatly folded in a pile on the end of the coffee table.
So when he glances over towards Jim’s room, he has to debate with himself whether or not he should let curiosity get the better of him.

Deciding that he would let it do so, he shuffles over and pokes his head through the gap.

The room is pretty dark as Jim has set his window to black completely out, but the light filtering in from the main is room is just enough the Chris can make out Jim’s bed. And enough that he can tell that there is definitely two people squeezed on to the narrow single sharing the equally small duvet.

Leo is flat on his back, his t-shirt rucked up almost to his shoulders and one arm thrown over his head, snoring very gently. His other arm is wrapped around Jim’s back – Jim, who is curled against Leo’s side like a particularly clingy octopus, using Leo’s chest as a pillow.

Chris can feel his eyebrows disappearing into his hairline and hastily ducks back out into the main room before he accidently wakes them and alerts them to his staring.

Once safely out of the way again, he leans against the small patch of empty wall between Jim’s door and the HoloScreen, and mentally wrestles with whether or not to amend Point 22. Eventually he gives in and does so:

22. [AMENDED] Jim Kirk is kinda cute when he’s sleeping, especially when he’s doing so with Bones, and Chris is definitely disgusted at himself for thinking such awfully sappy thoughts.

109. Waking Jim from a dead sleep is almost an exercise in futility

When he glances down at the Chrono on the HoloDisk player, he has to restrain a groan. Unless they woke on their own -and soon- Chris was going to be forced to wake them up himself. Either that or he would have to leave them and let them be horrendously late to their first classes of the day.

Grimacing, he instead trudges over to the kitchen and starts pulling the ingredients for pancake batter out of the cupboards; hopefully the smell of fresh baking would entice them out of bed and he’d be saved the embarrassment of having to go in and shake them awake.

He stands outside of the door, a plate of pancakes in each hand and curses Point 69; neither Jim nor Bones have stirred in the slightest and now there’s less than thirty minutes left before they all have to leave. Resigning himself to some awkwardness, he slides the plates on to the table behind him and slips sideways into the bedroom.

“Jim. Jimmy come on wake up kid. You’re gonna be late at this rate.”

“Chris, s’at you?”

“Yes but come on son. It’s gone 0810 and your breakfast is going cold.”

“Jus’ five more minutes yeah? S’nice and warm.”

“Oh for- Jim! You’re supposed to be a morning person!”

“Hmm no. Change’ my mind.”

“I will physically drag you off the bed if I need to kiddo.”
“No you won’. Love me back too much.”

While Chris is still silently staring at him incredulously and trying to process that last statement, Jim turns and tucks his face back into the crook of Leo’s shoulder, and within seconds his breathing has shallowed back out into sleep.

Bones doesn’t stir once during in the whole exchange.

In the end, Chris gets the computer to un-blacken the window and yanks the duvet off of them both. Both actions are met with twin groans of protestation, but Jim does eventually roll to the edge of the bed and sit up, glaring at Chris for all his worth. Leo grumbles piteously and shoves a forearm over his face.

Chris rolls his eyes at them both and throws Jim’s uniform jacket at his head as he leaves once again.

110. Despite the façade he shows the rest of the world, Jim’s actually quite sensitive and soft hearted

Chris is the first one back to the flat that evening, and as he’s surprisingly on top of his paperwork for once in his life, he retreats to the couch with a beer and a HoloVid. When Jim shows up alone forty minutes later, the young man shuffles into his room in an almost subdued manner. And then when he eventually emerges, he dithers around near the table aimlessly for a good few minutes.

Eventually, Chris’ patience wears thin and he turns towards him with a huff.

“You know I’d never take advantage of you right?” Jim suddenly blurts out, stopping next to Chris’ legs.

“Well obviously,” Chris replies, feeling completely bewildered.

“So you know it’s not true, what they’re saying.”

“Jim? I have no idea what you’re talking about son.”

Jim visibly cringes and shuffles on the spot, staring down at the rug tassels he’s kicking back and forth.

“You haven’t heard then?” he exhales shakily, “What they’re been saying about us all day?”

“Erm, no?” Chris says questioningly, growing more and more concerned by the minute.”

“Well, I would never- And you wouldn’t- It’s sick, that would never happen-”

“Kid, I can barely understand a word you’re saying.”

Jim shrugs his shoulders again, and clenches his fists in his pockets. There’s a few moments silence while he continues to stare holes into the floorboards, then Jim finally glances back up and looks
Chris dead in the eye.

“Half the Academy is completely convinced that I only live here because you keep me as some sort perverted bed warmer,” Jim garbles out in one long breathless stream, “And that in return you help me cheat on my courses because I’ll never amount to anything because you falsify all my results for me and I never do the work myself.”

And yeah okay, that’s definitely a sickeningly awful rumour, Chris grimaces. It’s not that he hasn’t been expecting something of the sort to crop up eventually, because they do live together and regularly share meals together and the like. And Chris has always been quite a tactile individual, so with Jim being the same way, people were bound to notice that they quite often nudge shoulders and lean on each other and pat each other’s backs and then extrapolate from there.

But he had been hoping the inevitable rumours wouldn’t be quite this vicious; they’re certainly not going to help Chris with his Point 40 at any rate.

He briefly considers that he should maybe have been a bit more careful to maintain professional boundaries when they’re in public together. But, self-congratulatory or not, Chris has to admit that a large part of why Jim’s self-confidence has improved so much over the last six months is probably down to his unconditional willingness to interact with Jim as an equal regardless of their surroundings. So in all honesty, he decides he would rather deal with some unpleasant rumours on occasion than change his behaviour towards Jim and have him retreat back into his shell.

Mind made up, he continues grimacing and scrubs his hands down his face.

“Yeah, that’s not good,” he winces.

“I can’t believe they’d think that of you!” Jim huffs, scowling at the floor once more. “And I know I have a bit of a reputation, even if it is wildly over exaggerated, but still! That’s just wrong!”

“I know kid,” Chris commiserates, “but they’ll get bored and find something else to whisper in corners about eventually.”

“And on top of all that, Bones is mad at me!” Jim blurts in an equally as sudden manner as before.

“Leo’s mad at you? For what?” Chris asks perplexed, thrown off balance by the sudden change of topic.

111. Jim is really good at putting his foot in his mouth

“He suggested that we tell everyone we were dating in order to shut them up about you and me. And I went and blurted out that I’d never do that ever! And then he stormed off before I could clarify!”

Chris quite literally face palms.

“Oh god kid, seriously!?”

“I didn’t mean it like that!” Jim protests loudly, running his hands through his hair harshly. “I just meant that I wouldn’t take advantage of our friendship like that, not while he’s still recovering from his nasty break up! Christ, it’s not even been seven months since he lost his father, got banished from his family home for it and then walked in on his wife of six years in bed with another man! Can you imagine the emotional turmoil he’d go through if I made him fake date me? I would never do that to him! And before I could explain that, he flipped my mess tray in my face, growled some unintelligible southern metaphorical nonsense at me and went tearing out the hall with thunderclouds practically crackling over his head.”
Chris probably shouldn’t laugh, but he really want to.

“Chris! It’s not funny! What the hell do I do!? He’s my best friend! I can’t lose the only best friend I ever had just because of a stupid misunderstanding!”

That sobers Chris up fast. Sighing, he asks Jim if he’s tried all the usual tricks; sending him Comms, leaving him a note, tracking him down and apologising to him in person. Jim nods sadly, and finally throws himself down on the couch next to Chris.

“I even went up to Medical to speak to him this evening, but Phil said he was in surgery and then told me that I should probably steer clear until his mood improved anyway. Apparently the Surgeon General threatened to send him home, he was being that short tempered.”

“You messed up good kiddo.”

“I know.” Jim sulks, sprawling against Chris side and kicking his feet up onto the coffee table. “And I thought today was going to go so well after Bones let me use him as a teddy bear all night.”

Chris ruffles Jim’s hair and tells him that Bones will come round eventually; they’d be back to being inseparable before they knew it.

112. Chris is beginning to suspect there’s going to be more to Jim and Bones’ relationship than the Epic Friendship he was imagining.

Chapter End Notes

I finally wrote you some actual McKirk. Well I sort of did ;)

POLL TALLY AS OF [15/08/16 16:36BST]
Epic Romance: 20
Epic Bromance: 23

(Voting is still open! every vote counts regardless of format; comments, Tumblr Asks (etc.) and direct messages (for those of you who know me personally) all acceptable forms of voting :)

Just to clarify for those of you who were worried. No matter the final decision, the focus of this Fic will remain on Chris and Jim's friendship. Any and all romantic relationships will be present and fairly obvious, but will remain mostly background, such as you see in this chapter. One of my main aims when I begun writing this, was to write something that wasn't focused on 'shipping' for a change, as we all get plenty of that already! I wanted to do something different, and I hope I've been managing that so far :D
Chapter 15

Chapter Notes

Current Poll standings: [16/08/2016 23:47BST]
Romance: 36
Bromance: 36

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Jim and Bones’ ‘disagreement’ lasted precisely six days. For all of those six days, Jim looked more and more like a depressed and lonely puppy every time Chris saw him. Leo avoided Chris entirely, but Phil informed him that he’d gone back to being as non-sarcastically grumpy as he was during his first week with the ‘Fleet back in August. After enduring three days of them both, Chris and Phil had started to seriously contemplate forcibly banging their heads together, especially after Jim declared that he was going to give Leo the silent treatment back.

Thankfully, on the sixth day, Number One had the misfortune of having to cover the Intermediate Survival Theory class that they both attend. She reported that the tension between the pair was palpable from the minute they entered, but that it didn’t crack until halfway through her presentation when Jim leaned forward to whisper something in another Cadet’s ear. At that point they’d started having an almighty row, accusing each other of being insensitive, immature, and just generally pathetic.

Number One had eventually grabbed them both by the scruff of their necks, hauled them into an empty lecture theatre and locked them in. But when she had gone to chew them out for their behaviour after the lecture had finished, she’d discovered that they’d both vanished. Chris presumes that Jim had hacked the door open, and judging from Amanda’s sour face when she relayed the story to him, also deleted the security footage of whatever happened while they were shut in together.

Knowing that he was going to have to have serious words with them both for a) the very public and inappropriate argument, and b) vanishing all afternoon and missing a load of their classes, Chris had worked himself into quite an unpleasant mood by the time he’d gotten back to the flat that evening. But when he’d stomped in through the door, the first thing he’d noticed was the two of them fast asleep on the couch together, Jim using Leo as a pillow again. All of Chris’ resolve had immediately gone out of the window, and he’d left them cuddled up together with a sigh and not spoken of the incident again.

Now, two weeks later, Chris notes that they’re just as close as they ever were; you never would have guessed they’d refused to speak to each other for nearly a whole week.

Chris shakes his head as the door closes behind them, the two of them heading to the hanger to meet Spock, and vows to try and prevent any future fallings-out.

113. For the sake of everyone else’s mental health, Jim and Bones should never be allowed to have a serious argument ever again

“So. What’s the plan for the evening then?”
“The hell Phil!? What are you doing here?”

Knowing that he would have the flat entirely to himself for the majority of the evening while the boys were out with Spock, Chris had thrown on his oldest and comfiest pyjama pants, replicated himself a meat feast pizza, and laid out on his couch with a dog-eared copy of Robin Hobb’s Assassin’s Apprentice. But he’d barely gotten past the first chapter before Phil had barged in and collapsed on top of Chris’ feet. What he actually should have done, Chris now thinks, was keep Point 52 firmly in mind and dead-bolted the door first.

Having now recovered from his initial shock, Chris stares at Phil disbelievingly over the top of his book. Phil merely shrugs and pulls Chris’ feet out from underneath him and drops them in his lap instead.

“Well, you said tall, dark and Vulcan was taking the disastrous duo up out of the atmosphere for several hours tonight. So I figured we could have some quality guy time without the kids sticking their noses in for a change.”

“I can’t believe you just said quality guy time,” Chris comments dryly, “You make us sound like a pair of teenage girls planning a sleepover.”

“Well we can plan a sleepover if you want sweetie,” Phil grins, pitching his voice high and fluttering his eyelashes. Chris chokes on the bite of pizza he just took before dissolving into laughter. Phil laughs back and steals a slice off of Chris’ plate.

114. Jim has his own place in Chris’ heart, but he’ll never replace Philip Boyce

Not that they’re actually all that comparable; Jim is Jim and Phil is Phil. Chris cares for them both in different ways, but cares for them equally all the same.

“So what are we going to do then?” Phil asks again, swiping another slice.

“You’ve never seen Inspector Mayhew!” Chris mock gasps, laughing internally. “We are correcting this oversight immediately!”

“Why do I get the feeling you’re somehow taking the mick Cappy?” Phil asks, sounding dubious.

“But it’s a classic!” Chris grins, “You’ll totally love Pylon and Rig.”

“Well I suppose I’ll find out won’t I?” he sighs, “But first! Fetch me more ice-cream Command minion!”

Chris grabs their empty bowls and saunters off towards the kitchen with a sarcastic salute and snarky comment about the realities of the chain of command.

“So,” Phil smirks when Chris returns, “Are you finally going to explain those points you still deny exist?”

Chris raises his eyebrow and starts to protest and deny once again, but cuts off when Phil suddenly produces a small blue notebook and a vintage ink pen from under one of the cushions.

“You were saying,” Phil grins evilly.

Chris curses at himself emphatically for ever daring to write the list down.
115. Chris prays to anyone who’ll listen that Jim never finds the list too

“Point 8. James Tiberius Kirk is one of those goddamn evil, inhumane morning people and I hate my life. Or how about... 27. Jim Kirk does strange things while I’m still in bed. No wait, 22 is better; Jim Kirk is kinda cute when he’s sleeping and I’m disgusted at myself for thinking such sappy thoughts! You watch Jim while he’s sleeping Chrissy?”

Chris groans in total humiliation and makes yet another unsuccessful attempt to swipe the notebook back from Phil.

“Wait wait! 42. I may be a huge nerd, but so is Jim Kirk!” Phil laughs, dodging around the table out of Chris’ reach again, “Oh that one’s true alright; the two of you are the biggest pair of geeks ever inflicted upon this poor planet! And look, you’ve even ringed it and labelled it as the best point so far!”

“Philip Boyce, hand me that book back now before I decide to lobotomise you with your own collection of antique surgery equipment!”

“96. I’m going to beat Finnegan’s face into the floor for Jim at the first plausibly deniable opportunity. I like that one, I’ll help you do it when the time comes!”

“Phil dammit! Stop reading my notebook!”

“So why do you have a list?”

They’re lying in a sprawl on the end of Chris’ bed. Chris had finally corned Phil when he’d made the mistake of dodging backwards into Chris’ room; Chris hadn’t hesitated to take advantage of the lack of escape routes.

“I honestly have no idea. It just seemed like a good idea at the time. I pulled the kid off of a barroom table battered and bleeding, stuffed some tissues up his nose, insulted him with the memory of his dead father and with references to his minor delinquency charges, had the cheek to tell him to enlist, manipulated him again using his dead father to dare him --which is honestly one of the most asshole-lish things I think I’ve ever done in retrospect- and then when he actually showed up for the shuttle boarding on time in the morning, I was so surprised that I just started listing other surprising things about him. And then I never stopped.”

Phil turns his head to look across at Chris and then shuffles a little closer to him.

“You’re seriously still self-guiltling over your recruitment method Chris? It got him to sign up didn’t it? And yeah, maybe he wasn’t wasting his life as badly as initial appearances would have you believe, but he’s still definitely in a better place now than he was. And that’s largely down to you and your ridiculously sentimental soft-hearted foolishness. So forgive yourself already.”

Chris sighs deeply and brushes his hair out of his eyes, deliberately avoiding looking at Phil.

“Sounds like I’m not the only ridiculously sentimental soft-hearted fool,” Chris mutters, hoping the blush he can feel creeping up his neck won’t reach his face. Phil snorts and rolls onto his side.

“Yeah well, at least we appear to be mature enough to not bother trying to deny it right?”

“Mature? You?” Chris smirks at the ceiling
“Don’t be a hypocrite; I’m not the one who keeps a book of “Jim points” clipped to the underside of my sock draw. That’s the most unoriginal hiding place ever conceived after beneath loose floor boards.”

“Point 55,” Chris growls aiming a playful swat at Phil’s face, “I swear Phil’s recent tendency to break unspoken boundaries is also somehow Jim’s fault.”

“Please,” Phil snorts again, “That’s not recent; I’ve been invading your personal space for years.”

“Well okay then? How about 116. Phil was never such an asshole before Jim came along?”

“Ha! Yeah right! I’ve always been a total asshole! Jim has no bearing on that fact!”

“Oh, don’t I know it,” Chris laughs, shoving Phil sideways off the bed.

They’ve just returned back to the main room to collect their bowls of now-melted ice-cream when the front door’s code confirmation chime sounds and then slides open.

Jim and Bones both come tumbling through the opening, Jim babbling at his normal rapid pace and Bones snarking back in his usual deep southern rumble. More surprisingly though, Spock strides through rather more gracefully behind them.

“‘ey ‘pock,” Phil garbles around a spoonful of mostly melted raspberry ripple.

“Doctor Boyce. I was not anticipating your presence this evening.”

“Eh, I came to see Chris,” he shrugs before jamming another spoonful into his mouth. Chris rolls his eyes at Phil’s appalling manners and greets the Vulcan rather more politely.

“So, everything go alright with the flight then?” Chris asks after apologising to Spock for Phil’s behaviour.

“Nova yes!” Jim grins, playfully punching Leo on the shoulder. “Bones didn’t throw up or pass out once and I even got him to glance out of the window for a whole two seconds!”

“The Cadet’s summary is accurate, if lacking in necessary detail.” Spock agrees passively. “We completed precisely seven basic medium orbit manoeuvres, maintained a geosynchronous position over Seoul for thirty point six-seven-nine minutes, and Mr Kirk successfully completed the atmospheric re-entry sequence with only minor input from myself. Doctor McCoy remained his usual emotional and volatile self for the duration of the flight, but did indeed succeed in controlling his emesis reaction.”

“And then I dragged Spock back here to celebrate because Bones succeeded in not puking everywhere! I’m so proud of you Boney!” Jim emphasises his enthusiasm by throwing his arms around Leo’s middle and lifting him a few inches off the floor. Predictably, Leo exclaims in dismay and immediately begins flailing and cussing.

“Well I recommend more ice-cream!” Phil chuckles, shoving his empty bowl into a clearly bewildered Spock’s hands.

Chris shakes his head, bewildered himself by the fact his friends can apparently get Spock to display emotion on his face.

117. (See also Point 18 ) Not even Vulcans are immune to the “Jim Kirk Effect”
118. Chris will never make assumptions regarding the state of Jim’s familial relationships ever again

Chris could never have predicted who he would meet two days later. Nor how that meeting would go or how it would change his perception of certain things.

“Captain, there’s a Commander out here requesting entry to your office. She’s wearing Engineering dress livery and insisting on a meeting with you very forcibly,” Chris’ Yeoman informs him via a Vid Comm.

Chris glances down at the stack of PADDs he’s nearly finished reading and signing, and then at the Chrono on the wall above the door.

“Did she give a name Mr Hargritch?” he asks sternly, conscious that whoever she was, she could probably overhear their conversation.

“No Sir. She says you’ll recognise her when you see her.”

Chris resigns himself to being late to his lunch meet-up with Phil and Number One.

“Alright fine, send her in.” he sighs, not bothering to hide his irritation.

And then the door slides open and Chris feels like he just took a punch to the gut.

“Commander Kirk.” He garbles out a little breathlessly, hyperaware that his eyes have widened considerably.

“Yes hello Captain. Long-time no see. What were you? Twenty-two? Twenty-three? Not even graduated the Academy yet and banging on my door demanding an interview about the Kelvin. Even after I slammed the door in your face. Persistent little bugger you were. Though I suppose your Master’s Dissertation was a fairly excellent bit of writing if you like that sort of thing. Why anyone would enjoy reading about tactics though, I have no clue. Still, it’s been a while and you’re not a cutesy floppy haired blonde Cadet with overly bright eyes anymore, so I suppose we can just cut to the chase hmm?

“Errrr,” Chris says eloquently.

“So,” she continues, verbally bulldozing right over Chris, “why exactly has my son attached himself to you like a limpet then? I may have more or less cut myself out of my boy’s life at Jim’s own request, but he’s still my kid and I will watch his back whether he wants it or not. Yes, he has every right to pretend I don’t exist after the series of monumentally shitty decisions I made while he was growing up, but I’ll be damned if I let that trend of shitty decisions continue now. So tell me Christopher Pike, what’s so different about you that you’ve managed to overcome his horrendous but justifiable trust issues? Because I’d really love to know.”

Chris gapes like a fish, startled into silence. Thankfully, Winona Kirk apparently hasn’t finished her verbal onslaught, because she’s sets off talking at a mile a minute again before Chris’ silence drags on too long.

“And for that matter, why by Risa did no-one inform me that my son had gone and joined up with Starfleet? I’m not surprised that Jim didn’t tell me himself because I’m still in the process of earning back the right to regular communication with him, but someone from the Academy should have contacted me, if only as a courtesy. Unless of course Jim specifically requested that you didn’t,
which I suppose means I can forgive you for the oversight, but otherwise what the hell guys? I have to find out he’s here from a pre-recorded Comm message directing me to forward my communications to a Comm Number listed as belonging to you? I’m half tempted to finally accept that promotion to the admiralty now, just so that no-one can keep me out of the loop anymore!”

*Good lord* Chris thinks, *it’s like having an older, more confident Jim ranting at you!*

119. Jim Kirk is a lot more like his mother than Chris would ever have believed!

“So then what happened?” Number One asks him when he finally makes it to the Officer’s Mess.

“Mostly she just talked nonstop at me some more,” Chris grunts, “I could barely get a word in edge ways. I didn’t manage to answer a single one of her questions! And then she just nodded and strode out like she was the senior officer of the two of us!”

“I thought she’d be all dour and brooding and miserable.” Phil adds, peeling the tomatoes out of his sandwich and shoving them in Chris’.

“So did I to be honest,” Chris replies, shaking his head, “given the way that Jim avoids even mentioning her for the most part, I assumed their non-communication was down to a mutual intense dislike. Then again, she didn’t try and deny at any point that she’d been a truly awful parent, so maybe Jim thinks whatever it is that is causing the rift is mutual when it’s actually not? It wouldn’t surprise me if he mistakenly thought that his Mom hated him.”

“I dunno Chris, if she found out about his enrolment by trying to Comm him, they must speak at least on occasion over the subspace Network.” Number One points out, “If they didn’t speak at all, she never would have tried calling him. So Jim’s probably at least civil with her.”

“Yeah probably,” he concedes, “but it still doesn’t change the fact that something *did* happen to cause the estrangement in the first place.”

“Yeah, something related to those two points of yours. The early ones about bad shit happening to the poor kid” Phil grimaces.

**Points 13 and 14,** Chris quotes with a frown, “Something *bad* happened during Jim’s childhood, and if he has his way, none of us will ever find out what, and, whatever it was that happened, it left enough physical evidence to worry a hardened trauma surgeon.”

“Well I’ve never seen his uncensored medical chart personally,” Phil muses unhappily, “but Bones still winces whenever he looks at it. And he worked in Atlanta’s primary ER for quite a few years, so he’s seen some grim things. We all know it was some form of childhood physical abuse, that much is glaringly obvious, but I honestly dread to think how bad it must have been if it can make McCoy cringe.”

Chris grunts an unwilling agreement, scowling at the shredded remains of his lunch; he doesn’t really feel like eating it given the direction the conversation has now gone.

“He’ll open up to you about it eventually,” Number One consoles him, rubbing her hand up and down his shoulder, “and when he does, we’ll know exactly who we need to plan an assassination for. I bet Archer will even lend you some of his shady resources we’re not supposed to know about.”

“That’s if Chris doesn’t just strangle the culprit himself,” Phil mutters to her, “Hell, I’ll even help him hide the evidence. And the body.”
Chris doesn’t answer again, just shoves his plate away and leans back in his chair with his arms crossed.

120. Chris isn’t sure if he actually does want to know what happened to Jim, because he’s pretty sure it’ll be completely heart-breaking.

Chapter End Notes

I'm sorry for that ending...?
Ok, sorry for vanishing for a little while; I have been pulling some major overtime at work recently. My bank account loves me, my body does not.

And then admittedly I got a little sidetracked with writing Survive for a couple of days... (I've stuck a link here because it's another Jim & Chris story)

POLL STANDINGS: [31/08/2016 00:22BST]
Romance: 49
Bromance: 47

(I've had some confusing comments and messages, so please bear in mind that I'm asking about Chris/Phil when you're voting! Thanks guys :D)

“Are you sure you’ve got everything kid?”

Jim sighs in a put upon manner.

“For the third time, yes I have packed everything that I need! Everything on the allowed kit list is in my Bergen.”

“Have you got extra ration bars though? You should always take more than you think you’ll need.”

“And get penalised for cheating? No, I haven’t snuck extra food into my pack despite how much I want to.”

“But what about clothing? You haven’t forgotten your waterproofs or your hypoallergenic sun cream or anything? You don’t know what the weather is going to be like son.”

Jim gives him a flat unimpressed look, picks up his large survival rucksack and strides out the front door.

“Hey! I mean it kid!” Chris calls, tugging his own jacket on and following him out the door, “These survival expeditions are serious business!”

121. Chris can be quite the unnecessary worry wart where Jim is concerned

Chris writes the new point down in his notebook dutifully, Phil and Number One leaning over him to make sure he doesn’t change the wording. They’d met him as left the hanger after he’d seen Jim and Bones off, and dragged him to the nearest café for a coffee. Phil had apparently gone snooping around his flat again and grabbed his notebook, because he’d handed it to Chris as soon as they’d sat down.

“I’m not a worry wart.” Chris scowls, even as he finishes jotting down exactly that. Number One snorts at him and pulls the book and pen out his hands.
“It’s just a one week expedition and they’re only going to the Canadian Rockies Chris. They’re not even leaving the continent, let alone the planet. They’re with fully qualified instructors for the first two days and in groups of four with remote supervision for the rest of the time. And there have never been any major accidents during a first or second year survival exercise, but you’re still acting more anxious than a father leaving his four year old at kindergarten for the first time.”

“No major accidents doesn’t mean none at all!” Chris heatedly points out, deliberately ignoring her father metaphor. “And there’s a first time for everything! This is Jim we’re talking about. Anything could happen!”

“One of these days you’re going to have to stop denying the truth Cappy,” Phil grins, “because you really are acting exactly like a Dad who just dropped his kid off for his first day of school. And don’t you go muttering denials at me again! I don’t give a damn about your Point 82

Chris carries on muttering anyway.

122. Chris’ flat is too quiet without Jim in it

Chris had lived on his own for years before Jim barrelled into his life, both on Earth and shipboard. Yes, Phil was normally only a 15 minute walk away and Amanda only 5 more than that when they were all on campus, and him and Phil even less than that when they were out in the black together. But he’d always had the evenings to himself for most of the week in both situations. And then suddenly Jim had come along and there’d always been at least one other person in the flat every evening.

And Chris hadn’t realised just how much he’d gotten used to it.

For the first two nights Jim being gone had seemed like a relief; the peace and quiet; the uninterrupted reading time; the ability to put whatever HoloVid he wanted on without any alternate suggestions or complaints. He could eat what he wanted, sleep when he wanted, do whatever he wanted. But by half way through the third night, Chris feels like he’s completely at a loose end. After flicking through four dozen Federation Vid channels, pushing aside five different novels, poking his head into Jim’s empty room half a dozen times, and replicating three different bowls of cake and ice-cream and finishing none of them, he eventually realises that he’s staring at the inside of the fridge with no idea why and no idea how long he’s been doing it for.

A quick glance at the nearest Chrono tells him that it’s only 1942. So a bit too early to give up and go to bed already; if he did, he’d be awake at three in the morning and spend all of tomorrow hating himself for it. Sighing, he paces back and forth in the kitchen a few times, before eventually growling “sod it” to himself and grabbing his personal PADD and jacket.

“Chris?” Phil asks as he answers his door, sounding mildly surprised, “I wasn’t expecting you tonight?”

“Help me. I’m bored to tears.” Chris moans dramatically, pushing his way past his best friend into his flat.

“You’re… bored?” Phil replies, still sounding bemused. But he closes the door behind them and follows Chris into his kitchen none the less. Chris opens Phil’s cooler and pulls them both a Bud Classic out.

“It’s too quiet. I don’t know what to do with myself.” Chris tells him, sounding far more serious than
Phil eyes Chris sideways, rummaging through his utensil drawer looking for a bottle opener, but doesn’t comment. Chris watches him search for about five seconds before becoming impatient enough to snap his cap off with his teeth.

“Oh for goodness sake Christopher! You’ll damage your enamel doing tricks like that! And I’ll be the one stuck fixing your chipped crowns you imbecile, so don’t!”

Chris just smirks at him and then grabs Phil’s bottle and uncaps it too.

Phil clips him round the ear with a scowl and immediately banishes him from the kitchen. Chris feels better already.

“I take it you’re staying here for the night then?”

“Yes. M’too lazy to walk home.”

“My couch is much smaller than your new leather monstrosity. You won’t be able to stretch out completely.”

“S’not monstrous! S’glorious!”

“You stick to it when you get warm.”

“S’only because you always ruck the throw up by shuffling around so much.”

“Whatver Chris. Just please, at least lie straight. You’ll spend all of tomorrow with a horrendous crick in your neck if you continue to sprawl at that ungainly angle all night.”

“But m’comfy!”

“Stars above Chris! And you claim Jim is the kid!”

Chris half-heartedly kicks Phil in the shin and shuts his eyes.

123. The only way to make Jim’s absence tolerable is constant activity.

After that first night with Phil, Chris knows not to let himself sit alone at home and wallow in his misery. Instead, he makes sure he has plans for every evening, be they social or work related. And he spends a lot of time crashing on Phil’s couch overnight, disliking the unusual emptiness of his own flat. Phil doesn’t complain—he actually seems to enjoy Chris’ near constant company to Chris’ surprise, so Chris makes himself stop worrying that he’s being an imposition and just goes with it.

And then before he knows it, Saturday has rolled around again and he’s walking across to Hanger 8 to collect Jim and Leo.

124. Jim can work himself into quite a state when he’s anxious

Chris joins the milling crowd of staff and students gathered along the sides of the hanger’s main bay, leaning against the wall next to two Upperclassmen Cadets. The minutes tick by slowly, and Chris tries to distract himself from the slow drag of time by listening in on the conversations of the people around him.
He’s eavesdropping on a pair of fraternal twins discussing dragging their younger sister out for celebratory drinks when the hanger door alerts finally start bleeping and the opening mechanism grinds into action. The crowd around him stirs with anticipation, and then finally, a fleet of eight shuttles are arching down into the bay, rumbling down to land in a textbook neat line along the painted floor grids.

Chris takes a deep breath and pushes off the wall.

“Jim! Jim! Leo?” Chris calls, weaving carefully through the flowing mass of people. According to the flight plans he downloaded from the Academy instructor’s intranet, the two young men should be aboard the Galileo II shuttle. So he scans along the line of docked shuttles until he spots the name and then begins weaving in that direction, still calling out their names.

“Captain?” he hears Leo shout back. And then he can finally see the duo staggering towards him through a break in the crowd, their navy blue exercise jumpsuits standing out from the sea of mainly red and grey surrounding them.

Chris stops in his tracks, immediately aware that something is wrong.

He was expecting Bones to look a little worse for the wear, both from the week of living in the wild, and from having to ride in a low-orbit shuttle back from Canada. But surprisingly the doctor only looks a little dusty and has a graze or two on his knuckles and a week’s worth of stubble growth. Other than that, he looks mostly fine.

Jim on the other hand, is a wide eyed shaking mess and half his face is a deep blue-purple colour.

“What the hell happened!?” Chris suddenly exclaims, finally lurching into motion again.

“Chris!” Jim yells, relief visibly causing his whole face and body to go slack, “Chris, they took all my ration bars and made Bones and I go off on our own!”

“They did what!? Who ordered that Jimmy?” he asks, reaching out and tipping Jim’s head back to examine the extensive bruising all down his left side; there are a multitude of small cuts and grazes centred within it, he notes with a grimace.

“The lead instructor of mine and Bones’ section got a message through to his Comm. Wouldn’t tell me who from. I tried to protest, but he said he’d disqualify me if I didn’t shut-up and accept his orders. Chris he took all my food!”

Jim says the last part rather frantically, and starts running his hands shakily over Chris’ pockets. Chris looks at him startled, surprised by both Jim’s rocketing levels of anxiety and his forwardness considering the number of people surrounding them.

Then suddenly, he’s yanking at the front zip on Chris’ jacket, and before Chris can ask him what the hell he’s doing, he’s sticking his hand down the front and pulling the contents of Chris’ inside pocket out. Chris lets him do so with growing concern.

“Oh thank god,” Jim sighs once he’s managed to grasp the small cereal bar that Chris nearly always keeps stashed in there to snack on. Leo bends down to scoop up the pair of in-ear headphones that went clattering to the floor when Jim pulled his hand out, and when he stands upright again, he and Chris exchange an unsettled look.

“Jim don’t!” Bones cries unexpectedly, “Goddammit kid! That could have nuts or anything in it! You didn’t even glance at the ingredients list!” Leo then tries to pry the bar out of Jim’s hand, but he
turns away with a distressed noise and continues cramming it into his mouth.

Chris realises with an unpleasant lurch that Jim’s obsession with food must not be anywhere near as innocent as he thought it was.

125. Jim has been denied food in a serious way at some point in his life.

“It’s alright Doctor,” Chris tries to soothe. “I never buy anything he’s allergic to these days just in case.”

From the wary look that Leo then sends his way, he doesn’t manage to keep as much of his unease out of his voice as he would have liked. Chris grimaces again and pulls Jim in to lean against his side, wishing he hadn’t eaten his apple half an hour ago.

They drag Jim onto a tram headed towards Starfleet Medical as soon as they finally manage to leave the hanger. Once they’ve paid their fares and gotten seated, Chris pulls his PADD out and sends off two text Comms.

The first goes to Phil; a notification that they’re headed his way and a plea for him to run to the nearest corner shop and buy a load of Jim-safe snack foods before they arrive.

The second is sent to Admiral Archer. As they were on their first off-campus survival expedition, Jim and Bones should never have been made to separate into a group any smaller than four, and they certainly should never have had their food confiscated. Chris wants to know why that had happened, and he wants to know why right damn now.

126. (See Also, Point 4) Jim’s not just not a bad patient, he’s a worryingly listless one.

It’s not something he really noticed the first time he brought Jim here back last August, but now that he knows him better, he can’t help but notice that Jim doesn’t just relax and let doctors and nurses get on with their jobs, he zones out almost entirely.

He answers any questions he’s asked, and moves about as requested, but his normally endless chatter cuts off completely, and he doesn’t offer up any of his usual cheeky quips or flirty humorous remarks. It makes Chris uneasy, which is the last thing he needs right now with how anxious he’s feeling already.

“Phil told me someone’s ass needs kicking,” Number One suddenly growls, sliding silently up to Chris’ left. Chris jumps slightly and glances sideways at her, but turns back to peering through the observation glass almost immediately. Inside the small room, both Leo and Phil are crowded around the Biobed, the former filling up hyposprays and the latter carefully wiping over Jim’s abused face with a steriliser.

“As soon as know who to target, I’ll let you know.” Chris scowls.

Number One pauses, then asks

“What happened? He looks like he fell face first down a cliff.”

“You’re actually more or less right actually.” Chris sighs, “But I suspect it was less accidental that either of those boys are letting on. Jim’s really not a half-bad liar for the most part, but he always looks incredibly guilty when he tries to lie to me. He claims that it was his own stupid fault he took a tumble down into a river bed, but something tells me someone gave him a helping hand with the
failing part of the equation.”

“And he must know that you know he’s an expert rock climber,” Number One adds, frowning herself, “He’s got to be pretty steady on his feet in rough terrain.”

“Yeah, the certification is on his record. Nova knows where he picked that skill up from though; Iowa isn’t exactly a State known for its hills and cliff-faces.”

“He was off planet for a few years wasn’t he? He could have learned then.”

“Yes, he was…” Chris mumbles quietly, more to himself than as a reply to Number One’s question.

Jim was off planet for a few years, and the more he thinks about it, the more suspicious he gets.

127. Where ever Jim went, it’s likely that that’s where Point 13 occurred.

Chris just wishes he could work out what did happen, and where. So that he could at least attempt to help the kid work through whatever it was.

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“Pike. I need a word.”

Archer’s appearance several hours later is preceded by the usual rhythmical tapping of his cane against the hard linoleum flooring. Chris greets him with a respectful nod, and after a final glance through the glass to where Jim is laid out letting Leo run a dermal regenerator over his neck, he turns and follows the Admiral back down the corridor.

Before they reach the ER’s front reception, Chris finds himself ushered into an empty exam room, the observation glass completely opaqued out.

“Look kid, I’m going to be blunt.” Archer tells him as soon as the door has slid shut behind them, “Beyond your boy’s word, there’s absolutely no digital or physical evidence that something happened that shouldn’t have. There’s not even a hint of a paper trail.”

“Oh, something happened alright,” Chris immediately growls back, clenching his hands together behind his back in an effort to stop himself from waving them around wildly.

“I don’t doubt it Christopher. I pulled the footage from the hanger bay as soon I’d read your message. And you’re right, young James was in a right state. If everything had run smoothly he wouldn’t have been anywhere near as wound up as he was; despite his reputation, he’s got his head on pretty straight.”

Chris realises he’s started pacing while Archer talked and takes a deep breath and plants his feet at the head of the empty Biobed. Archer watches him silently from his own place leaning against the doorframe.

“So what now then?” Chris asks after several more deep breaths.

“Oh, just because all the hard evidence is gone like it never existed, doesn’t mean I can’t work out what happened anyway. Thirty of Kirk’s classmates saw the instructor receive the Comm call immediately before they were dropped off for the independent hiking exercise. And they saw him empty his and McCoy’s Bergens out and take all their rations. All I had to do was corner a group of them and they were falling over their feet to tell me exactly what they witnessed.”

Chris holds Archer’s gaze levelly, silently asking him to continue.
“I got the instructors name from the second group of Cadets I interrogated.” Archer says, having read Chris’ expression.

“And?”

“Lieutenant Graham Maldike, Operations Division.”

“Shit, he’s one of Komack’s yes-men isn’t he?”

“He’s a bootlicker if I ever saw one yes. I can’t prove the Comm came straight from our favourite flag officer unless I can get my hands on his personal PADD or Comm device, but I do know that Komack has been acting particularly smug for last few days. Now I know why.”

Chris tiredly scrubs his hands down over his face; he never did get on with Komack, but this was getting ridiculous now.

“So this is your warning Mr. Pike. Watch your boy’s back. I’ve got my eyes on yours for you, but be on your own guard for trouble. I’m going to risk having a word with Marcus, because this is getting serious now; I’ve put a lot of years of work into this ‘Fleet and I won’t let its reputation be tarnished by the fallout of some petty rivalry. I trust you and yours to continue rising above it as you have been doing.”

Once Chris has nodded his agreement, Archer pushes off the frame and thumbs the door open.

“Good.” He continues, “Dismissed Captain, go back to your kid. And I want updates on his progress; he looks like he tried to head-butt a moving airbus right now and I won’t be happy until he’s back to full health, got it?”

Chris nods his understanding again, and strides out of the room with his back straight but a small sliver of fear lodged in his throat.

128. Chris was hoping to keep Jim clear of the ‘Fleet’s political machinations for a few years yet, but apparently he’s going to have no such luck.
3DBABE1999, I appologise in advance, because **Point 136** is the one that I said I would steal from you...

[01/09/2016 00:42BST]
- Romance: 52
- Bromance: 49

“Captain, while I am not overly familiar with the workings of the human immune system, I can none the less surmise that yours is currently compromised.”

“He’s telling you that you’re as sick as a dog Chris, and that you should go home.”

Chris shoots both Spock and Phil a withering glare from behind his desk. And then drops his head back into his hands and swallows back the sob that wants to escape his throat. He really does feel like death warmed over, but he’s got too much work to do to acknowledge that fact.

“Doctor Boyce is correct Captain, you should indeed return to your apartment. The quality of your work is suffering greatly due to your ailment. There would be no shame in choosing to take a moment’s respite to recover.”

“Spock as much as I would love to go home and die in peace, I’ve got too much work to do. The Easter break starts in four days, and all these forms have to be read and signed off on **before** then so that they can be processed by the start of the exam term.” Chris croaks out, his throat hating him for doing so.

“Well they can get someone else to do it then. Come on, I’m putting you on medical leave and taking you home.”

“Phil, I can’t!”

“Nope. You can and you are. Up you come Chrissy. Spock, would you grab his jacket and tell his Yeoman what’s happening? And I’d appreciate it if you’d find a moment to send a Comm to Captain Thirrwood asking for advice over the paperwork issue. I’m sure between the three of us we can work something out.”

“Certainly Doctor. I will forward you the Captain’s reply.”

**129. Jim is a pain in the ass to be around when you’re ill**

Chris shouldn’t resent him for it, but Jim is too damn cheerful to cope with when all you want to do is hide under your duvet and cry. Chris’ coping method for colds and flu is to ignore it until it goes away. Or failing that, to hide in his room and drown in self-pity while ignoring the world until it again, goes away.

Of course Chris’ usual coping methods aren’t compatible with **Point 107**
Jim just will *not* leave him alone. Every hour on the dot since Phil dragged him home and deposited him on the couch with his duvet and a mug of watered down lemon tea, Jim appears and insists on checking his temperature and making him drink more water and offering dry cold toast and plain crackers.

“Jim no,” he moans when the kid strolls out of his room for the fifth time that afternoon, “please just let me die in peace. Go back to your studying!”

“Phil said I have to make you drink another quarter pint of water. And you *still* haven’t eaten anything.”

“I don’t care Jimmy, I just wanna sleep.”

“I’ll let you doze back off as soon as you’ve swallowed down some of these Ritz crackers and washed it down with this” he tells Chris, waving the relevant items under his nose.

“Please don’t make eat kid. Please! My stomach would stage a mutiny if it tried to digest anything right now.”

“You are so overdramatic Chris; anyone would think you were actually dying! Now sit up and drink up!”

“I hate you so much.”

“No you don’t.”

Oh, he really does right now.

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130. **Jim is very useful to have around when you’re ill**

Chris is aware that that’s an almost direct contradiction to the previous point, but in the time between mentally listing the two, he’s gone from simply *feeling* unbelievably nauseous to, well…

Let’s just say Chris has been spending a lot of time huddled on the bathroom floor with Jim rubbing his back and muttering reassurances. He definitely appreciates Jim’s presence now anyway.

“’S’allright kid, jus’ go to bed. I’ll be fine,” he tells Jim for probably the dozenth time, taking the cup of water he’s handed and rinsing his mouth out.

“You’re really not fine Chris. If you don’t stop throwing up within the next fifteen minutes, I *am* going to call either Phil or Bones to come check you over.”

“No please don’t,” he coughs back, his breathes coming in juddering shudders, “’s’after midnight. L’both be in bed by now.”

“Well you’ve got quarter of an hour before I make a decision to convince me. Come on, lets you get cleaned up.”

“S’all back to front kid. Should be me lookin’ after you,” Chris grimaces, shakily allowing Jim to pull him upright with an arm hooked around his chest.

“Well, it was about time that I got to return the favour. So stopping worrying about me for once and concentrate on getting yourself better.”

Jim half carries him back to his room and lowers him into his bed. Chris barely has time to realise
that the covers have been pulled up over shoulders before he’s falling away into sleep once again.

131. Chris hates it when he worries Jim

“You were right to call me kid,” Chris hears Bones rumble somewhere in the distance, “he’s burning up. I’m going to give him an antipyretic, but if his core temperature doesn’t drop below 103° in the next two hours or so, we’re going to have to take him over to Medical for observation.”

“But he’s going to be okay right?” Jim replies worriedly, sounding equally as muffled. Chris wonders if they’re out in the main room, or in his bedroom with him; he feels so light-headed, either is possible.

“I’m pretty sure it’s just a bout of flu kid. A properly nasty bout alright, but just a common Earth-originating virus. He’ll be fine as soon as we get his temperature down.”

“So we just need to get him to cool down? And then he’ll be okay?”

“Basically kid, yes. But I’m more worried about you. Have you slept at all yet tonight? And how much did you eat this evening?”

There’s a long pause filled only with Chris’ wheezy shallow breathing before Jim answers the question with a huff.

“Okay, no I haven’t slept. But I ate some of those crackers earlier when Chris wouldn’t.”

“Dammit Jim, that’s not enough! You have to sort your eating habits out! I know you and food have a hot and cold relationship, and I know Komack’s stupid stunt threw you off and that you’ve been feeling queasy for the week and half since then, but you can’t just stop eating altogether! Archer told you he and Marcus are dealing with the whole food confiscation thing, so stop worrying and eat!”

And Chris knows he’s dazed to hell and back and unable to think straight, but he also knows that whatever he’s overhearing isn’t good.

“I am eating! Since that stupid fracking thing with the cereal bar in the damn hanger, Chris won’t stop making me eat! Every time I turn around either him or Phil are shoving apples in my pockets or pushing plates of carbs under my nose or whatever. Hell, even Number One made Spock give me some of his Kreyla the other day when I ran into them on campus!”

Bones sighs, and something wooden creaks as he shifts his weight.

“You really are going to have to tell them kid. Or Chris at the very least. He’s as whip smart as you are, so he’s got to be damn close to working it out on his own by now anyway.”

“Are you crazy Bones!” Jim hisses. Chris forces himself to lie still and keep his eyes shut, despite the fact his room has suddenly become even more impossibly stifling. “He’ll totally lose it the second I mention it! I know everyone jokes that he’s my crazy over protective father behind his back, but it’s pretty much not a joke anymore! He’ll go out of his mind with worry even though it was nine years ago now and I’m fine! I’m not inflicting that burden on him! I refuse to!”

“Alright, alright! Calm down or you’ll wake him up! It’s your secret to tell, so you know I’ll keep my trap shut, no matter how dumb I think your decision is. Now come on, I gotta give him this hypo and recheck his core temp. And then you are going to eat something more substantial than a handful of water biscuits, or we’ll do this the hard way and I’ll force a bunch of multivitamins into your bloodstream, whether you like it or not.”
“Whatever Bones,” Jim grumbles, before Chris hears them shuffling towards him. There’s a hiss and a flinch-worthy pinching sensation against the bottom of his neck, and then he can feel himself being dragged slowly down into fitful sleep again.

*Sedatives?* he thinks hazily, sure that he can feel Bones’ fingers running smoothly over his forehead.

And then, before he really does succumb to unconsciousness:

132. Chris isn’t an unnecessary worry wart, he’s just plain worried.

“Hey, how’d you feel Chris?”

The window must have been turned at least semi-transparent at some point, because Chris can feel sunlight warming the side of his face. And when he cracks his eyes open, the room is basked in a low golden glow.

Jim is sat cross legged on the bottom of Chris’ bed, his hair ruffled up untidily and deepening bags under his eyes. In fact, he looks like he’s barely slept for a week. Chris meets his eyes with a frown, immediately sure that he should be the one asking Jim that question, not the other way round.

And then the conversation that he inadvertently eavesdropped on last night suddenly comes crashing back into his memory and it’s all he can do to stop himself blurting out something stupid and demanding answers right there and then.

“Ok well, I’m going to guess from the epic series of frowny faces that you just pulled that you still feel like shit,” Jim continues when Chris fails to say anything, “but I have good news! I have bad news too unfortunately. But the good news is still good!”

“What’s the time?” Chris manages to croak, his throat feeling like he swallowed a pack of razor blades. Jim winces in sympathy and slides off the bed and over to the nearside bedside table, turning back to Chris with a mug of something smelling like warm honey. Chris accepts the mug with a grateful smile, and then shuffles over to allow Jim to clamber back up onto the bed next to him.

“Just gone 1130. Don’t worry, you’re still officially off sick. And Spock and One have some crazy system underway that’s chewing through your paperwork. It’s scarily efficient according to Phil.”

Chris frowns again, realising that Jim is sniffling almost constantly and that he sounds a little congested.

“Are you alright?” he asks after a deep swallow of the syrupy mixture.

“Eh, that’s the bad news. Well, bad news part one. Phil, Bones and I all kind of caught the virus from you. But!” he exclaims with a smirk before Chris can finish the unhappy noise he was making, “Phil also spent most of yesterday and last night working his magical medicine research mojo, so good news is, he’s managed to isolate the viral strain and develop an antiviral and a vaccine. That’s good part one. Good part two is that he came over and dosed you up with it nearly two hours ago, so you should be back on your feet by this evening.”

“I sense a bad news two coming,” Chris winces.

“Yeah… Bad news two is that both the antiviral and the vaccine are based upon MC-2Vq. Which I can’t take without serious risk of going permanently blind…”

Chris drops his head back down onto his pillow with another wince and pulls Jim down to lie next to
him.

“I swear you have the worst luck in the world son. Try and get some sleep, you look like exhausted.”

133. **Chris will never envy Jim’s crappy immune system. Ever.**

Jim raises an eyebrow at him, but shuts his eyes and rolls onto his front.

134. **Jim doesn’t handle being ill any better than Chris does.**

Technically it’s not the first time Jim’s been sick since he met Chris, but Chris thinks they can discount the whole birthday debacle on account of them both being drugged to the gills the majority of the time, and thus mostly unaware of what was going on.

Right now though, he’s pretty coherent and thoroughly miserable.

Chris on the other hand, is still feeling a little under the weather, but is much improved from the previous evening. So when the door chimes, he’s the one to get up and answer it, leaving Jim curled up on the corner of the couch wrapped in blankets.

“Spock! I didn’t think I’d be seeing you today!”

“Captain. I came to inform you that the majority of your paperwork has been organised and submitted. I also desire to enquire about your health, if that is permissible. I see that your colouration and circulation are much improved from yesterday. It is my hope that you feel sufficiently improved also, in accordance with these positive visual changes.”

“Yeah, still feel a little bit eugh, but I’m much better thanks Spock,” Chris replies with a wry twist of his mouth. He waves the Vulcan into the flat and guides him towards the kitchen. “Good to hear about the paperwork too. Although I have no idea how you got through it so fast.”

“Captain Amanda Thirrwood is a singularly efficient individual. And I myself had much time to devote to the task; I finished my own essential paperwork nearly 1.213 standard Terran weeks ago.”

“I won’t question your mysterious ways then. Can I get you a drink?”

“Negative Captain, I do not require sustenance of any variety at this time. However, you should not refrain from fulfilling your own needs.”

Chris chuckles dryly, crossing his arms and leaning back against the counter next to the sink.

“Spock, you do know that you don’t have to be so formal all the time right? I’d appreciate it on the ship’s bridge around our crew members when we get that far, but in situations like this, it’s perfectly acceptable to just call me Chris or Christopher.”

“I will of course, Capt- Cadet Kirk? I was unaware you had contracted the same malady as Captain Pike.”

Jim stumbles into the kitchen in the middle of Spock’s sentence, his eyes completely glazed over and sweat pouring down his forehead and neck. Chris swears violently and catches him before he trips and does himself a damage.

“Chris, I really don’t feel good.”

“I know kid, I know,” he sighs against the top of Jim’s head, hooking his arms around him. “Come
on let’s find you some clean dry clothing and get you to bed.”

“Captain, I would offer myself as assistance to yours and the Cadet’s needs. Doctor Boyce ensured I received a dose of the antiviral and vaccine tailored to my unique physiology at 1153 this morning, so I am at no risk of becoming infected.”

“Okay right then,” Chris breathes, already pulling Jim towards the bathroom, “If you could Comm either Phil or Bones -umm, Doctor McCoy I mean, that would be great. I’m pretty sure he needs a shot to get his temperature down, and I have no idea which one’s are safe to give him. Actually, message both of them; you’re more likely to get a speedy reply that way. And then go in either mine or Jim’s room and find a dry t-shirt. We’re basically the same size clothing wise, so it doesn’t matter whose drawers you rummage through.”

Spock nods and pulls his PADD out from the inside of his thick woollen jacket. Chris leaves him to it and thumbs the bathroom door open, lowering Jim to sit leaning against the cool glass of the shower door. Then he turns and runs a clean flannel cloth under the cold tap, before using it to carefully pat down Jim’s face.

“Oh kiddo, let’s get this soaked shirt off you.”

“No Chris. Can’t!”

As soon as Chris hooks his hands under the bottom hem to help him out of it, Jim goes stiff as a rod and tries to push Chris away, deliriously panicked.

“Woah woah Jim! It's alright, I just want to swap your tee for a dry one.”

“No, not supposed to! You’ll see if, if-”

135. Chris has never actually seen Jim without a t-shirt or more on before

Oh god, Chris should have noticed.

Jim never walks around the flat bare-topped, not even before jumping in the shower in the morning, despite the fact that Chris does it all the time. When he reacted to the blue and green dyes in December, he put the hydrocortisone cream on himself, under his shirt. The few times he’s been to Medical, he always insists on leaving his t-shirt on, even when offered a hospital gown instead. He does all his PT and running in compression shirts, even when the entire rest of his class are in naught but their shorts and boots.

Jim never takes his top off unless he’s completely alone.

“It’s okay Jimmy,” he says with a calm he’s certainly not feeling. “I know I’m not supposed to see, but it’s okay anyway.”

“But- But-”

“Hey hey, don’t worry about it, relax, it’s alright. It’s only me Jimmy, it’s only me.”

Jim stares straight into Chris’ eyes, his mouth parting slightly and his whole face going slack. Behind them, Spock slides into the bathroom as silently as a ghost, slowly places the dry t-shirt over Chris’ shoulder, and then glides out of the small room as carefully as he arrived. Chris silently blesses him for intuitively understanding the gravity of the situation despite his Vulcan upbringing.

Jim continues to watch Chris vacantly.
Chris subtly takes a deep breath and reaches out towards Jim again. This time, Jim lets him.

Oh god, Chris is going to be sick.

And then he’s going to murder someone.

“Phil. Phil. I can’t- Phil. ”

“Jesus Chris, what the hell happened!??”

The two doctors arrive only minutes after Chris has somehow scraped enough of his sanity back together to get Jim redressed and tucked into bed. Leo takes one look at him, goes ashen coloured and vanishes into Jim’s room. Phil does exactly the same but sweeps immediately across the room to where Chris is sat huddled in the corner.

“Phil. Jim. He-”

Chris can’t help it, he breaks down in tears.

“Phil,” he sobs, shamelessly clinging to the front of the doctor’s shirt.

Phil sweeps his hands over Chris’ hair, making shushing noises and pulling him against his chest.

“Jim- he- he- Jim. He’s JT Phil. Jim’s JT and he was on Tarsus goddamn IV!”

136. No one. Literally no one, can make Chris cry the way Jim Kirk can.
Chapter 18

Chapter Notes

[05/09/2016 23:38BST]
Romance: 53
Bromance: 49

I've had so many comments and messages from people saying I made them cry (the feedback from you all was amazing, I'm in awe!)

Sorry, but I'm probably not going to make it any better right now...

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chris notices that his Mom is frowning at him again.

She’s been doing it almost constantly since they arrived in York three days ago. Chris wishes she wouldn’t, because he knows the frowning will soon turn into repeatedly asking him if everything’s okay. Chris doesn’t want to lie to her and say everything is fine.

Everything is most definitely not fine.

He avoids meeting his Mom’s gaze and turns his attention back to where Edward is patiently showing Jim how to restring his acoustic guitar. How to tune it. How to play the basic chords.

Soon, Jim is holding the guitar by himself, and Chris watches as he carefully leans over to look at his fret hand, fingers cautiously sliding along the strings. Three two zero zero zero three; the positions for a G Major chord. Jim carefully uses his right hand to strum the plectrum downwards, and his whole face lights up in delight.

Jim’s head shoots up, still grinning, and his eyes travel immediately to where Chris is sat across the room from him. Chris smiles encouragingly back, forcing himself to keep his gaze on Jim’s face instead of glancing further down.

He’s been staring at Jim’s chest far too often this last week.

Jim’s chest, where four numbers and three letters have been seared harshly into the skin above his heart.

4172 T-IV

4172. The number of people on Tarsus IV sentenced to death by Kodos the Executioner for nothing more than the crime of living.

Jim’s hand moves into an E chord with another blinding smile.

137. James T. Kirk is not a victim. He’s a survivor.

Chris is just going to have to keep reminding himself of that fact for a while.
They’re sat alone on a bench by the river front, the old railway station behind them. Once the largest station in the world, it’s now been converted into a modern intercity-tramline and airbus hanger. But the sweeping arches of the original Victorian architecture still remain, another reminder of days gone by in a city famous for its long and varied history.

“I really am okay Chris. Honestly.”

“I know kid.” Chris sighs, “I just- It’s gonna take me a little while to reconfigure, to adjust my world view ya’know? I mean, I know I’m probably being a little overbearing with the mother-bear routine as Phil likes to call it, but…” He grimaces, resisting the urge to shuffle closer to the boy.

“Chris it’s fine. It’s… nice knowing that you care. You, Bones, Phil. Number One. Hell even Spock with his stoic Vulcan not-frowning. Before- before people would say they were sorry, and that it was awful what happened me. But they were saying that because it was the thing you were supposed to say, because they pitied everyone from that hellhole. Not because it was me, because they cared about how it affected me.”

“So you hacked the Federation network and struck your name from all the records so no-one would ever know you had been there. So you wouldn’t have to deal with the pity.”

“I didn’t actually have to hack anything; there never was a record that James Tiberius Kirk was on Tarsus IV. Frank booked my place using his surname so that Mom wouldn’t find out. JT Wellcott lived on T-IV, but officially, I never did. I never told the rescue crew my actual name, never let the hospital I lived in for two years afterwards know that JT was an invented identity. And when I was finally discharged just after my sixteenth birthday, I got myself emancipated, surreptitiously transferred all my degree credits over to my official ID, and vanished into the anonymity that comes with being a borderline alcoholic delinquent nomad. I’m not proud of everything I did in those years before you found me, but at least I learned to accept what happened to me and move on.”

Chris lets the words settle into the silence between them; it’s the most Jim has said on the subject since that awful night a week ago, and Chris won’t disrupt his flow now that he’s finally opening up.

“I am glad though,” Jim continues softly. “I’m glad that you found me and let my craziness into your life. T-IV… to start with it was great you know? Nobody got mad at me for being too smart; nobody cared that I was eleven and could already speak two alien languages; nobody called me a freak because I could do quantum physics before my voice had even broke. There was no Frank, no family legacy hanging over my head, no Mom trying her hardest and then running away from me anyway. I didn’t have to worry about where Sam had gone or if he was still alive, or where my next meal was going to come from. Just endless fantastic learning, worry-free relaxing and long evenings watching the two suns set below the horizon. But all those memories are tainted now by what came after. What I have now, what you and the others have given me? That’s still pure, and it’s everything I ever wanted.”

Chris sternly tells himself not to start crying again. He must pull a face though, because Jim apologises with a self-depreciating smile and throws his arm over Chris’ shoulders.

“Now look what I’ve done!” Jim jokes, obviously trying to lighten the mood, “I’ve made you all weepy again old man!”

“Watch who you’re calling old kid,” Chris growls back, kicking Jim’s shin lightly with his heel, “You’ll be my age before you know it, and then who’ll be laughing?”
“Me still, because by that time you’ll be sixty-five. Which is positively ancient!”

Chris really does kick him then.

139. **He’ll deny it to the grave, but Jim does actually make Chris feel old and wise at times.**

“Okay, that’s it boy. Christopher Pike, you’re going to tell me what’s bothering you, and you’re going to do it right now. You’ve done nothing but mope and trail after Jim like he’s an abused puppy since you got here, and I want to know why.”

His Mom corners him alone in the kitchen after dinner that evening. And as he’s got his arms elbow deep in soapy water washing pots, he has no hope of escaping

“Mom there’s nothing wrong,” Chris sighs despite knowing that she’s never going to believe that.

“Don’t give me that. After forty-four years, I’ve learnt well what miserable looks like on you. And every time you think no-one’s looking, you do your best impression of a distraught teenager who just found out his favourite band are splitting up.”

Chris knows he’s projecting the textbook definition of ‘incredulity’ right now, but in the face of a metaphor that ridiculous, the only other reaction he could have gone with was indignation.

“So are you going to tell me what’s weighing so heavily on your mind,” she continues, blithely ignoring Chris’ spluttering, “or am I going to have to go and guilt trip or otherwise trick the information out of Philip?”

“Mom, everything is fine,” he tries again with another sigh. “Please, just. It’s been a rough week, but it’s over with now. Really, it’s okay.”

She frowns at him sternly, crossing her arms over her chest.

“You finally found out about his childhood didn’t you?” she tells him bluntly. “That’s why you’ve barely let the poor boy out of your sight recently.”

140. **Chris wishes he could be half as perceptive with Jim as his Mom is with him**

“What? How did you-?”

“Chris honey, you might be new to this whole parenthood concept, but I’ve been fumbling my way through it for nearly fifty years now. And I may be retired, but that doesn’t mean I ever stopped being a research phycologist. So between the two, I’ve had plenty of time to learn to recognise signs of abuse when I see them, and your boy has them in spades. He puts on a brave face for the rest of the world to see, but he’s more relaxed around you and that means I get to see the real him too.”

“It’s- It’s probably not what you’re thinking,” Chris winces unwilling to divulge Jim’s secrets without his permission.

“A parental figure abused him, or abandoned him to abuse.” She tells him with a grimace, “At some point he didn’t have enough to eat, which is why you and Philip have been practically force-feeding him since you arrived. Eventually, he got sick and tired of being compared to his late father and ran off and got himself in all sorts of trouble; drinks, fights, girls and so on. How am I doing so far?”

“Lacking in detail, but not wrong,” Chris mutters.
“There’s more to it than that obviously, because I know you had already worked all that out by Christmas. No, whatever you found out recently is bigger than that otherwise you wouldn’t be so upset by it now. So come on, what happened?”

“It’s not my secret to tell Mom.” He tells her after a moment, not sure what else to say.

“And I respect that darling, but I worry about all my children and grandchildren. It’s my right as a grandmother to do so, so I’m worried about our Jimmy too. I just wish you’d share your concerns with me because I can’t help him or you if I don’t know what precisely I should be worrying over.”

“He’s not my kid Mom,” Chris mumbles half-heartedly, his voice wavering.

She gives him a long, flat, unimpressed look.

Chris reminds himself that he’s a Fleet Captain, head of Starfleet Academy and one of the most respected officers in the fleet.

His Mom raises an eyebrow at him when he continues to remain silent.

“Okay fine!” he yells, throwing his damp soapy hands up over his head. “James Kirk is my damn kid and I should just accept that I’m a parent now!”

“Hallelujah!” Phil suddenly shouts from the kitchen doorway with a grin, “Finally, he admits the obvious! Only took you eight fracking months!”

Chris throws a sodden sponge at him.

141. Jim Kirk is Chris’ kid and he should damn well stop denying it already

His parent’s house is not actually in York itself, but in the village of Bishopthorpe on its immediate southern edge. Unlike most in the city proper, the houses there are large and sprawling with extensive gardens, driveways and garages. This means that they come with quite the number of bedrooms, studies and living areas, which is why all of Chris’ family gather there for Christmas every year, rather than going elsewhere.

In theory, this also means that the house has plenty of spare beds; enough that none of them should have to share a room for the duration of their stay. And yet -thanks to Edward’s sudden unexpected bout of redecorating- Jim is currently sharing the twin’s usual room with Bones. And Chris has ended up with Phil, the two of them taking it turns to use the futon and the bed for the night.

Tonight, Chris is the one stretched out on the folding sofa under the room’s ancient but large bay window.

“So what did Jim tell you this afternoon then? I don’t know what you talked about when you up and vanished into town without me, but you both came back looking like a weight had been lifted off your shoulders.” Phil rumbles from the bed, rolling over to glance at Chris through the darkness.

“Tarsus. But. Tarsus before- before everything went to hell.”

“Hard to imagine it ever being a nice place.”

“He said that- that Tarsus was great to start with; the best place he’d ever lived before…” Chris trails off into silence.
“Before a madman obsessed with eugenics came along and enacted the biggest and worse non-war related genocide the Federation has ever seen?”

“Well that too,” Chris grimaces, “But I meant before he met us actually.”

“Well you are pretty great Chris.”

“Don’t Phil, it’s not funny right now.”

“It wasn’t a joke. You took that boy in as a complete stranger just because a bunch of admirals told you too. You barely complained, you fed him, looked after him and you gave him someone to look up to. And that was all in the first month. By the end of the first term, the two of you had gotten so close, I now hear the phrase ‘Chris’ boy’ far more often than I ever heard ‘George Kirk’s son’. He’s your kid Chris, heart and soul. And that’s because you’ve earned the right to be by *being there* for him.”

“Phil…”

“Shut-up Chris, you needed to hear it. But I expect joint custody when he eventually owns to up his feelings for our grumpy southern doctor; if you get Jim, then I get Bones for now. But we’ll share them when we’re old and grey and they’re married with 2.5 kids.”

**142. Phil never fails to make Chris feel better even when it's Jim he's upset over.**

“We’re already old and grey Phil; I’ve been grey since my early thirties for crying out loud!”

“Guess we’ll have to share them now then won’t we? Well, when they eventually admit they’re head over heels for each other. Did you know they’ve pushed the beds in their room together? Anna insisted on showing me this morning when I came up to shower.”

“Really? That’s a development. Well I knew there was something going on, I’m not blind, but I thought they were still tiptoeing around each other. Especially after that bloody argument in February; I know they haven’t shared Jim’s bed since then anyway.”

“Ha, you said bloody! Your English is showing Chrissy.”

“I lived in England for five whole years of my childhood, as you damn well know! And given that we’re in England right now in my very English Stepfather’s house, it’s hardly surprising that more of it’s slipping out than usual!”

“Still, it’s funny. Limey.”

“Sod off and go to sleep. Git.”

“Aye aye Cap’ain! Chocks away, tally-ho and have a totally *spiffing* night!”

“Phil. I will get up and smother you.”

Phil continues chuckling long into the night.

“Chris. We have to talk.”

“What?” Chris replies, Phil’s serious tone immediately putting him on guard.

“Not here, the boys are still around. Come on lets go for a walk. We’ll go get Anna and Edward’s
“Spit it out already Phil, you’re making me nervous.”

Phil stops in the middle of the street and sighs, before jerking his head towards the children’s park behind the new infant school. Chris follows him into the open grassy area and drops onto the bench beside the doctor.

“Jim walked into the bathroom we’re all sharing this morning without his shirt on. And I was in there at the time brushing my teeth.”

Chris suppresses a flinch, but Phil shoots him a knowing look anyway.

“You’re right, it isn’t pretty Chris,” Phil scowls, “The marks on his front match the famous Holo from the colony almost exactly. Anyone who sees them is going to know instantly what happened to him and where, whether they can read the brand on his chest or not. But that’s not what I’m concerned about. I’m guessing you saw his back too?”

“Yeah,” Chris replies roughly, swallowing hard. “Looks like they’re from a belt right? An old fashioned one with a metal buckle. If Kodos was still alive, I’d wring his fu-” He stops mid-word, clenching his fist against his knee and forcing himself to calm down.

“Chris…” Phil starts, his voice sounding sickened, “there’s more than one set of marks. The top layer, the age matches the cuts and welts on his chest and stomach so they’re from Tarsus. But they’re overlying an older set, one that at least saw some minimal regeneration. They predate the others by maybe three to five years? Hard to tell now, they’ve faded so much.”

Chris blanches, and feels his vision start to haze red.

**143. Nothing incites Chris’ anger faster than the thought of someone maliciously harming Jim**

“Goddammit Phil, he would have been less than ten years old!” Chris rages, shooting to his feet and pacing angrily back and forth. “If I ever find which bastard lay his hands on a defenceless child, on my boy I’ll-“

“Chris! Chris! Look at me for god sake man!”

Phil is suddenly standing in front of him, griping his shoulders in a vice grip. Chris notices his breathing is coming in shuddering gasps and that he’s shaking harder than a torn sail in a harsh wind. Phil waits patiently for him to regain some control and then pulls him in and wraps his arms around him. Chris drops his head onto Phil’s shoulder with a frustrated growl, valiantly struggling against Point 136 again.

“I know Chris. I’m furious too. Has Jim said anything? Anything at all that we can use as a lead?”

“There’s someone,” he mumbles. “Jim, he mentioned someone called Frank yesterday. Apparently he was the one who sent Jim to Tarsus in the first place. Which wouldn’t worry me on its own because no one could have predicted what happened. But… Jim said he booked the trip under his name rather than Jim’s so that his Mom wouldn’t find out. I don’t know Phil,” he sighs into the doctor’s shoulder, “maybe it’s nothing and Frank was just helping him escape a bad home life. But- Then later when he was telling me everything good about the colony before Kodos… well, before. And I’m not completely sure, but I think one of the things he listed was that there was no Frank. Maybe I’m just reading too much into it but.”
“No Chris, it’s a good start. I’ll get Number One and Spock to look into it. And if they don’t get anywhere, then Archer probably will. Do you only have a first name or..?”

“Wellcott. Try Frank Wellcott. It’s the name Jimmy was using while he was being JT.”

“James Tiberius Wellcott.” Phil tries out with a chuckle, “Nope, Kirk suits him better. Or maybe he should be a Kirk-Pike now huh?”

“Shuddup.” Chris groans, pushing away from Phil and wiping at his eyes.

“Never Chrissy, Never.”

144. Chris will forever deny the warm feeling that bubbled up in his chest the first time Phil suggested that Jim should change his last name.

Chapter End Notes

By the way, I've lived in England my entire life, and I've never heard anyone say "Chocks away, tally-ho or spiffing" any way other than ironically... ;)

And the stuff about York is legit :)
Chapter 19

Chapter Notes

Chapter posting going to be more irregularly timed from now on: term starts this weekend, and I'm going abroad to do research fieldwork in a week, so not going to have an awful lot of time to do writing!

Sorry all :(

Hope you enjoy anyway!

Group Message System; initiated by; STSpock59
Stardate: 2256.31; Earth-time; 1013PST

STSpock59:- Captain, I believe I have located the individual that you requested I identify
STSpock59:- Between March 13th 2239 and November 2nd 2246, Mr F. Wellcott was married to Ms W. Kirk and was listed as George S. Kirk Jr and James T. Kirk’s primary guardian.
STSpock59:- These records have since been illegally expunged.

CPIke177:- Good Job Spock.
CPIke177:- Where is he?

STSpock59:- Currently he is residing in the Terran Detention Centre in Nebraska State under the name Keith Hardcourt
STSpock59:- His record states that he was convicted of Driving Under the Influence, combined with possession of Class A illegal substances with intention to deal, 2.134 Standard years ago
STSpock59:- There is approximately 5.1 years of his sentence remaining, with no chance of early parole.
STSpock59:- [file_ID, file_ID_2] I have attached both his current ID, and what I managed to recover of his original.

PBoycz83:- Wellcott is in jail?
PBoycz83:- Why am I not surprised?

AThirwood342:- That's going to make getting to him harder.

JArcher1:- On it.
JArcher1:- Go back to work the lot of you.

Chris locks his PADD and picks his paperwork back up with a grim smile.

145. Jim Kirk is a perfectionist

“Evening Jim. How’d your exam go this afternoon son?”

Chris’s question is met with a long drawn out groan and a couple of overly dramatic sobs. When he rounds the corner, he finds Jim face down on the couch, his boots kicked off next to him and his uniform jacket thrown haphazardly over the coffee table.
“That well huh?” Chris laughs, pushing the jacket aside so he can sit facing the young man.

“Please, kill me now and spare me the later humiliation.”

“Relax! You’re an Astrophysics wizz kid, you’ll have done brilliantly!”

“But everyone came out of the hall talking about question seven! They all used Junden’s law to find the relative warp speed in sublight when you’re orbiting a Class Y planet. I didn’t, I used Z’Gordus Theory! And I was the only one, so I must be the one who got it wrong Chris!”

Chris looks at him levelly, and mentally weighs up his options.

“And?” he decides to go with.

“What do you mean and?” Jim snaps, glaring harshly at Chris.

“And it doesn’t matter if you got it wrong.” Chris shrugs. “If you even were wrong, you’re still going to get exceptionally good marks; you’re still going to be near to the top, if not the top of the class. And most importantly, I’m still going to be immensely proud of you no matter what you get. You could flunk every one of your classes and I still wouldn’t be mad at you.”

Jim’s face slowly morphs from anger into confusion, and Chris takes a moment to recall Point 32 and mentally update it.

32. [AMENDMENT] Chris is going to beat senseless the one responsible for teaching Jim to be absolutely scared witless of making mistakes. That is, as soon as Jonathan Archer can get him access to the jail…


“Jim. I mean it. I won’t ever be mad with you for not getting 100%.”

Jim frowns.

“Come on kid, budge up so we can put a Vid on. I know you don’t have another exam until Monday so I declare tonight to be a lazy slouch evening. We’ll order take away and drink beer and forget the rest of the world exists.”

“…only if we can have pizza.”

146. Jim can focus on one thing to the exclusion of all else.

Including the exclusion of eating, drinking and sleeping. Jim’s third exam is in two days and Chris is at his wit’s end with him.

“Jim! Your rice is going cold! Come on!”

“In a minute Chris! I just gotta finish this chapter!”

“That’s what you told me at midday! And you ended up not eating your sandwiches!”

“I’ve just got to finish copying these definitions!”

“Jim, dinner now!”
“Chris I’ll be like one minute!”

Chris sighs deeply, scrubbing his hands roughly down over his face.

“If you aren’t out here sat at this table with me in precisely sixty seconds or less, I will come and confiscate all of your textbooks and other PADDs!”

“Seriously, Chris! One minute!”

Two minutes and thirty-two seconds later, Chris barges into Jim’s room, pulls Jim to his feet, and physically drags him into the kitchen and makes him sit down and eat.

147. Jim can be more frustrating than trying to reverse warp around a Class K nebula.

Forget being at his wit’s end, Chris is approximately 10 seconds from tearing his hair out by the roots.

“For goodness sake Jim! Go to damn bed!”

Jim frowns at the PADD he’s holding but doesn’t look up to where Chris is standing in the doorway.

“Jim, please. You look more tired than a Captain coming off his fourth consecutive red alert shift!”

“M’okay Chris. Just need to fix these equations.”

Chris briefly contemplates banging his head a few times on the doorframe; it has to be less painful than his repeated slamming against the brick wall of Jim’s stubbornness is proving to be.

“You need to sleep kid. Or you won’t be able to concentrate in your exam tomorrow afternoon.”

Jim hums at him noncommittally, and flips another page over, using his stylus to scribble a note messily on the screen.

“Jimmy I will force the matter if you don’t go of your own free will.”

“I’ll go in ten minutes. I promise.”

“No you damn well won’t. If I agree to that, you won’t go at all! So you’ll go now!”

Chris punctuates the statement by darting forward and pulling the PADD out of the lad’s hands. Jim wines piteously and his eyes widen into a picture of betrayal, but before he can start complaining verbally, Chris has already started steering him towards his bed.

“Chris! I have work to do!”

“And you can do it in the morning once you’ve slept.”

“Chriiiis!” he wines again. Chris ignores him and pushes him down on to his mattress and pulls the duvet up over him. As Chris suspected would happen, within seconds Jim’s breathing has evened out and his eyes slid shut. Chris exhales in relief, glad that Jim hasn’t changed out his pyjamas all day, and slowly backs out of the room, quietly ordering the computer to set the room in sleep mode as he goes.
“So did you finally get him to sleep last night then?” Phil chuckles before throwing a raisin upwards and catching it in his mouth.

“Eventually yes,” Chris laughs, rolling his eyes at Phil’s antics. “And I didn’t quite have to resort to sedatives and hypos.”

“Well not yet anyway,” Phil smirks, “he’s still got two exams left after the one this afternoon.”

“Oh stars, don’t remind me,” Chris groans. “I swear we were never this bad while we were at the Academy.”

“Oh I don’t know. I had to carry you from the hallway outside of the exam hall back to your room after your Advanced Tactics exam in your first Upperclassman year.”

“I distinctly remember walking under my own steam!”

“Yeah,” Phil snorts, “for all of about a hundred yards. And that was with me holding you upright.”

“Shush you,” Chris mumbles back, sinking in his chair.

Phil grins and throws another raisin up into the air.

148. Chris was never as much of a handful as Jim is, no matter what Phil says.

Chris is strolling slowly from the Campus Store towards the Admin building, box of crackers and cheese in hand, when both Number One and Jonathon Archer stride up from behind him and steer him off the path and across the grass. Chris lets them, instantly curious and worried about why they’re doing so.

“Er, guys?” he asks, once they’ve slotted themselves into a quiet shady corner beneath the overhang of the Tucker Building.

“Two things.” Archer rumbles, leaning on the wall and tapping his cane against the toe of his boot. “One. I hope you have no summer plans. We need a senior officer experienced in diplomacy and tactical negotiations to travel to Epicron IX in the Beta sector to handle a matter of vital importance to Starfleet. It’s a five week round trip and Nogura put your name forward for the job. I supported his recommendation, so Marcus has listed you as first choice.”

“Oh,” Chris stutters, surprised. “I mean, I’m honoured but-”

“I’ve organised it so that Mr. Kirk will be travelling with you as an Ensign for the Tactical Department.” Archer continues over the top of him. “As the matter is primarily concerned with medical trade, Doctor Boyce is also going to be asked to be a primary member of the negotiations party. He will be informed that he may select one member of the Fleet or Academy to accompany him as an assistant, and we all already know who he’ll ask. You will of course all receive a full briefing in the upcoming weeks, but you can expect to launch in one month’s time under Captain ch’Vrothi.”

Rather than trying to answer verbally, Chris simply allows his surprise to show clearly on his face. Number One smirks at him, while Archer has a pleased smile gracing his features. Chris clears his throat and shuffles on his feet.

149. Chris is not the only one who’ll bend rules for Jim Kirk
“How, err- how exactly did you get permission for Jim and Bones to be offered a ship posting when they’re still Plebes?” Because that just didn’t happen; a two to four week tour at the end of your Underclassman year was common so you could learn the ropes before your commissioning. And if you were extremely lucky and showed a lot of potential, you might get a weeklong trip during summer between your second and third years. But a Plebe going shipboard? There was no precedent.

“If they go on this mission, then I have grounds to put them forward for promotion to Lieutenant at the start of their second year. I told Marcus it would be good press, promoting George Kirk’s boy already. Once he’d agreed to Kirk going, I just added McCoy to the roster as well and let him sign off on it without telling him. Which is dastardly underhanded of me, but that’s politics for you.”

“We will of course, only tell Jim that he’s going because Jon thought it would be a good experience for him.” Number One adds, “Poor kid has enough legacy problems already without knowing that his impending promotion is partially due to who his father was.”

Chris nods, grimacing slightly. He doesn’t and never has liked withholding the truth from people, but he can see how it’s probably for the best in this instance.

“Speaking of fathers,” Archer suddenly scowls, “that brings me to my second point. I’m going to take Kirk and McCoy to that symposium on Isolinear Variance Drives in Prague the weekend after next, ostensibly so that they can relax and rewind after their final exams are finished. But in actuality, I just want him safely out of the way so that you, Boyce, and Amanda here can take a short trip across to Nebraska.”

“We will only have fifteen minutes with him,” Number One takes over, “and there will at least two wardens in the room with us at all times. The chief administrator must have been able to sense our ill-intent as it were, because one of the conditions of the meeting is that Wellcott leaves in the same condition he arrived in.”

“I’ll remember to act appropriately surprised and angry when I receive a message informing me that you failed to uphold that agreement.” Archer growls. “Just don’t break too many of his bones okay?”

“No promises.” Chris mutters back, lips twisted into a bitter smirk.

**150. Chris is better at lying to Jim than Jim is at lying to Chris**

“Are you sure you’ll manage without me around all weekend?” Jim laughs, “I heard how attached to Phil you became the last time I went away.”

“I’m sure I can manage to entertain myself for a few days yes,” Chris growls back playfully, “I coped for years before you came along after all. In fact, I was coping before you were even born boy. Now be gone with you; Archer won’t be impressed if you’re late meeting him.”

“I’m going, I’m going!” Jim laughs again, deftly avoiding Chris’s cheerful shove.

Chris watches him skip away down the hall with a smile.

“You ready for this?” Phil asks from beside him, as the force field across the door of the interview room fizzes and lowers.

Number One leans forward and places her hand on his left shoulder. Chris takes a deep breath and tries unsuccessfully to will the tension out of his body with his exhale. He glances at Phil and squares
his shoulders.

“No,” he swallows, and then steps across the doorway into the small room.

“Chris! Chris! Dammit CHRIS! Let go of him DAMMIT! PHILIP BOYCE GET OUT OF THE WAY!”

Chris growls, ignoring all the hands desperately trying to pull him off the man pinned below him.

Phil pushes another warden away.

For the first five minutes, Chris had somehow managed to hold back his rage.

Wellcott had sat silently across the table from him, his face emotionless except for the occasional twitch of his mouth towards a smirk. Number One had asked the questions, had stated the unpleasant facts as they knew them. Phil had stood behind his other shoulder, his hand firmly on Chris’ bicep. His grip had tightened every time Wellcott had failed to answer. Chris had controlled his rage until after five minutes of no co-operation, Amanda had finally asked a simple “why?”

And Wellcott had let his almost-smirk break into a vicious grin. And he’d laughed and laughed and laughed.

“Because he was nobody.” He had giggled. “Because he was nobody and it was fun that I could.”

And Chris had snapped. And Phil had let him.

151. Chris thoroughly enjoys carrying out justice on Jim’s behalf.

“Well that went well,” Phil huffs breathlessly once they’ve been dragged back out in the corridor and left to wallow in their misery alone. They’re sat side-by-side on the floor, backs against the cold concrete and metal of the wall. Number One is pacing back and forth in front of them.

Chris dabs at his bloody nose with his shirt sleeve, and leans against Phil’s side.

“You broke his leg.” Number One growls at them both.

“Only the one?” Phil chuckles, “Shame, I thought we’d at least manage to snap both of them.”

“You broke his leg, both his arms, fractured his hand, shattered his nose-”

“I think he got me back for that one.” Chris mutters, sounding muffled and nasally.”

“-cracked several of his ribs, nearly clawed his eye out with your damn nails, and left him with enough bruises to turn him rainbow coloured.” She finishes with a snarl.

“But is he still breathing?” Phil asks with a raised eyebrow, flicking semi-dried fleck of blood out from under his fingernails.

“Unfortunately yes.” Amanda snaps back. “Don’t ever make me play the sensible restrained one ever again. Have you any idea how frustrating it was not getting to give that bastard my own portion of revenge?”

Chris grins, blood from his nose staining his teeth, and drags his stained shirt sleeve across his face
Phil has been subjecting him to twice daily sessions with a regenerator for the past three days, despite all of Chris’ grumbling and protesting. But when Jim and Leo return with Archer on the Monday evening, his nose has healed properly, but the accompanying black eyes have not.

“What on Earth have you been doing now dang it man?” Bones grumbles as soon as he’s followed Jim into the flat, immediately striding over to peer intently at Chris.

“I punched him in the face!” Phil announces overly cheerfully from the kitchen before Chris can invent his own excuse.

“You… punched him?” Jim asks, sounding incredulous.

“We were sparring. Apparently I ‘need the practice’ and being a doctor is ‘no excuse for having a slack training regime’. Anyway, he dragged me to the gym, we had a bit of a tussle, and I wacked him one a bit too hard.”

“Wow okay. Remind me to never train with you.” Jim replies, shooting Phil a semi-impressed look.

“He didn’t hit me that hard!” Chris protests, “He just got lucky!”

“Well I don’t want him “getting lucky” with me either!” Jim smirks, using his fingers to form air quotes.

“He has a point Chris,” Bones rumbles, “you’ve obviously had some very good regen work done, but it looks to me as if you had a full nasal fracture recently.”

“Yeah okay,” Jim laughs, “definitely not sparring with him ever! Unless of course it’s just Chris being a pansy?” he adds.

“Traitors.” Chris mumbles, “I’m surrounded by traitors.”

“I have been asked by the North American branch of the Terran Detention Centre for Persistent Offenders to give you a severe dressing down for your despicable behaviour when you visited their facilities early on Saturday, May 10th.”

Jonathon Archer is seated behind his desk, Chris, Phil and Number One lined up shoulder to shoulder opposite him. All three of them are standing at parade rest, their eyes fixed on the wall behind the Admiral’s head.

“Officers, what by Cochrane did you think you were doing!? I return from a pleasant weekend away, to find a report of a most infuriating nature waiting for me. I do not need to stress how displeased I am, because it should already be clear that the adjective you are looking for is very.”

He pauses, and Chris forces himself to stand still and keep his gaze level.

“You’re a disappointment to the Fleet, the lot of you,” he continues in a low growl after a seeming age. “How could you leave a man like that still breathing? This report here says you didn’t even manage to puncture one of the monster’s lungs! You’re supposed to be highly trained, disciplined members of the Federation’s peace keeping armada, and you can’t even properly beat a child abusing, drug addicted, alcoholic, unrepentant asshole to death!”
“We thought it best not to get sent down for murder sir, so we decided that some caution was advisable.” Phil offers, still not meeting Archer’s eyes.

“Oh like I’d have let them pin you with a murder charge. Who do you think I am? A lowly Vice Admiral? Do better next time, or I’ll permanently assign the lot of you to the coldest, bleakest uninhabitable outpost I can find. You’re dismissed, get out of my office you bunch of reprobates.”

Chris smirks as he throws a perfectly executed salute towards the Admiral, and about-turns with textbook precision. Archer winks at him, and Chris follows his two best friends out of the office with a grin.

152. Jim Kirk has more people in his corner that he ever could have predicted, and Chris couldn’t be happier with that.
Chapter 20

Chapter Notes

The reason there's been a fair while between updates is because I'm currently on a survey ship out on the Atlantic Ocean doing science!

It's just a normal sea ship and not a star ship unfortunately, but I'll take what I can get :)

The internet connection is pretty rubbish, so don't expect replies to comments and stuff :( I'll try and update the Appendix once I'm back on dry land :)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Chris! Finnegan just found out I got a Plebe year ship posting! His horrified face was hilarious! And he can’t do a damn thing about it because he’s still on probation and has to be on his best behaviour!”

Chris is standing in the middle of his bedroom, his bunk-crate sat open on his bed in front of him and piles of uniform, personal effects and equipment scattered around it, when Jim comes barrelling up to him. The young man is grinning from ear to ear and bouncing from one foot to another.

“He better not try anything,” Chris almost growls, holding up two t-shirts, trying to decide between them, “Marcus, Nogura and Archer are all watching his every move and if he so much as puts a toe out of line, he can forget doing his Masters. Hell, he can probably forget ever graduating period.”

“It’s a damn shame his suspension finished just in time for him to do his exams,” Jim morns. “If had been just two weeks longer, he would have had to repeat Upperclassman term two and I could have been free of him for most of next year.”

“Well you’re going to be free of him nearly all of summer instead.” Chris smiles, choosing to fold the navy blue tee and throwing the green one aside.

“I get to go to space Chris! On a mission!” Jim exhales, sounding just as awed as he did when Archer had told him for the first time last week.

“It won’t be all fun and games Jim,” Chris tells him. “You are going to have to work; running simulations for the Tactics and Navigations department, helping the engineers, running errands for pretty much everybody. They’ll keep you busy.”

“Yeah but space!”

153. Jim's adventurous streak is a mile wide.

“Go finish your packing you hyperactive menace; we have to be on board by 0715 tomorrow morning, so you need to be done in time to get a decent night’s sleep.”

Jim grins and slides out of the room to do just that.

As soon as he’s stowed his crate in his assigned room, Chris strides back to the turbolift and heads
towards the Medbay. As they’re only guests on Captain ch’Vrothi’s ship, Phil has none of the usual duties of a CMO, but he’ll undoubtedly be bossing around the other Doctors and Nurses just the same as always regardless.

“Captain Pike sir, glad to have you on board the USS Avenger. Have you been shown to your quarters yet?” Doctor Makaar, the Capellan CMO asks him as soon as he’s stepped foot into the Medbay.

“I have thank-you Doctor. I’m looking for Doctor Boyce. I presumed he’d make his way here no matter where he’d actually been assigned to.”

“Yes he’s here,” the doctor sighs with a rueful shake of his head. “I sent him to help out with the final stock checks in the supply cupboards in the back room. Hopefully that’ll keep him occupied long enough that I can get everything else sorted and settled without all my staff receiving contradicting orders every five minutes.”

“I’ll drag him up to the bridge with me when I go check in with Captain ch’Vrothi. That’ll keep him out of your hair for at least an hour hopefully.”

“It would be much appreciated, thank-you Captain.” Makaar smiles.

Chris chuckles and goes to collect his irritant of a best friend.

154. Jim gets bored easily

Chris isn’t surprised by this.

Jim goes running daily. During the day, he’s always socialising; even just walking around campus, Chris has noticed he’s always with a crowd of people. He usually spends his evenings with his head in notes and textbooks and journals until Chris drags him away for a break. He’s been blasting through his course at the Academy and powering through whatever his post-doc involves, at a speed so great you could almost call it reckless.

In short, he’s always doing something, and he’s always busy.

So no, Chris isn’t surprised that Jim gets bored easily.

Nor is he surprised that Jim doesn’t deal particularly well with boredom.

“Captain, I’ve just been informed that he’s disappeared into the navigations lab again,” Commander Neacax, the Avenger’s Betazoid Chief Science Officer sighs.

Chris sighs deeply as well.

“Alright, give me five and I’ll go haul him out and talk to him. What’s he actually supposed to be doing?”

“He was asked him to recalibrate the Trans-Warp Spatial Capacitor which should have taken him a couple of hours. But it’s only been half an hour and he’s apparently decided to wander off and find something else to do instead.”

“And that ‘something’ is haranguing the navigation department and getting underfoot?”

“It is indeed Captain, it is indeed.”
“Ensign Kirk!” Chris calls, striding into the lab confidently, “Care to explain why you’re in here doing other people’s work for them instead of your own again?”

Jim’s head pops up from behind a console, looking incredibly sheepish but annoyingly stubborn too.

“Captain Pike sir, I finished the recalibration so I was just-”

“Kirk, I don’t give a damn.” Chris cuts him off exasperatedly. “You have been told, by three separate members of staff no less -excluding myself- that when you’re done with one job, to go to your department supervisor and ask for another!”

“But they-“

“No buts. That’s how it works, and that’s what you should be doing!”

Jim adopts a frown that Chris automatically mentally compares to a sad kitten. Chris tries not to let it affect him, but he knows he’s fighting a losing battle.

“Alright,” Chris concedes with a sigh, “Come on. We’ll walk up the main observation deck and you can explain to me why you’re not going to your supervisor.”

“Um. Of course sir. Coming sir.”

155. Jim’s constant desire to help everyone gets him into all sorts of trouble.

Chris waits for the door for the empty observation platform on deck G to swish open, and then steps through the frame and over to the large aluminium viewing window, Jim on his heels. He waits for several long seconds, watching distant stars shoot by in a blur of bright warp trails, and then turns and leans on the nearest bulkhead.

“So kid. Tell me why you keep vanishing off to do your own thing against orders. This is Starfleet Jim, not happy hour on a tourist vessel; there are certain ways that you have to do things.”

Jim pulls a face, and glances down at the floor.

“I get that Chris, I really do. But I trained as an engineer and computer scientist, my math capability is pretty high, and I’m used to independent thinking and analysis. If I see a problem that needs fixing, I try and fix it. And I’ve told all my various supervisors that, and they still keep assigning me grunt work. Which again, I wouldn’t mind, if they gave me enough of it to keep me occupied. But they don’t! And then when I finish four times faster than they think I will, they’ve wandered off and I’m left at a loose end wasting my time.”

“And so instead of standing around waiting, you find things to keep you occupied.” Chris summarises.

“I get that Chris, I really do. But I trained as an engineer and computer scientist, my math capability is pretty high, and I’m used to independent thinking and analysis. If I see a problem that needs fixing, I try and fix it. And I’ve told all my various supervisors that, and they still keep assigning me grunt work. Which again, I wouldn’t mind, if they gave me enough of it to keep me occupied. But they don’t! And then when I finish four times faster than they think I will, they’ve wandered off and I’m left at a loose end wasting my time.”

“And so instead of standing around waiting, you find things to keep you occupied.” Chris summarises.

“I tried to follow the correct procedures the first dozen times Chris. But I can’t stand just hanging around being useless. So I help other people with their jobs and assignments.”

“You could just go find your supervisor when you’re done you know.” Chris points out.

“And get another dressing down for leaving my post?! Jim scowls, turning to glare out into space. “I have to stay in my assigned section during my shift unless asked to run an errand by a senior officer.”

“Well you are only an ensign currently son. I know I have a habit of treating you otherwise, but not
many other people are going to show you the same kind of favouritism.”

“That’s because you’re awesome unlike everyone else,” Jim mutters, only just loud enough for Chris to hear.

“Ok look,” Chris suspires, “I’ll talk to Commander Neacax and see if we can organise some more technically demanding work for you. Or maybe transfer for you into the engineering department for a few days.”

Jim grins enthusiastically at him.

“Thanks Chris! Oh, and would you tell him to train McGyner on the Ionic Wavelength Distorter? The guy will be a natural at it once he knows what he’s doing; he’s totally being wasted only doing Visible Spectroscopy analysis. And mention that…”

Chris resigns himself to having to listen to and memorise a long list of suggestion and ideas. And then has an idea of his own and lists another point:

156. The only way to keep Jim Kirk properly occupied while on board a Starship is to put him in charge of a group of people

He’ll take that one to Captain ch’Vrothi and see if they can put it into action.

157. Chris is just as bad as Jim where boredom is concerned.

He lists this point because after five days of being shipboard, he suddenly realises that not doing so would make him a massive hypocrite.

“Chris you’re pacing again.” Phil grates out, not looking up from his PADD.

“Do you think I could put my name down for a helmsman shift on the bridge?” Chris asks once he’s forced himself to stand still.

“You’re off duty Chris. And this isn’t your ship.”

“But I can still be useful right? I can help out. I’m a good pilot Phil!”

“Chris! Stop! Pacing!”

No, Chris doesn’t deal well with boredom either.

“Mr Pike, set us in standard synchronous orbit above the planet. A distance of 1000km should be acceptable.”

“Aye Captain.” Chris smirks, sliding his fingers across the screen and manipulating the necessary controls.

“Commander Hok, gather the landing party in the transporter room. Mr Pike, you are relieved of your post; go with the Commander and prepare to beam down. Miss Jarda, resume your place at the helm.”

“Aye Captain,” Chris repeats, turning his smirk into an all-out grin.
“You should never say “keep quiet and stay out of trouble” to Jim Kirk."

“Just remember lads, you’re only here to observe and learn. This is a good opportunity to see diplomacy and negotiations in action, so stay back but keep your eyes open and take note of what everyone says and does.”

Jim nods enthusiastically and bounces up on to the transporter pad, dragging Leo with him. Bones scowls at the doorway, grumbling quietly in a low growl.

Chris joins them on the pad, standing on a free dome between Jim and Phil. An Ensign and a Lieutenant from the security division fill the remaining two spaces and then Chris calls out “Energise”. The transporter technician slides the three bars up his screen, and they disappear in a stream of white light.

They rematerialize in a large stone hall lit by bright green screens high on the vaulted ceiling above them. The grey rock of the walls gleams subtly, the otherwise dull colour enhanced by flecks of a multitude of glistening reflective minerals in hues of every kind; a rainbow arc of light seems to bounce all along its surface, casting bright trails across the eyes of the group of officers and crewman stood before them.

At the end of the hall, a raised dais constructed of the same alien rock stands. Three large throne-like seats are set upon it, their backs constructed of artful twists that resemble what a native Terran would likely call a vine-wrapped tree. The stone branches twist elegantly towards a wide arched window, warm green sunlight filtering between them. A gentle breeze flows in with the beams, bringing with it a subtle hint of sea-salt tang.

Chris notes the taste, and recognises the hollow booming sound of distant waves crashing against the base of a tall cliff or precipice. Then his eyes track down from the wide window, back towards the seats at its base, focusing on the small crowd of beings gathered there.

The humanoid native species of Epicron IX are all rather tall individuals; the shortest Epicrons are all at least six-foot five, while the tallest reach heights greater than nine foot. But they’re also thin and willowy, their skin a purple so pale it’s almost white, and they glide around in their wispy drape-like clothing with an innate gracefulness that gives them an overall impression of fragility.

Chris knows better than to judge them by their appearance though; reports from the Federation’s last visit to the planet detail an incident in which one Epicron accidentally broke an Ensign’s left arm while greeting the young woman; the Epicron was excessively apologetic, but it happened none the less. Hopefully, a similar incident could be prevented from occurring this time around.

Chris has also read the section on Epicron’s culture and lifestyle several times, so he’s mentally prepared for the greeting they receive when the group from the dais glide down the steps and across the glimmering floor towards them. The rest of the initial landing party however, are very much not.

“K’thon Backka. A pleasure to meet you.” Chris nods at the foremost of the approaching Epicrons, bending a little at the waist in a slight bow. Backka shimmers to a halt, smiling gently, those behind him following suite. The tall alien slowly brings his hands together, left fist pressed to right palm in front of his chest. He then returns Chris’ bow with a flourish, and nods respectively to the others in the landing party.

“I’m Captain Christopher Pike, the chief of negotiations for this trade mission,” Chris continues.
“Captain ch’Vrothi and the senior officers of the USS Avenger will be joining us shortly, if that is acceptable to you?”

Backka’s smile turns into a blinding white smile and he thrusts both his hands forward, offering the Epicron equivalent of a handshake. Chris clasps the alien’s wrists and rotates his arms outwards, completing the gesture.

“Yo dudes! Wat up!” Backka laughs, releasing Chris’ wrists. “Totally rockin’ to have y’all gracing our hunk of rock with yo presence! O’course yo homies can join us; a party ain’t a party till the whole squad shows!”

Beside Chris, Jim’s eyebrows shoot up into his hairline and he chokes back what Chris recognises to be the start of an incredulous noise. Phil elbows the young man in the arm, but the doctor’s own face is screwed up in an effort not to burst out laughing.

“Well I’ll be damned.” Bones breathes quietly, one eyebrow hitched up.

Chris smiles himself, and flips his Ship Comm open with a beep to call down the next landing party.

“Um. Chris?” Jim mutters quietly, sliding up behind Chris. They’ve been down on the planet for three days, and so far, everything has run smoothly. The Epicrons are more than willing to join the Federation, enthusiastically offering up their planet as a tourist destination in exchange for access to the medical technology that Phil, Makaar and Leo have been demonstrating to them.

So far.

“Yes Jim?” Chris replies softly, still gazing out at the festivities and slowly sipping his vibrant azure wine.

“Well, you know how Epicrons form relationships in trios right? Usually one male, one female and one androgynous individual, but any combination really. And sometimes pairs where they currently lack a third.”

“Yes?” Chris replies slowly, turning to peer suspiciously at his kid.

“Well I sort of told one of the young women here that her eyes shone like polished amethysts shining in the dual moonlight and her partners heard me. I didn’t mean anything by it, I was just being politely complimentary, but they now think I’m trying to steal her in order to complete a trio with myself and Bones. I told them that I wasn’t and explained that human relationships are primarily couples, but they wouldn’t accept it and stormed off shrieking about revenge…”

Chris pinches his brow and groans, wishing that he’d never had to make Point 61.

“Goddammit Jim! Twelve hours. Twelve hours! That’s all the time we have left on this planet before we could have left problem free! You know how seriously Epicrons take their relationships, and what do you go and do!?”

“I’m sorry Chris! I was just being nice!”

“Jim Kirk, you wouldn’t know the difference between being nice and being flirty if it punched you in the face! What did I tell you? Keep quiet and stay out of trouble! That’s what!”

“I don’t flirt with everyone!” Jim protests. “Have I ever flirted with you huh? Or with Phil?”
“Oh god, don’t go there,” Chris winces “I’m cringing even contemplating it.”

“Same actually.” Jim adds, also pulling a face. “The idea feels even more incestuous now than it did when Finnegan spread all those rumours about us back in February.”

Chris nods in agreement, swallowing a large mouthful of his drink.

“Anyway, this is besides point.” He continues after lowering his glass. “Come on, we best go find ch’Vrothi and Backka and sort this mess out before it becomes a problem.”

Backka frowns when Chris finishes recounting what Jim told him.

Ch’Vrothi sighs and shakes chis head.

Phil and Bones both cross their arms across their chest at the same time, while Hok, Makaar and Neacax all adopt various grimaces.

“Oh bro, it ain’t good, this ain’t. Dem homies gonna be madder at you than a wet sack o’ angry kittocats.” Backka commiserates, patting Jim consolingly on the top of his head. “How we gonna fix this for you, my main man? Ain’t right that you gotta deal wit dis. Ain’t right at all. Ain’t yo fault that yo culture is different. Dem homies should know you ain’t tryna steal their precious. What we gonna do bro, what we gonna do?”

And that’s when Chris sees it.

The pale blue dot of light flickering across Jim’s chest, settling and steadying over Jim’s heart.

Chris doesn’t think, just shouts and throws himself at Jim.

160. Chris will take a bullet for Jim.

And he’s pretty sure it is an actual antiquated projectile bullet, if the sharp hot searing that erupts from the middle of his back is anything to go by.

He groans, agony flaring up and down his body and doesn’t try to stop the blackness from blotting out the world when Phil suddenly rolls him onto his side and pulls his head into his lap, a bloodied hand pressing gently against his cheek.

Chapter End Notes

The Memory Beta page for Andorian genders (ch’Vrothi is an Adorian Chan)

When I was describing the walls of the Epicron hall, I was thinking of Opal :)

Capellan names are pronounced with two separate emphasis' on double vowels, so Makaar is pronounced like Macka-are
Hello all!

Back on dry land with lots of core samples to process in the lab :) I’m afraid my update rate isn’t going to improve much, as I’ve got a lot to do in the coming weeks. Sorry :(

PS. Appendix finally up to date again, and some more artwork added! (don’t forget you can suggest stuff to add to it, or send me your own work if you like!)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Beeping.

A slow, steady, monotone pattern.

Two beats. A pause. Two more beats.

A cycle without pause nor end. Just one two. One two. One two.

One two.

“Chris. Chris if you can hear me, squeeze my hand. Chris? Please Chris.”

“…Hand me that scalpel! And would someone please turn the-”

“Doctor! His BP! It’s-”

“Goddammit Christopher Pike, I swear I’ll-”

“James T. Kirk! Get back in bed!”

“I just want to sit with him for a bit Phil.”

“You still have a hole in your left shoulder! Go lie down before I make…”

Chris loses track of the voices as he’s swallowed by the darkness once more.

“He’s going to be okay right?”

“He’ll be just fine kid. Just fine.”

161. You can’t keep Jim Kirk in a hospital bed
Chris forces his gummy feeling eyes open and finds himself staring at a sterile white ceiling. Slowly, he becomes aware that he can hear the low hum of whirring machinery, a distant drone of murmuring voices, and that he can feel the familiar rumbling vibrations of a moving starship thrumming through his bones.

Someone shuffles beside him, sighing deeply, and Chris feels the side of the bed shift slightly. Chris smiles, knowing immediately who’s leaning on the metal bars running down the side of the bed.

“M’sure you’re ‘sposed to be in bed kid,” Chris rasps out, his throat feeling drier than the Sahara Desert.

“Oh my god Chris! You’re awake! Phil! Phil he’s awake!”

Jim sits bolt upright immediately, and within seconds, Chris’ vision is filled with the sight of the lad leaning over him. Worry is warring with relief on his face, and his hands keep making aborted movements towards Chris.

“Ah, sleeping beauty does indeed return to land of the living.” Phil growls from somewhere off to the left. “About time.”

Chris doesn’t try to talk again, the pain from his previous attempt warning him off from doing so, and instead just turns his head sideways and shoots Phil a smirk. Phil rolls his eyes and walks up to the bed and around to the side to stand next to Jim.

“Well then.” Phil breathes, unhooking a PADD from the railings, knowing from previous mishaps that Chris would want to know his status straight away. “So basically you are going to be fine. The penetration wound was through and through, missing your spine by a good inch and somehow avoided all the major arteries. Two of your ribs were completely shattered as the projectile exited your chest, and a hell of a lot of muscular damage was done, but thanks to McCoy’s frankly astonishingly good trauma surgery skills, that’s proven surprisingly easy to repair. You also lost one heck of a lot of blood, so even after the rest of the multiple transfusions you still need, you’re going to feel very light headed and rather cold for a few days. You cracked your wrist when you landed, so as soon as your body has the energy to handle it, I’ll need to do some regen work to repair the fracture. On the plus side, for once in your life you actually managed to avoid being concussed. But you spent a good long while in shock instead, so expect your reaction times and such things to be slow anyway. Other than that, you’ll soon be right as rain. Well, at least you will be until I beat you black and blue for being a goddamn idiot again.”

Chris nods, taking in the explanation and ascribes each part to the various dull aches from his body. Then he very pointedly looks at Jim, who’s got his own swath of bandages peeking out the top of his pyjama t-shirt, his arm in a sling, and bags under his eyes darker than lumps of coal.

“And as for our Jimmy here,” Phil continues, understanding Chris’ gesture perfectly, “your stupid heroics shifted him out of the way of a fatal shot, but the projectile passed out your chest and lodged itself in his shoulder. I operated on him and got it out while Bones and Makaar saved your dumb ass, but thanks to his endless ream of crazy allergies, I can’t use a dermal regenerator on him until the last of the anaesthetic alternative I used passes out of his blood stream. So in the mean time he’s got actual stiches holding his shoulder together! Stiches! I had to sew him together like a frikin’ rag doll! Talk about antiquated!”

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162. Only Jim Kirk could cause this kind of medical problem.

Phil grimaces as he relays this last part, and Jim shuffles self-consciously where he’s stood next to him.
Chris debates trying to speak again, and then decides against it and pats Jim’s free arm reassuringly instead.

“And on that note,” Phil announces cheerily with a clap, his eyes darting once down to Chris’ hand, “you son, are going to bed!”

Jim immediately starts protesting, sliding closer to Chris’ head and leaning sideways once more on the metal bars of the bed. Phil remains resolute in the face of Jim’s puppy-dog eyes though, and points at the door with a stern look. Jim eventually shuffles out pouting, Phil following him after reassuring Chris he’d be back in less than a minute.

Chris smiles softly at them both, and then shuts his eyes and lets the exhaustion he’s been holding off swallow him again.

163. Jim is the textbook definition of a ‘walking trouble magnet’

Chris’ latest point is technically a partial repeat of Point 64, but given what he’s hearing now, he decides it deserves to stand alone.

“So your telling me that Jim being the target for the shooting actually had nothing to do with the two jealous lovers?” Chris asks, shuffling to sit more upright in the Biobed.

“No, he just happened to be the easiest to aim at out of the group of us gathered at the head of the hall,” Captain ch’Vrothi sighs as he rubs at the base of chis right antenna. “The responsible party were actually Epicrons claiming to be members of the Jaxxabarkan. Which is essentially what you Terrans would call a far right movement, and what my people call a bunch of over opinionated bigoted idiots. And we’re rather a militaristic race as you well know, so that’s saying something.”

Chris chuckles, glad when his still sore chest doesn’t flare up agony at the action.

“Yes well,” Chris replies dryly with a smirk, “you Andorians might have organised your entire society around your Imperial Guard and your service to it, but you still have an exceptionally rigorous code of honour. You’d never resort to such underhanded methods to make your point.”

Ch’Vrothi chuckles as well, crossing chis arms across chis chest.

“If I’m honest, I was tempted to challenge the leaders of the rebellious faction to Ushaan once we apprehended them,” che admits with a very human shrug. “I consider any assault to you and yours to be a personal affront to me given that you are my guest aboard my ship. Fortunately for them, Mr Neacax dissuaded me from the idea; they’re in the Brigg instead, enjoying the hospitality of my security team.”

“Fortunately for them.” Chris repeats with a grin bordering on viscous.

Ch’Vrothi watches Chris silently for a few seconds, and then smirks viciously as well.

“Well I’ll leave you to your rest Mr Pike,” the Avenger’s Captain eventually says, “If I keep you from it any longer, I have no doubt your Doctor Boyce will chase me down to give me some or the other inoculation that I don’t actually need.”

Chris laughs again, and settles back against his pillows with a smile.

“If I can go? You’re signing me out of Medbay?”
“Yes Cappy. Now get dressed before I change my mind.”

“You do that and I’ll stage a rebellion and organise a mutiny.”

“Watch it Christopher, or I’ll suddenly remember to give you another set of nutrient boosters.”

Chris gulps and starts buckling his boots even faster.

164. Jim Kirk has nightmares

When Chris finally gets back to his room on Deck K, Phil hovering behind him like a concerned mother the entire way, he steps through the doorway to find Jim fast asleep in his bunk. Rather than his own sleep wear, he’s wearing Chris’ old maroon Class of 2233 Academy t-shirt, and what he thinks are Leo’s flannel sleep pants. He’s also curled up tightly on his side with the bedsheets bunched up and twisted around him, one of the bunk’s two pillows clutched to his chest.

More importantly to Chris, his breathing is also quite erratic, his face is screwed up in what looks like pain, and his grip on the pillow is tight enough to bleach his knuckles white.

Chris hurries over to the edge of the bunk immediately, sliding to his knees and leaning forward. Behind him, Chris hears Phil cuss and drop Chris’ small duffle bag none too gently to the floor.

“Jim,” Chris breathes, running his hand gently across Jim’s damp cheek. “Jim son, you need to wake up now.”

Jim whimpers in his sleep, and one hand suddenly shoots out grasping. Chris catches it in his own hand and pulls it against his chest, rubbing his thumb in small circles over Jim’s index finger. His other hand, he leaves resting gently on the back of Jim’s neck.

“Jimmy, open your eyes. Shhh shh, come on wake up now kid.”

Phil has stepped up behind Chris, a solid reassuring presence at his back, and he drops a hand onto Chris shoulder.

“Jimmy! Wake up!” Chris says louder and more firmly.

Jim sits bolt upright.

“Hey hey hey,” Chris soothes, running his now-freed hands gently up and down Jim’s damp cheek. Jim takes in several deep shuddering breathes, his whole body trembling, and his eyes dart around the room rapidly. Eventually after several more long moments, his gaze settles on Chris and he frowns in confusion.

“Da-dad?” Jim stutters brokenly, “I thought- I thought-”

Chris’ breath catches in his throat, and he forces his hands to keep moving despite his shock. Phil’s grip on his shoulder tightens just enough for Chris to notice.

165. Jim Kirk will probably never stop taking Chris by surprise

“Jim, it’s me,” he tells Jim softly, “It’s me Chris.”

“But I saw you die,” Jim whispers back wide eyed.

“I’m here Jim. I’m here and alive,” he reassures him. Jim’s face crumples again, and Chris suddenly
finds himself with his arms wrapped around Jim’s back while the young man gasps against his chest. “He’s been like this nearly every night, even when we’ve convinced him to take a sedative” Phil suddenly says from behind him in a low rumble. “It’s why he’s been looking so pale and drawn all the time recently. Made Bones and I promise not to tell you until you’d been released from Medbay; he didn’t want to worry you while you were still recovering.”

Chris turns his head slightly to glance up at Phil, who’s grimacing and looking extremely unhappy. Their eyes meet and Phil’s expression becomes more apologetic.

“Come on,” the Doctor continues with a sigh, “let’s get the two of you up on the bunk. Maybe he’ll sleep better with you around.”

Chris shuffles slightly, changing his grip on Jim so that when Phil helps him to stand, the young man doesn’t get dragged further off the bed. Once he’s mostly upright, he turns and slides himself onto the bunk, Jim lying in the V of his legs and resting on his chest. He’s putting an uncomfortable amount of pressure over the still aching area where the bullet exited his body, but Chris ignores the dull pain, prioritising Jim over his own comfort.

Phil pulls the sheet carefully from around Jim’s legs, shakes it out and then quickly but carefully lays it back over the bed. Then, with a roll of his eyes, he sets about unbuckling Chris’ boots for him and yanking them off.

“Thanks.” Chris grunts, trying to pull his belt out his belt loops without disturbing Jim overly much; Jim was still tremoring slightly, but he seemed to have settled into a light doze and Chris was loathe to wake him up further.

Phil grunts back in acknowledgement, and then turns and starts rummaging in Chris’ bag, still lying tilted by the half open door. He returns clutching Chris’ PADD, and puts it carefully on the shelf next to the head of the bed.

“I’ve turned all your morning alarms off,” he tells Chris quietly. “And silenced all your alerts and notifications so we should be able to sleep straight through to morning.”

“We should be able to?” Chris questions.

“What, you think I’m going anywhere? I’ll sleep in the arm chair.”

“That’s gonna kill your back,” Chris winces sympathetically.

“Well I’d get in the bed with you too if I could, but ship-bunks are narrower than a splintered plank of wood.”

Chris looks at the narrow strip of mattress remaining between him and Jim and the wall, and then back at Phil with a shrug. Phil eyes him sceptically.

“Are you serious? I’m not a twig like you two; I actually have muscle mass and shoulders Chris.”

Chris shrugs again with a slight smile and reaches down with one hand to flip the safety field up along the open side of the bunk, shuffling up against it.

“You’re insane,” Phil mumbles. But he does slide the door the rest of the way shut, grab the spare blankets, and then start to tug his own boots off.

166. Chris has no idea how he would cope with Jim without Phil there to constantly support
Chris wakes with his back pressed against the foot-high safety force field, someone’s arm hooked around his neck, a mouth full of hair, and both a foot and knee pressing insistently against his bladder.

He blinks owlishly in the low light and strangles back a groan when he tries to move his arm only to discover it’s got the weight of two full-grown men lying on it. He tries to shift his shoulders experimentally instead and then realises how well and truly he’s been pinned.

He spits the hair out of his mouth again and promptly breathes it up his nose instead.

“Goddammit.” He grumbles quietly. His feet are cold and numb, the sheets having ridden up during the night to rest somewhere across everyone’s waists.

With little other choice, he closes his eyes again, drops his forehead back against the side of Jim’s and tries to will himself back to sleep.

167. (See also Point 101) Chris should never let Phil agree with his crazy ideas ever again

“Um. Guys?”

Much to his own surprise, he must have actually managed to doze back off, because he wakes again to the sound of Jim’s voice to find him peering sideways at him with a confused look.

“Oh god,” Phil suddenly moans in a high pitch from behind Jim, “I can’t feel my legs.”

“Why are you both cuddling me in bed?” Jim asks, sounding mildly hysterical.

“Jim, would you please get your elbow out of my neck!” Phil continues to whine, ignoring Jim’s question entirely. Jim twists between them, and Chris fails to bite back a whimper when he suddenly regains sensation in his arm all at once.

“Sorry sorry!” Jim apologises profusely, guilt sliding down his face like a mask.

“Okay. Just, everyone lie still alright.” Phil gasps out tightly.

Chris squeezes his eyes shut, and tries to ignore the extreme pins and needles racing up and down his arm.

“Phil?” he asks shakily after a few seconds have ticked by in silence. “Don’t ever listen to my dumb ideas ever again okay?”

“Oh hell no I won’t,” Phil groans back.

“Seriously, what’s going on?” Jim asks again.

“Chris had a stupid idea.” Phil answers.

“Oh my God, did I climb into bed with you like a terrified three-year-old?” Jim suddenly exclaims horrified, shooting upright and turning to peer back at them.

“Jim!” Chris and Phil both cry at the same time, both having had Jim’s elbows suddenly stab into them as he sat up.
“Sorry but- Well did I? I’m twenty-three for Nova’s sake!” Jim asks again, his face rapidly turning beet-red.

“Not so much.” Chris grunts, rubbing at the not yet faded scar on his chest.

“More you were in the bed and then we got in with you,” Phil adds.

“Right.” Jim says with a frown. And then, “Um. Why?”

Phil looks across the bed at Chris and raises and eyebrow. Chris huffs in resignation and looks back at Jim again.

“Well, after I left Medbay and came back here last night… When I arrived you were sleeping less than peacefully.”

Jim’s colouration drops from bright red to pale white near-instantly, the blood draining from his face rapidly.

“Oh,” he near whispers, “I remember now.”

“Jimmy it’s not a probl-” Chris starts hurriedly, only to cut off when Jim suddenly drops back to lie between them again; face down, despite the complete lack of space.

He mumbles something unintelligible into the pillow, and Chris exchanges a questioning and worried look with Phil over his head. Phil shrugs back and shifts Jim’s shoulder a little, settling it atop his chest more comfortably.

“Neither of us understand pillow-gabble,” Phil tells him, poking him behind his ear.

Jim groans loudly and mumbles something else equally as incomprehensible.

“Oi! Jimbo!” Phil grumbles, poking him several more times.

Jim’s head slowly slides sideways until his nose is no more than a handful of inches from Chris’. Despite the extreme closeness, Chris forces his eyes to focus on Jim’s, absently noting how ridiculously bright blue they are again.

“I remember- I remember calling you Dad,” Jim says quietly.

Chris holds his gaze steadily, and when Jim’s expression doesn’t change either, he allows the corners of his mouth to curl up in a soft smile.

“You’re not mad?” Jim asks frowning.

“Of course he’s not kiddo!” Phil exclaims with an overdramatic wave of his hands before Chris can say anything.

“Really?”

“Why would I be mad?” Chris asks him, genuinely confused.

“But, what about- I mean, George Kirk was a hero. I shouldn’t just disregard-”

“You can have both you know,” Phil snorts wryly in the middle of Jim’s sentence. “It’s allowed.”

Both Jim and Chris frown, neither of them understanding.
“Seriously?” Phil exclaims, “the two of you are so similarly slow-witted and dense, it’s a wonder that you’re not related by blood! Stop protesting, it’s true! Oh for-look! You can have both a Father and a Dad. Stars Chris, you at least should have worked that one out given that you have both yourself.”

“My situation isn’t exactly the same though!” Chris protests weakly, “My father is a complete and utter douche canoe! George Kirk very much isn’t. Wasn’t.”

“And?” Phil cries. “Lords, why are you even complaining, does it matter!?”

Chris stops. Because he genuinely doesn’t know why he is protesting; he already accepted Jim as his weeks ago anyway.

Jim is still looking at him agog.

“Well if you’re okay with it…?” he asks Jim hesitantly.

Jim watches him silently, and Chris tries to clamp down on his increasing anxiety to no avail.

“Sure thing, Dad.” Jim finally smiles shyly, tucking his head down under Chris chin.

**168. Jim belongs to Chris, heart and soul.**

“Christ, can we go find some breakfast now?” Phil whines, completely ruining the moment, “I seriously need some bacon to replace all the testosterone I just lost dealing with you two weepy saps.”

Chris reaches over Jim and punches Phil in the arm. Hard.

In my head, immediately following this, Bones walks in:

"Oh hell blazing Christ! I spend frikin' hours wondering where the hell y'all have gotten to this morning, and when I eventually find you, you're all snuggled up in bed! Together!"

Phil groans loudly again, and turns to glare at the younger doctor.

"Go fetch me bacon Medbay Minion. Please!"

"Bacon? What? Wait... Jim are those my pants!? Goddammit kid!"
Chapter Notes

For those of you who've been asking: yes, you can count the little section from last chapter's end notes as 'canon' to this fic :)

POLL STANDINGS: [23/10/2016 21:12BST]
Romance: 56
Bromance: 55

Technically, there's still time to vote, but given how neck on neck it's been I think I've come up with a solution that'll please both groups. I won't share details now because spoilers, but expect things in the future...

PS. PLEASE READ THE END NOTES!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

169. Claiming Jim Kirk apparently means you get claimed by his mother in return.

“My son just called you Dad.”

Chris shuffles uneasily under Winona Kirk’s unblinking gaze.

“Um.” Chris replies eloquently.

“My son, my Jimmy, my genius rebel child with more trust issues than a Federation Spy in embedded in the Klingon Empire, just barged into your office like he owns the place, waved at me with a cheerful smile and greeting as if he hasn’t been ignoring my existence for the most part for the last eight years, ruffled your hair, stole your lunch, and then waltzed right back out of here shouting “see you later dad!” over his shoulder like it’s an everyday occurrence!”

“Erm. It was Phil’s idea?” Chris tries hesitantly.


“…Yeeeesss?”

“Nice guy, brilliant doctor. Sarcastic bastard though. Are you actually sleeping with him or should I write that off as another crazy ‘Fleet rumour? Actually, who cares, you’re sweet together anyway, so I won’t pilfer. Wait does this mean Jim’s going to start calling him Dad too? That would get confusing. Maybe one of you should switch to Papa or something. I would like joint parenting rights now that Jim is at least partially acknowledging me again. Co-parenting? Tri-parenting? So long as Jim agrees of course. Jim’s opinion in all this takes priority obviously.”

Winona is talking so rapidly at him, it takes Chris a few seconds to parse what she just said. However, when his brain has finally caught up, he realises with a small burst of panic that she’s already set off talking a mile a minute again.
“I can’t see Jim not agreeing though. I shouted at some people for leaving me out of the loop last time I had shore leave on Earth, and now I actually get informed when something happens to my child. So I heard about Epicron IX and Jim getting shot at and you actually getting shot. Heard you have a pretty epic scar too, on account the actual solid projectile that was fired at you. I guess willingly taking an actual physical bullet for my boy does give you parental rights over him, but I’m still incredibly bemused by the whole thing anyway. You know what? We should go dinner as a family unit. Make sure you invite your Phil. And that other doctor. The young grumpy one that Jim is no doubt denying being in love with. A friend sent me some pictures of the two of them on the quad together. Talk about matching lovesick expressions. Yes him, you should invite him too.”

“Dinner?” Chris asks, latching onto to the one part of Winona’s rambling that isn’t make him want to cringe.

“I’m thinking Italian,” Winona continues, dropping unconcernedly into the chair in front of Chris’ desk, her hands still waving around madly. “Pizza and pasta are safe bets with Jim in both taste terms and in actual safety terms. Then again, you probably already know that. Ha, who am I kidding, of course you know that. You live with Jim; he calls you Dad! I bet you even know why he has crazy eating habits and a mind-bogglingly long list of allergies. Yeah, your face just did the thing, the sad thing. Yes, that thing! Which means you do know. I’m impressed he told you. Or let you work it out at least? Whatever. You know what happened, that’s the important part. Anyway. Dinner. I think we should go tonight, I’ll book a table, I know a place!”

“Err no! No can do!” Chris garbles out hurriedly, waving his own hands about frantically now.

“What? Why not?” Winona immediately asks, pouting in the same exaggerated manner that Jim always uses.

“It’s my birthday today.” Chris explains quickly, “Jim made me promise not to make any plans.”

“Oh!” Winona exclaims joyfully, her grin sudden and blinding. “You should have told me Christopher! I would have brought you a present! Wait, that’s a good idea!” She climbs to her feet again, and almost literally skips to the door.

“Stay here,” she tells him sternly from his doorway, “I’ll be back in an hour.”

And then she darts forward to the desk again, drops a kiss on his forehead and runs back out his office shouting Happy Birthday over her shoulder.

Chris sits back in his chair, completely dazed.

170. Jim is not the only Kirk who can blast through your life and sanity like a tornado

“Winona was here and then Jim stole your lunch?” Number One repeats back to him not ten minutes later.

“That’s about the gist of it yeah,” Chris sighs with a chuckle, running his hand back through his hair.

“She completely verbally steamrollered you again didn’t she,” Phil smirks.

“Utterly flattened me,” Chris agrees, trying to swipe one of Phil’s sausage rolls. Phil bats his hand away with a glower and clutches his Tupperware closer to his chest. Chris pouts and looks pleadingly at Number One instead.

“Don’t look at me like that Chris,” she tells him flatly, “my sandwiches are stuffed with basil tofu, so
“You wouldn’t eat it even if I gave you one.”

“You shouldn’t have let ‘immy ‘ake yours.” Phil grins around a mouthful. Number One scowls at him for it, which only makes Phil grin wider.

“You disgust me,” she growls, thwacking his shoulder with the back of her hand.

Chris uses Phil’s distraction to lean over and steal a slice of ham and cheese quiche.

Winona Kirk barges back into Chris’ office without knocking at the exact moment Phil manages to pin Chris to the floor using his one of his old high school wrestling moves. Chris is red in the face from laughing so much, his mouth covered in flakes of stolen pastry, and Phil is cussing him loudly in a mixture of Tellerite and poorly pronounced Vulcan.

Number One is sat calmly watching them, her feet propped up on Chris’ desk. Winona looks at the two flailing men on the floor, up to Number One, and then back down to the floor.

“Commander Kirk,” Number One nods at her. Chris grins and brings his knee up into Phil’s stomach, who moans and then growls.

“Captain One,” Winona nods back absently, her expressions rapidly cycling between confusion, fascination, and amusement.

“Ignore the children,” Number One tells her, nonchalantly popping a cherry tomato into her mouth, “I usually do.”

Winona’s eyebrow quirks upwards, and her head tilts sideways, eyes still fixed on Chris and Phil. Phil jams his hands under Chris’ collar, tickling him mercilessly. Chris claws at Phil’s arms and giggles uncontrollably.

“You know what,” Winona breathes dumbfounded, “on second thoughts I’ll find you later tonight when you’re not…” she waves her hands in their general direction, allowing the movement to complete her sentence, and then swivels on the spot and leaves in a hurry.

“I think that went well.”

“Did you see her face Chris!”

“Well hopefully she now thinks I’m as confusing as I think she is.”

“Maybe not confusing,” Number One chips in. “She’ll think you’re insane yes, but perhaps not confusing.”

“Same thing isn’t it?” Phil chuckles.

171. Not all of Chris’ craziness can be attributed to Jim; some of it definitely predates him!

172. Jim Kirk should not be allowed to organise birthday parties.

For one thing, apparently his first instinct is to go and recruit Jonathon Archer to help out.

“I was only expecting half a dozen people or so,” Chris blurts out, somewhat surprised by the number of people milling about Archer’s back garden; nearly as many as the summer BBQ a year
ago.

“You’re forty-five years young today Christopher,” Archer smirks evilly, “When Jim asked if I had any ideas, I couldn’t not make a big deal of it.”

“This is revenge for getting shot and nearly dying isn’t it?”

“Well I did tell you after the initial briefing that if you went and did anything heroically stupid, there would be hell to pay.”

“Just please tell me you left the HoloCam inside this time Jon? My reputation got tarnished enough the last time around.”

“No promises kiddo,” Archer laughs, “I had way too much fun at your expense last September to not at least consider it.”

Chris sighs exaggeratedly, and wades into the crowd with his hands thrown above his head.

Chris has an ice cold beer in one hand, his other arm thrown around Jim’s shoulders, and he’s leaning back against Phil’s chest. Number One slides over to them smoothly and drops a bright red party hat on Chris’ head with a slight smile. Phil reaches around and pings the elastic chord under his chin with a snigger. Bones’, who’s leaning against Jim’s other side, extracts revenge on Chris’ behalf by clipping Phil round the ear with a snap of his fingers. Spock ghosts up to the group with his usual bland expression, Uhura close behind him. They both pause at the same moment and raise the same eyebrow.

173. Jim’s and Chris’ friends are the same people these days.

There’s no divide anymore; no “Jim’s” and no “Chris”’. Just one big group.

Smiling, Chris takes another long draw from his bottle, and leans more of his weight back against Phil.

“Captain Pike! Looking rather more upright that you were earlier. Hey Jim, how are you doing honey?”

“Mom? I didn’t know you were coming?” Jim frowns, shifting under Chris’ arm. Chris takes a second to be thankful Jim’s initial reaction to his mother’s sudden appearance is surprisingly calm.

“Well I wasn’t going to love, but my plans to get this over and done with this afternoon were somewhat interrupted by this one’s unexpected antics,” she replies, gesturing at Chris.

“Antics?” Jim asks, glancing questioningly at Chris.

“Have I ever told you about Phil’s high school wrestling career?” Chris laughs.

“Wrestling? Phil?” Jim replies incredulously, looking the man in question up and down.

“Hey! Don’t look so surprised! I was good!” Phil protests.


“Well I was good.” Phil mumbles sulkily. Chris hurriedly switches the topic back to Winona’s reason for being there in the first place, hoping to stop Phil from actually starting to sulk.
“Right! Yes!” Winona grins. “I went to grab this out of storage for you.”

She hands him a dusty rectangular package wrapped in worn brown paper. Once he has hold of it, Chris notes that it’s actually quite heavy and pretty solid feeling; if he had to guess right now, he’d go with it being a large hardback paper book.

“Thanks,” he tells her distractedly, still turning the parcel about in his hands.

“He always does this,” he hears Jim sigh, “he can never just open a present; always has to inspect the wrapping paper to death first. You should have seen him with the stuff I gave him this morning. I swear he was more interested in the cats printed on the paper than the set of framed HoloPics inside it!”

“Shush you,” Chris mumbles at him, nudging him with his elbow. Jim mock glares and rubs his arm, but immediately starts smiling again when Chris finally starts picking at the tape stuck to it.

When he finally gets the paper off, Chris realises his guess wasn’t actually that far off; it is indeed some kind of old large book. There’s no writing or images on the cover, just the plain maroon of the book cloth it’s bound with, and a thin line of gold tooling running either side of the spine. He shifts it in his hands, and the pages crackle with an almost plastic like rustling, leaving Chris even more intrigued.

Then Chris flips the book open and blinks in surprise several times.

“Oh seriously Mom!” Jim groans, embarrassment clear in his tone.

It’s an old fashioned photo album. With actual vintage photos rather than the HoloPics of the modern age. There’s four or so attached with fine ribbon to each page, and a clear sheet of aluminium acetate clipped over each one as protection. And every photo is of Jim.

174. Young Jim was surprisingly cute

Well, Chris amends wryly, it’s not that much of a surprise given how much of heartbreaker the adult version of Jim has turned out to be. But none the less, he apparently had the wide blue eyes and floppy blonde hair effect down to a fine art even in his toddler years.

Chris’ smile threatens to strain his face muscles when he flips over another page and comes across one of Jim hanging upside down from a tree and grinning for all he’s worth. He must be about six in the photo, and the t-shirt he’s wearing has a worn image of the USS Yorktown and the words To Boldly Go printed on it. Phil chuckles over his shoulder when he too notices the photo, and Jim reddens like a tomato beside them both.

“You’ve got good taste in ships,” Phil tells the young man with a grin.

“I bought that t-shirt for him long before you boys got your grubby mitts on the Yorktown,” Winona tells them smirking, “so you can’t claim any responsibility for that one. But as he didn’t outgrow his obsession with Constellation Class ships until well into his teen years, you can be blamed for that time he tried to sneak on board the Odyssey the one time I brought him to the Spacedock here in San Fran. Your chief engineer was the one who caught him and dragged him back to me kicking and screaming!”

“Mom!” Jim shouts indignantly.

“You tried to sneak on board the Odyssey?” Chris asks Jim incredulously.
“I was nine!” Jim cries with a wave of his hands.

“Actually I remember that,” Number One adds with an amused expression. “I never knew who, just that some kid had been found hiding in a Jefferies tube by Caitlin Barry.”

“Why did no-one think to tell me!?” Chris asks, turning to his old XO with a mildly accusing stare.

“Cait had it under control,” she replies with a carefree shrug. “You were busy being Captainly.”

“Yeah well now I’m wondering what else went on behind my back that you all decided not to ‘bother’ me with!”

Number One, Winona and Phil break out in knowing grins at the same time, and Chris sighs deeply. Jim at least, joins Chris in looking disturbed, and Chris is absurdly grateful for his presence in his life all over again.

“Pike, after more than thirty years of service to the ‘Fleet, trust me when I tell you that you’re better off not knowing,” Winona laughs, clapping him on the shoulder. “Now. I’m going to go bug Archer and April about that empty posting for a Chief on the Potemkin, so you look after both that album and my boy and I’ll catch you later! Or at least I’ll attempt to. Depends on both of our schedules I suppose. And Jim’s. You should prioritise Jim’s schedule over anything I try and plan. Unless it’s that dinner I was talking about, in which case attendance is mandatory. I’ll Comm you a place and time. Do I have your Comm number Pike? Actually no worries, I’ll get it from the system if I don’t. Jim honey, I’ll Comm you too. Now behave for your father. Fathers? And Captain Thirrwood here too; you should definitely behave for her. Oh! And you must properly introduce me to this Bones of yours! Where is he anyway? Is that him over there with that baby faced Vulcan? Actually I might go talk to them first before Archer. Later all!”

She plants a loudly smacking kiss on Jim’s forehead despite his protestations, grabs Chris in a rib cracking hug to Chris’ utter surprise, and then bounces away with entirely too much energy.

“I’m so glad I’m not the only one who gets verbally railroaded by her,” Jim mutters to Chris several seconds later, both of them watching Winona approach Leo, Spock and Uhura with a look of apprehension.

“…Fathers? Plural?” Phil asks bemused from behind them.

“Don’t.” Chris replies dryly. “Just, don’t.”

“Good God man! You said your mother was a spirited individual Jim, but I think you shaved a little off the truth! I could feel my brain frying tryin’ to keep up her gabblin’!”

“She is indeed a …singular individual.” Spock adds with a not-frown. “In all my experiences with humanity, I believe I have never met someone with such forceful charisma. It was at times, somewhat overwhelming to experience.”

“No seriously, I thought hobgoblin here was gonna faint at one point! Jeez, talk about bulldozing! I always thought you talked too much kid, but now I’ve seen how bad it actually coulda been! Lord save me from talkative Kirks!”

“Oh come on, relax Bones! At least she didn’t try and give you a shovel talk right?”

“…Captain Pike, might I enquire as to what exactly a shovel talk is?”
Chris sends a withering look Jim’s way and gets only a cheeky grin in return.

**175. Jim is very good at landing Chris in sticky situations.**

Fortunately, Chris is also quite good at getting out of them.

“Oh, I think Jimmy here can explain that one to you,” Chris grins cheekily back. “After all he’s the one who’s had the most experience with them.”

Spock nods consideringly and turns to Jim expectantly.

“I hate you so much right now,” Jim whispers at him as he sweeps past and heads towards the beer coolers again.

At 1950 exactly, across the deck, Archer hauls himself out of his deckchair with T’Pau’s assistance and knocks the butt of his cane hard against the wooden floor three times.

“Right then you horrible lot,” the old Admiral begins with a grin once everyone has quietened down. “As you’re all aware, today is the 10th of July. Which means it’s our mischievous Mr Pike’s anniversary of his birth. I won’t embarrass him by shouting his age out, but I will tell you he’s nearly old enough to be a third of mine,” he winks, a low chuckle rumbling across the crowd.

“I won’t draw this out and give you the list of everything that makes him a great man, because we’d be here all night if I tried to. Instead I’ll simply give you this; he’s a gentleman that I am unbelievably honoured to know, and a gentleman that’ll be unbelievably honoured to continue knowing. He’s kind, caring, loyal, passionate, an absolute credit to his profession, and most of importantly I believe, he’s also recently proved himself to be unprecedentedly fantastic at parenting.

“So here’s to one of the best people I know. Christopher Pike, Happy Birthday and many happy returns, even if you can sometimes be an utter Dunsie!”

The crowd around them erupts into cheers and clapping, and Chris tries to surreptitiously wipe his eyes.

Jim turns to face him with a smile, and then throws his arms around Chris’ shoulders. Chris pulls him close and buries his face into Jim’s neck with a chuckle.

“Happy Birthday Dad,” Jim whispers

“Thanks Son,” Chris replies with a smile.

**176. Chris has no idea what good deed he did in a previous life to be rewarded with Jim, but he’s glad he did whatever it was!**

Chapter End Notes

Okay so. The future of this fic:

Obvs, I’m gonna keep writing because this story is soooo not done.

BUT:
When I planned this, it was supposed to be about 5 chapters for Jim's first year at the academy and then I'd carry on from there. But then I let my imagination run away with me and it's turned into this huge monstrous sprawl (>70,000 words already good lord!). So What I'm going to do is split the story into "books".

In other words, **Co-Hab is becoming a series! :)**

Please do keep checking and subscribing to this fic, as I've got Another Appendix to add with things that would have contained spoilers up until now, as well as some odd bits of writing that didn't make it into the main work :)

So yes,

**LETS BOLDLY GO!!!**
Chapter 23

Chapter Notes

So this is it guys. The last chapter of this installment!

As I said before, do keep subscribing because I've got another Appendix to add and some odd bits of stuff. Final edit will occur soon and hopefully I'll find the last of those pesky typos and grammar errors :)

To everyone who's Kudos'd, bookmarked, subscribed and especially everyone who's commented: you have my endless gratitude :)

Special mention to my parents here, who are endlessly supportive of my creative writing. I finally finished something without getting distracted halfway through! Woop!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Despite Chris’ wishes otherwise, **Point 124** still remains very much true.

“I think I’m gonna be sick.”

“You’re not going to be sick Jim,” Chris sighs for the fifth time that night.

“But what if I’ve-”

“You’ve passed everything.” Chris repeats for what feels like the hundredth time.

“But-”

“You haven’t failed. You’ll be top of your class.”

“But maybe-”

Chris finally gives into desire and clamps his hand over Jim’s mouth.

Jim glowers at him, but eventually his shoulders slump and he flops dramatically over sideways, his head ending up in Chris’ lap. Chris smiles to himself and turns his attention back to the HoloVid, absently running his fingers through Jim’s hair.

177. (See also, **Point 77**) Jim has finally grown confident enough to actually ask when he needs something.

For a given definition of ‘ask’ anyway.

“Let me guess. You can’t sleep.”

According to the Chrono on the bedside table, Chris has only been asleep for about forty minutes or so when Jim wakes him by padding softly into his room with a despondent look. The young man shrugs silently at Chris’ question, and twiddles with the hem of his green sleep shirt.
“Ok fine,” Chris sighs. “Come on.”

He shuffles slowly over to the other side of his bed, and then throws the duvet back, patting the vacated space a couple of times.

“Seriously kid, come on,” he repeats when Jim continues to hesitate. “What? It’s not like we haven’t slept in the same bed before son. At least this time there’s actually enough room for both of us huh?” he tries to joke. “And no Phil to whinge either right!?"

Jim shrugs again and takes half a step forward, but then pauses again.

“Please? I feel better myself if I know your okay.” Chris tries. Finally, Jim offers a weak half smile and clambers slowly in next to him. Chris flips the duvet back over him and then settles back down himself, rolling back onto his stomach and bunching the pillow back up under his arm.

He’s most of the way back to sleep again when he hears Jim’s whisper.

“Thanks Dad.”

“Hmmm,” he smiles, and snakes a hand out to rest against Jim’s shoulder.

178. Phil Boyce is mean and evil and everyone should hate him, including Jim.

“Wakey wakey! I want eggs and bakey!” Phil calls overly loudly, barging into Chris’ flat as if it’s his own. Chris groans and pulls the duvet up over his head.

“Chrissy! Get the hell out of bed you lazy log!” Phil somehow shouts even louder. A few seconds later, the bedroom door swishes open and Phil’s heavy footsteps approach the edge of the bed. Chris cringes, already anticipating what will happen and tries to cling tightly to the duvet. But just as he predicted, Phil grabs hold of it and pulls.

“Oh god whyyy,” Chris moans, curling up piteously around his pillow as cold air hits him like a wall.

“Because we’re going to have breakfast ready and waiting for Jim when he gets out of the shower, that’s why. So get up!”

“Noooo!” Chris whines, uncaring that he sounds like he’s a four-year-old that’s about to throw a tantrum.

“Yes! Or I’ll take a HoloPic of you and send it to Archer!”

“Novafire, I hate you so very much.”

“Good!” Phil grins unrepentantly.

And then, to Chris’ utter disgust, he hooks his hands under Chris’ arms and pulls him upright forcibly.

“This really wasn’t worth it Phil.”

“Shut up and eat your bacon you grump.”

“I hate you so much.”
179. Jim gets overly stressed when he believes he’s about to fail.

Chris and Phil walk Jim over to the Academy’s main hall and join the increasingly large crowd gathered outside the doors. Spock spots them first and strides in their direction, bringing Uhura and Bones with him.

“Cadet, despite my limited experiences with such emotional states, I discern that you seem to be in a state of high anxiety.”

“Yeah, we noticed,” Phil comments dryly, throwing his arm over Jim’s trembling shoulders.

“I’m okay,” Jim almost squeaks, shoving his shaking hands in the pockets of his red uniform pants. Chris casually leans against him, trying to be a solid reassuring presence, while Bones frowns and pulls out his medical PADD.

Before he manages to start scanning Jim, the hall doors open.

The mass of red, black and grey uniforms surge forward, bottlenecking through the entrance, but spilling out into the wide-open space beyond. Moving with the crowd, Chris huddles at the back of his small group, steering them towards the stage where Marcus, Archer and Nogura are stood watching over the proceedings.

Chris steps to front of the group and snaps out a crisp salute, the others behind him following suite. All three Admirals nod in recognition, and Chris steps into parade rest.

“Captain Pike,” Marcus rumbles. “You’ve done good things with the Academy again this year. Record high grades in over a third of all tracks, and above average across the board.”

“Just doing my job sir,” Chris nods back, allowing his lips to twitch into a half smile.

“Well please keep at it Captain.”

“I’ll endeavour to sir.”

“Good man. Now, you and Cadet Kirk are requested to report to me after the awards ceremony this afternoon; I have a few things I wish to discuss with you concerning Mr. Kirk’s future at the academy. I will see you in my office at 1400 sharp.”

“Of course sir,” Chris agrees, swallowing down the sudden knot of anxiety created by Marcus’ formal phrasing.

“Then, ladies and gentlemen,” Marcus continues with a sweeping look at the group gathered behind Chris, “I wish you the best of luck regarding your results, and hope you achieve everything you desire to. Officers, Cadets. Dismissed. Captain, a quick word now?”

Phil and Spock salute once again, a move echoed by the three Cadets, and then Phil turns and starts pushing them towards the queues for the results tables. Spock lingers almost indecisively for a second longer but then nods respectfully at Chris, pivots and strides off after the others, leaving Chris standing uneasily with the three admirals.

“Oh relax kiddo,” Archer suddenly growls, poking Chris beneath his ribs with his cane. “I’ve seen your boy’s grades, he’s done great.”

“I know he has,” Chris tries not to pout, rubbing at his abdomen. “I just can’t get him to believe
“Well he will do once he gets his result file. And then I expect you and yours for a Sunday dinner celebration at the end of the week. T’pol has a new j’Naii recipe that she wants to try for desert, so I want your two doctors around in case she poisons me with her cooking again.”

“Are you about done Jonathon,” Marcus comments dryly, crossing his arms and raising his eyebrows pointedly.

“When you’re involved dear Alexander?” Archer smirks, “I’m never done.”

Off to their side, Chris notices Nogura rolling his eyes and sighing, and surmises that this is a typical exchange between the older men.

“Which of us the senior officer here Jon?”

“You’re referencing age or experience because that would be me in both cases.”

“You’re insufferable.”

“You love me really Alex,” Archer deadpans back.

Chris shuffles self-consciously and lightly clears his throat. Marcus’ attention suddenly snaps back to Chris, and his posture loses the relaxed looseness of the moment before.

“Right. Yes Captain. I merely wanted to inquire after Cadet Kirk’s attitude and personality away from an academic setting. The bulk of what I’ve heard from other sources is overwhelmingly positive, but as a few less complimentary reports do indeed exist, I want to know your experiences before I make my own judgement.”

180. Chris’ overprotective streak concerning Jim gets stronger every time it surges up.

Chris’ immediate instinct upon hearing Marcus’ request is to get extremely defensive on behalf of his boy. But telling the Fleet Admiral that Jim Kirk is infallible and can do no wrong won’t do either of them any good.

“I’ve found that he’s a very focused and dedicated individual,” he goes with instead after a moment of hesitation, “who has a great capacity for caring for the welfare of others. Yes, he can be easily distracted by his need to be constantly occupied with one thing or another, but given that he channels nearly all of his -at times excessive- energy into either personal betterment, or into helping and assisting others, it almost becomes a non-issue. I have on occasion heard Jim described as arrogant and over confident, but I believe this too can be attributed to his need to be helpful to everyone around him. If he hears that someone has a problem, he tries to fix it for them. But when you combine his impressive charisma with the fact that not everyone always wants help… well I can see why people would come to the conclusion that he’s an arrogant know-it-all, but I wouldn’t say that’s the truth of it myself. Otherwise, he’s a mature, sensible and very thoughtful young man.”

“Hmm,” is all Marcus’ says, to Chris’ concern. But he does look thoughtful, his hand rubbing contemplatively across his jaw.

“He’s a good kid Alex,” Archer growls, shooting Chris a knowing look. “and you know damn well that the problems that arose during the Canadian Plebe training exercise were not the boy’s fault. He got caught in the crosshairs of Komack’s power play, nothing more. So cut him some slack.”

Marcus turns back to Archer with a steely glare, and Chris thanks whatever deities might be listening
that it isn’t aimed at him.

“I am perfectly aware of the games Komack like to play Archer,” he says icily. “The situation is being handled.”

“Oh relax you defensive Dachlyd. I’m not questioning your integratory.”

“Then don’t—”

“Captain Pike!” Nogura suddenly across Marcus overly cheerily, “Shall we go for a walk and find out if your group have got their results yet?”

“Oh. Uh, yes sir. Lead the way sir.” Chris agrees hurriedly, throwing a hasty salute at the other two still bickering Admirals, before following Nogura down the stage steps.

181. An excessively happy Jim is a bouncy, extravagant Jim.

When Chris finally finds his friends in the crowd, long after Nogura has gone his own way, the first thing he notices is Spock’s overly blank face. The one Chris knows to read as surprised discomfort.

Then, once he can see him more clearly, he realises it’s because Jim is on his knees in front of the Vulcan with his arms wrapped around his legs, his face pressed into Spock’s stomach. And because Jim is giggling like a tribble on laughing gas.

“Captain Pike!” Spock almost exclaims to Chris’ amusement, clearly relieved to see him Point 117 springs to mind again). Jim’s head whips around when he hears Chris’ name, his eyes almost literally glowing from the force of his grin alone.

“Christ Jimmy! Put me down!” Chris suddenly finds himself laughing, Jim having swept up to him almost too fast to follow and lifted him off the floor in a bear hug.

“OhmygodChrisIpasseverythingandIdidsogreatandI’mtopofmyclassinallmycommandtrackcoursesandIgot;

“Jim! Breathe dammit man!” Bones shouts at him from behind, a wide smile splitting his face too.

“And put the poor man’s feet back on the floor before you crack his ribs or something similarly stupid!”

Chris staggers a little when he’s suddenly dropped, but Jim stabilises him by putting an arm back around his waist.

“Look!” Jim shouts exuberantly, shoving his PADD under Chris’ nose too close for him to focus on it.

“Jim!” Chris breathes, his pride clear in his voice once he’s moved the PADD far enough away to actually read it. “Jim, you broke three records!”

“Including one previously held by myself,” Spock adds. “Cadet, I must say your use of Z’Gordus Theory in place of Juden’s law for the question relating to class Y planet sublight relativity was a truly inspirational piece of original thinking. As a consultant instructor for the theoretical physics department, I was among the privileged few assigned to dismantling, reconstructing and replicating your methodology.”

“See! I told you that you’re an Astrophysics whiz kid and you had nothing to worry about!” Chris tells Jim gruffly, pulling him into another bearhug.
“I got less than 90% for Andorian though,” Jim mutters into Chris’ shoulder.

“Which is 15% more than I ever got for any of my language exams. You did brilliantly and I’m so proud of you.”

182. Chris really is so endlessly proud of Jim

“Bones got asked to take on a part time teaching position next year, he did so well in Xenobiology!” Jim suddenly exclaims, stepping to Chris’ side and leaning on his shoulder. “Phil got all weepy eyed and hugged him!”

“Did he now?” Chris smirks evilly at his suddenly scowling best friend.

“I told you not to tell him Jimbo!” Phil points accusingly at Jim. “Now I’ll never hear the end of it!”

Off to their side, Uhura turns to Leo and shakes her head.

“You have no idea how hard it is explaining you guys to my other friends.” She tells the young doctor with no little amusement.

“Oh I dunno Miss Uhura. I think I understand perfectly ‘cause by this point, I’ve given up even trying to explain this bunch o’ muppets to anyone!”

Precisely seven minutes before two in the afternoon, Chris finds himself standing outside of Marcus’ office with Jim nervously hovering behind him. In front of them, Marcus’ Yeoman, Commander Kyzzorzz, is sat squinting at them suspiciously.

“There’ss no appointsments bookssed for you Captain,” The Saurian hisses at him, his yellow eyes narrowing even further.

“That’s because -as I have told you four times now- because Admiral Marcus only requested the meeting with me five hours ago!” Chris almost snarls back, his patience worn completely thin. “The request was formally worded, but no electronic record of it was made! So no! There won’t be an official booking!”

“My bosss’ policccy is quite clear, Mr Pike.” Kyzzorzz spits back, his long thin tongue lashing out violently. “No appointsment. No entry.”

Chris’ finally thread of restraint snaps at the Saurian’s blatantly deliberate dropping of his title. Chris has no problem being referred to as Mister rather than Captain by individuals who outrank him, or by people outside of the ‘Fleet who don’t know better, but he won’t take it from subordinates. Especially not from someone doing so with the express intention of being disrespectful.

So he takes a deep breathe, smiles unpleasantly at the Yeoman, and then strides purposely towards the door ignoring the Saurians protestations.

Predictably, Kyzzorzz steps in front of him with another long angry hiss, but Chris simply reaches around him and pushes the intercom button on the door’s control panel.

“Marcus!” Chris growls loudly as soon the panel beeps in acknowledgement. “Will you please tell your bloody idiot Yeoman to get the hell out of my face before I break his bloody snout with my fist!”

There’s a click followed by another beep, and Chris hears Jim swallow loudly and exhale shakily
from behind him.

“Kyzzorzz! Sit down and let him pass! Captain, in here now!” Marcus shouts from the suddenly open doorway.

Chris shoots the Suarian Commander a smug look as he strides into the office and gets a vicious glower in return.

“You get very English when your mad,” Jim whispers none to subtly to him as he follows close behind. “It’s very villainous and terrifying.”

“Goddamn lizard-brained paper pusher—” Chris starts to mutter back, only to be cut off by Marcus.

“Pike I do not goddamned care! Sit the hell down and stop trying to burn holes in my desk with your eyes. If you ever lose your temper like that again when I’m around to hear it, you will find yourself on a one way trip to Starbase Theta-zero to join their janitorial subdivision. You’re a Fleet Captain and a Division head. Act like it!”

Chris takes another deep breath and nods his acquiesce, retroactively a little embarrassed for his loss of temper. He slides carefully into the chair the Fleet Admiral indicates, offering up an apology as he does so. Jim steps up nervously behind him and drops into a stiff parade rest, his hands clasped tightly behind his back.

“Good. Now that unpleasantness has been dealt with, I actually have some good news for the two of you. I have recently re-reviewed your case for admission Cadet Kirk, and considered the evidence your performance this year has provided. Combined with the recommendations of my colleagues - notably Admirals Nogura, Archer and Mayweather- I have taken the decision to lift many of the extra restrictions placed upon you. The extra supervisor meetings can stop so long as Mr. Archer agrees to remain your academic advisor, and your late-night curfews will be lifted. Provided of course, that you don’t step a toe out of line during the six-month probationary period.

“Captain,” Marcus continues, turning to focus back on Chris, “for you this means you’ll finally get your living space back to yourself. Kirk is free to choose his accommodations for the upcoming years the same as any other second year. He can go into halls or the private sector as he desires, but you can get him out your hair at least. I won’t apologise for forcing him upon you in the first place, because by all accounts, the experience has done you as much good as it has Kirk. Am I clear?”

Chris manages to shake off his shock just fast enough that Marcus’ doesn’t notice his hesitation before he voices his understanding.

“Very well gentlemen. You are dismissed. Oh, and Mr Pike? I expect you to apologise to my Yeoman for your language on your way out.”

Chris is very, very glad that he’s already turned his back towards to Marcus when he hears that last part, because otherwise he would have gotten another reprimand for the string of curses he silently throws in the Admiral’s direction as he leaves.

“That was the most insincere apology I’ve ever heard.”

“Are you sure kid? You’ve met my eldest nephew and niece remember?”

“Chris? honestly, Jack and Grace’s antics have never had a patch on your performance just then.”

“Oh good. Saurian asshole.”
“Seriously, you have to teach how to sound that scathing. It was awesome!”

Two days later finds Jim pacing back and forth diagonally across the main room of Chris’ flat. Chris watches him silently from his place sat at the dining table, one of hands idly tapping on one of the many PADDs strewn across the wooden surface.

“But if I chose Bovane Halls, I’ll probably have to put up with a Plebe roommate. Which not only means far too many parties for my taste, but I’m risking becoming a secondary target in all the stupid Plebe year pranks the kid will be hit with.”

“Jim-” Chris starts.

“Reid halls on the other hand: single rooms, quieter, more mature students. But shared kitchen facilities and bathrooms. So increased risk I may die from an allergy contamination or something equally stupid. And well. Single room equals tiny room.”

“Jim, you could ju-”

“I could try and get in Cochrane with Bones. But my chances of managing that without subverting the system are exceptionally slim. And I’d rather not risk it with Marcus and his probation period looming over me.”

“Jim really. Just-”

“And then there’s private sector. Which is the most appealing in terms of facilities and safety and general peace and quiet. But no way can I afford that on my own and Bones can’t really leave Cochrane if he’s teaching next year. He needs to stay on campus.”

“Jim! Would you listen to-!”

“I know Phil suggested looking at Bower Halls, but Finnegan lives there. So no way am I going there.”

“James T. Kirk! Shut up for ten fracking seconds!”

Jim goes wide eyed and apologetic and Chris immediately feels bad for shouting.

“Sorry but look,” he continues much softer. “You’re missing the obvious solution here kid.”

“…I am?”

“Yes. Just don’t move out?”

183. Chris can no longer imagine his home without Jim in it.

Jim looks at him with his face frozen in shock.

“…You- you want-”

“It’s pretty simple kid. You stay here and we don’t have to move all your stuff, you get a moderate sized room all to yourself, and you only have to share the kitchen and bathroom with me. And occasionally Phil I suppose. That’s a point against living with me another year I guess. But still… At least Phil and I aren’t going to accidently poison you with allergens, are we? Well, I did that one time with the curry last year, but I like to think I know enough now not to do it again. And! It’s not going to cost either of us anything. Well. The same portion of your stipend will go to rent like it always has,
but that’s neither here nor there really.”

“Dad,” Jim wobbles, his eyes becoming suspiciously watery.

“Well it’s a good idea isn’t it?” Chris smiles. And then suddenly frowns. “Only if you want to of course!” he hastily tacks onto the end. “You’re under no obligation to stay and I’ll support you whatever you decide!”

“Oh god you blithering buffoon! Of course I want to stay!” Jim laughs, throwing his arms around Chris’ neck.

“Oh good,” Chris replies faintly, a little overwhelmed by Jim’s sudden sprawling presence practically lying on him. “Wait. Did you just call me a blithering buffoon? I take it back! Pack your bags, get out!”

“Oh shut it old man. You’d pick up Bones’ strange names and phrases too if you were the one dating him.”

Chris pauses and Jim stands back up, looking down at Chris slightly concerned.

“What?” Jim asks, the edge of worry just audible in his voice.

“So… you and Leo are actually together then?”

Jim pulls a confused but amused face.

“Seriously Dad!? I thought that was obvious! Christ on a hoverbike, you must be blind!”

“Oh, okay right. I was errr… just checking. So that I know to threaten Leo at some point. Yes! With death or something. I’m supposed to do that right?”

“I think my Mom’s already got that covered for you,” Jim laughs. “good job too, seeing as you’re so slow on the up take! How the hell did you make Captain so quickly with such poor powers of observation?”

“Oi! Less that of that cheek mister! Or I’ll turn you out on your ear before you can blink!”

“Nahhh,” Jim chuckles, “You love me too much to do that!”

Chris sobers in an instant. Jim’s grin slides of his face as he realises what he just said.

“I do James, I really do.” Chris tells him quietly, reaching up to brush Jim’s hair off his forehead.

184. Chris Pike loves James T. Kirk as if he were his own flesh and blood.

“Dad?”

“Yes Son?”

“I love you too Dad.”

Chapter End Notes
Live long and Prosper ;)

Enjoyed this? Check out my Tumblr; a variety of useful and helpful links can be found in my info box.
APPENDIX

Chapter Notes

Pretty much everybody said they were interested in an Appendix, so here it is!

If you find a broken hyperlink or if one of the images is not showing, let me know and i'll get it fixed! (even if your reading this years after the publication date!

Click the Links below to Jump to the relevant section:

Chris' list of points
- 1-40
- 41-80
- 81-120
- 121-160
- 161-184
- Starfleet Ranks
- Division Heads
- Character ages
- Academy information
- Floor plan: Black & white
- Floor Plan: Colour
- Jim's timetable
- Art for chapters 6 and 7
- Art for chapter 10
- Art for chapter 20

Christopher Pike's list of interesting things about Jim Kirk (ordered chronologically)

Clicking the Underlined Link at the beginning of point will take you to the place where the Point was originally made

Chapter 1

1. Associating with him leads to far more meetings than could ever be necessary.

2. Jim Kirk is surprisingly quiet when he’s not staggeringly drunk

3. Despite his first impressions, Jim Kirk can actually hold his liquor

4. Despite expectations, Jim Kirk is not actually a bad patient.

5. Jim Kirk is one of those individuals prone to assigning people with seemingly random nicknames

2. [AMENDMENT] Jim Kirk is quiet most of the time when he isn’t staggeringly drunk.

6. Unless it’s edible or drinkable, Jim Kirk will do his damnedest to stop you from buying him anything.
7. Excepting situations where paying for items is concerned, Jim Kirk will happily follow orders and instructions.

7. [AMENDMENT] Excepting situations where paying for items is concerned, Jim Kirk will happily follow orders and instructions. Provided he agrees with the order.

8. James Tiberius Kirk is one of those goddamn evil, inhumane morning people and Chris hates his life.

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Chapter 2

9. knowing Jim Kirk means that you will be perpetually behind schedule. For everything.

10. After only 24 hours, Jim Kirk has already managed to get Chris to claim him as one of his own.

11. Jim Kirk is vastly overqualified for basically all of the undergraduate tracks at Starfleet Academy.

12. It’s probable that no one underestimates Jim Kirk more than Jim Kirk does.

13. Something bad happened during Jim Kirk’s childhood, and if Kirk has his way, no one will ever find out what.

14. Whatever it was that happened, it left enough physical evidence to worry a hardened trauma surgeon.

15. Jim Kirk is better than Chris at menial labour.

16. Jim Kirk may be a goddamn evil morning person and he might have assigned Chris a stupid nickname, but damn, the kid has good taste in booze.

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Chapter 3

17. Jim Kirk is a total neat-freak

18. The “Jim Kirk effect” is a very real thing

19. No really, nothing [edible of Chris’] is safe.

20. Jim Kirk is seriously allergic to coconut milk


22. Jim Kirk is kinda cute when he’s sleeping and Chris is disgusted at himself for thinking such sappy thoughts.

23. Forget coconut milk, Jim Kirk is seriously allergic to half the damn galaxy!

24. At some point last night, Kirk had become Jim and Point 10 has upgraded from a professional claim into a personal one.

-------------
Chapter 4

25. Jim Kirk seems determined to stick it to the Admiralty simply by behaving and being a model student.

26. Jim Kirk and Leonard McCoy are probably going to be this generation’s Pike and Boyce

27. Jim Kirk does strange things while Chris is still in bed.

28. Chris should stop forgetting that Jim Kirk is a genius with far too many science and engineering degrees.

29. Jim Kirk is welcome to keep his spare room permanently if it means Chris continues to come home to such awesome surprises!

30. Christopher Pike, you are an idiot who should know better than to compare people to their fathers, Jim Kirk included.

31. Jim’s curfews are a pain in the ass.

32. Someone in Jim’s childhood taught the lad to be absolutely scared witless of making mistakes and Chris is going to beat the responsible party senseless the first opportunity he gets.

Chapter 5

33. Jim Kirk is just as prone to hero worship as any other being in the universe

34. Jim experiences first day jitters just like everyone else does too

35. Jim Kirk scrubs up pretty damn well.

36. Jim’s prediction that his famous name would cause problems turns to be out a lot truer than Chris was hoping

37. Chris is going to have to organise an official Jim Kirk Fan Club at this rate.

38. Chris’ life would be a lot easier if he’d never met Jim Kirk.

39. (See Also, Points 11 & 28) It’s a good job Jim chose Command Track over engineering, because otherwise Chris would’ve been hilariously out of his depth all the time, instead of just half of it.

40. Chris is going to spend this year fixing Jim’s self-confidence and seeing to it that point 12 ends up very much a lie

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Chapter 6

41. Jim Kirk is one of those people who are obsessed with early morning running

42. Jim can be quite the unnecessary worry wart
43. Jim Kirk can keep a secret

44. Jim Kirk is a nervous message-spammer

45. Chris may be a huge nerd, but so is Jim Kirk

46. Chris, apparently thou hast a clone, and its name is Jim. Dammit.

47. [spoken, while drunk] ‘Point 47 Phil. Everything is Jim’s fault Philip, *Everything!*’

48. Chris is never, ever drinking with Jim ever again. Ever.

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Chapter 7

49. If you get drunk with Jim Kirk, you must be prepared to deal with weeks of embarrassment afterwards

50. Jim Kirk is an overachiever.

50. [AMENDMENT] Jim Kirk is an overachiever and this causes Chris no end of issues.

51. Apparently, both he and Jim can really carry a tune, drunk or not

52. Since Jim moved in, Chris’ flat has apparently become an open access space

53. Jim is actually a damn good cook

54. Jim’s friends are just as good at puppy eyes as Jim himself is

55. Chris swears Phil’s recent tendency to break unspoken boundaries is also somehow Jim’s fault

56. Chris is gonna murder Jim

----------------

Chapter 8

57. Jim Kirk is a dog person.

58. Jim’s message spamming isn’t limited to episodes of anxiety

59. Jim Kirk is going to be the death of Chris

60. Against all logic, Jim’s antics are actually improving Chris’ respectability

61. Chris is slowly realising that Jim really does flirt as much as other people keep saying he does

62. Jim Kirk is a genius, an overachiever, *and* a major theorem proposer

63. Jim should never be allowed to volunteer as a dog sitter ever again

64. Jim Kirk might be a routine destroying, office invading, walking trouble magnet, but he’s also quite possibly the greatest flatmate ever!

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Chapter 9

65. Jim turns into some sort of dazed, confused puppy when he’s tired
66. Jim Kirk is weirdly immune to caffeine
67. Jim Kirk is good with kids
68. Jim has no idea how to act around a family.
69. When he’s exhausted, Jim sleeps like the dead
70. Jim’s nicknames are so catchy, even Chris has started using them.
71. Jim is surprisingly patient with tactless teenagers
72. Jim Kirk should never have been allowed to meet any of Chris’ friends or family. Ever.

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Chapter 10

73. Not even Jim and Bones are immune to the horrors of Plebe-year pranks
74. Once you’ve gotten to know him, Jim is a surprisingly predictable individual.
75. Jim can spin practically any situation to his advantage.
76. If Jim tells you someone is an asshole, then in all probability, they are an asshole
77. Jim is absolutely bloody useless at asking for help when he needs it
78. Chris’ friends are as loyal to Chris as Jim’s are to Jim. i.e. very
79. Jim Kirk is capable of bringing out Chris’ ruthlessly vindictive side
80. Ok so maybe he is a little bit over protective, but Chris thinks it’s totally worth it when the result is Jim being this happy!

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Chapter 11

81. Chris never had to defend himself so much before Jim came along
82. Chris is utterly fed up of people insinuating that Jim is somehow his kid!
83. Leonard McCoy is perhaps the best friend Chris could ever wish for Jim to have
84. If you can take him enough by surprise, you can get Jim to do all sorts of things without question
85. Jim becomes a hyperactive eight year old at Christmas
86. Jim Kirk really likes presents
Jim is really quite good at gift buying

Jim’s right, this is the best Christmas ever

----------------

Chapter 12

Jim doesn’t even have to be physically present to goad Chris into doing things he normally wouldn’t

If you go bar hopping with Jim Kirk, be prepared follow the “Go Hard or Go Home” philosophy

Jim Kirk can change even the most stubborn of people’s opinions

Chris should have introduced Jim and Spock months ago

Drunk Jim has all the cultural sensitivity of an angry Xindi-Aboreal

Chris has the best group of friends ever. Jim and Co included.

Chris should probably listen to Jim more often.

Chris is going to beat Finnegan’s face into the floor for Jim at the first plausibly deniable opportunity

----------------

Chapter 13

When Jim is involved, some risks are worth taking

Jim is just as reckless as Chris is

Jim’s previous birthdays must have been awful

Chris will never get used to seeing Jim in pain.

Chris should never let Jim agree with his crazy ideas ever again

Jim Kirk is pretty good at acting

Winding Jim up is one of the most amusing things you can do

If Chris can give Jim a birthday like this every year, he’ll die a happy man

----------------

Chapter 14

Jim Kirk can wrap anyone around his little finger

Jim Kirk has a really good taste in music

Predictably, Jim has a serious mother hen mode

Jim has a habit of leaving his bedroom door half open while he sleeps
Jim Kirk is kinda cute when he’s sleeping, especially when he’s doing so with Bones, and Chris is definitely disgusted at himself for thinking such awfully sappy thoughts. Waking Jim from a dead sleep is almost an exercise in futility. Despite the façade he shows the rest of the world, Jim’s actually quite sensitive and soft hearted. Jim is really good at putting his foot in his mouth. Chris is beginning to suspect there’s going to be more to Jim and Bones’ relationship than the Epic Friendship he was imagining.

Chapter 15

For the sake of everyone else’s mental health, Jim and Bones should never be allowed to have a serious argument ever again. Jim has his own place in Chris’ heart, but he’ll never replace Philip Boyce. Chris prays to anyone who’ll listen that Jim never finds the list too. [spoken directly to Phil] “Phil was never such an asshole before Jim came along” Not even Vulcans are immune to the “Jim Kirk Effect”. Chris will never make assumptions regarding the state of Jim’s familial relationships ever again. Jim Kirk is a lot more like his mother than Chris would ever have believed! Chris isn’t sure if he actually does want to know what happened to Jim, because he’s pretty sure it’ll be completely heart-breaking.

Chapter 16

Chris can be quite the unnecessary worry wart where Jim is concerned. Chris’ flat is too quiet without Jim in it. The only way to make Jim’s absence tolerable is constant activity. Jim can work himself into quite a state when he’s anxious. Jim has been denied food in a serious way at some point in his life. (See Also, Point 4) Jim’s not just not just not a bad patient, he’s a worryingly listless one. Where ever Jim went, it’s likely that that’s where Point 13 occurred. Chris was hoping to keep Jim clear of the ‘Fleet’s political machinations for a few years yet, but apparently he’s going to have no such luck.
Chapter 17

129. Jim is a pain in the ass to be around when you’re ill
130. Jim is very useful to have around when you’re ill
131. Chris hates it when he worries Jim
132. Chris isn’t an unnecessary worry wart, he’s just plain worried.
133. Chris will never envy Jim’s crappy immune system. Ever.
134. Jim doesn’t handle being ill any better than Chris does.
135. Chris has never actually seen Jim without a t-shirt or more on before
136. No one. Literally no one, can make Chris cry the way Jim Kirk can.

Chapter 18

137. James T. Kirk is not a victim. He’s a survivor.
138. Jim Kirk can be endlessly patient.
139. He’ll deny it to the grave, but Jim does actually make Chris feel old and wise at times.
140. Chris wishes he could be half as perceptive with Jim as his Mom is with him
141. Jim Kirk is Chris’ kid and he should damn well stop denying it already
142. Phil never fails to make Chris feel better even when it’s Jim he’s upset over.
143. Nothing incites Chris’ anger faster than the thought of someone maliciously harming Jim
144. Chris will forever deny the warm feeling that bubbled up in his chest the first time Phil suggested that Jim should change his last name.

Chapter 19

145. Jim Kirk is a perfectionist

32. [AMENDMENT] Chris is going to beat senseless the one responsible for teaching Jim to be absolutely scared witless of making mistakes. That is, as soon as Jonathan Archer can get him access to the jail…

146. Jim can focus on one thing to the exclusion of all else.

147. Jim can be more frustrating than trying to reverse warp around a Class K nebula.

148. Chris was never as much of a handful as Jim is, no matter what Phil says.
149. Chris is not the only one who’ll bend rules for Jim Kirk
150. Chris is better at lying to Jim than Jim is at lying to Chris
151. Chris *thoroughly* enjoys carrying out justice on Jim’s behalf.
152. Jim Kirk has more people in his corner that he ever could have predicted, and Chris couldn’t be happier with that.

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**Chapter 20**

153. Jim’s adventurous streak is a mile wide.
154. Jim gets bored easily
155. Jim’s constant desire to help everyone gets him into all sorts of trouble. 
156. The only way to keep Jim Kirk properly occupied while on board a Starship is to put him in charge of a group of people
157. Chris is just as bad as Jim where boredom is concerned.
158. You should never say “keep quiet and stay out of trouble” to Jim Kirk.
159. Chris will never fail to be amused by Jim’s startled face.
160. Chris will take a bullet for Jim.

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**Chapter 21**

161. You can’t keep Jim Kirk in a hospital bed
162. Only Jim Kirk could cause this kind of medical problem.
163. Jim is the textbook definition of a ‘walking trouble magnet’
164. Jim Kirk has nightmares
165. Jim Kirk will probably never stop taking Chris by surprise
166. Chris has no idea how he would cope with Jim without Phil there to constantly support him.
167. (See also Point 101 ) Chris should never let Phil agree with his crazy ideas ever again
168. Jim belongs to Chris, heart and soul.

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**Chapter 22**

169. Claiming Jim Kirk apparently means you get claimed by his mother in return.
170. Jim is not the only Kirk who can blast through your life and sanity like a tornado
171. Not all of Chris’ craziness can be attributed to Jim; some of it definitely predates him!

172. Jim Kirk should not be allowed to organise birthday parties.

173. Jim’s and Chris’ friends are the same people these days.

174. Young Jim was surprisingly cute

175. Jim is very good at landing Chris in sticky situations.

176. Chris has no idea what good deed he did in a previous life to be rewarded with Jim, but he’s glad he did whatever it was!

Chapter 23

177. (See also, Point 77) Jim has finally grown confident enough to actually ask when he needs something.

178. Phil Boyce is mean and evil and everyone should hate him, including Jim.

179. Jim gets overly stressed when he believes he’s about to fail.

180. Chris’ overprotective streak concerning Jim gets stronger every time it surges up.

181. An excessively happy Jim is a bouncy, extravagant Jim.

182. Chris really is so endlessly proud of Jim

183. Chris can no longer imagine his home without Jim in it.

184. Chris Pike loves James T. Kirk as if he were his own flesh and blood.

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I have been asked by biovolx if I could add some basic background info on Starfleet, the Academy and the main characters. I’ll happily add more upon request :)

Starfleet ranks

As Starfleet ranks seem to vary from series to series, this is my own personal mashup of TOS, AOS and current Naval/Marine ranks; it’s the system I have been, and will continue to use for this fic :)

Officers:
Crewman (technically unranked)
Ensign
Lieutenant
Lieutenant Commander
Commander
Captain
Fleet Captain
Notes on Positions and Roles with regards to Ranks

- There are certain positions you can hold within the fleet that result in you using a title other than your rank
- The most obvious of these is Doctor/CMO. Whether you’re a Lieutenant or a Vice Admiral or a Commander or whatever, people are going to refer to you as Doctor Joe Bloggs, rather than as *Rank* Joe Bloggs. Same with Nurses and most of the other medical staff.
- This happens to Engineers a lot too. Particularly if you’re a ship’s Chief engineer; expect to just get called Chief a lot…
- The other people this applies to are those that train to be Yeomen and Quartermasters. In both cases, you use your position as your title, rather than your rank.
- For Yeomen, generally speaking, the higher your rank, the higher the rank of the person you work with. For example, if you’re a Captain’s Yeoman, you’re probably a Crewman or an Ensign. As Chris is a Fleet Captain, his Yeoman is a Lieutenant. Commodores would also likely have a Lieutenant Yeoman. Most of the Admiralty have Lieutenant Commander Yeomen.
- Quartermasters work in basically the same way, but their ranks usually range from Crewman all the way up to Vice Admirals. Starfleet’s Head Quartermaster for instance, is actually a Vice Admiral, whereas the Academy head Quartermaster under him is a Commodore.
- The Yeoman and Quartermaster roles are actually fairly similar, so you quite often find that people switch back and forth between them throughout their careers; Yeoman work with individual officers, Quartermasters deal with the day to day running of the overall fleet/ship/halls/etc.

Starfleet Division Heads (Correct as of August 2255)
(Listed by descending rank)

StarFleet: Fleet Admiral Alexander Marcus
*StarFleet (vice): Admiral Jonathan Archer
*StarFleet (vice): Admiral Heihachiro Nogura
JAG [legal]: Admiral Richard Barnett
Finance: Admiral Arthur J. Dunnington
*Operations: Admiral James P. Komack
Quartermaster: Vice Admiral Helen Crossby
Diplomatics: Vice Admiral Dakarai Risscount
Research and Development [Science]: Vice Admiral Jayesh Patel
Engineering: Rear Admiral Susan Mayweather
Surgeon General [Medical]: Doctor (RADM) Matheus Batch
*Security: Commodore Megan F. Singh
Academy: Fleet Captain Christopher Pike
*Recruitment: Fleet Captain Akilah Abdullah

Click to return to Top
Obviously, there are a lot more flag officers than those listed here. But they have other roles within Starfleet, such as running Starbases and leading diplomatic missions alongside various Ambassadors.

Those marked with an * were, for various reasons, absent from the Division Heads meeting in Chapter 8

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Main character ages (as of start of Fic)

Chris Pike: 44
Jim Kirk: 22
Leonard ‘Bones’ McCoy: 27
Phil Boyce: 48
Number One: 39
Nyota Uhura: 22
Jonathon Archer: as yet unwritten minor plot point >:D (he was born 142 years ago...)
Spock: 25 (Terran years)

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General notes on Starfleet and the Academy

- The usual admittance age for most of the Academy tracks is 18, following graduation from high school / completion of A-Levels / any other global or other-worldly equivalent. But Starfleet will take anyone of any age who passes the entry exams and/or meets the entry requirements.
- Most Courses last four years, but many choose to take the optional fifth year.
- Holding a degree is not necessary for admittance, but is highly recommended for some tracks, particularly Medical and Engineering.
- However, Starfleet are more than willing to train you from scratch in any discipline (Medical and Engineering included) should you wish to do so; most Science track students do this.
- If you do already have a degree when you begin, you are usually commissioned upon graduation with a higher starting rank than standard.
- The same goes for Masters Degrees, PhDs, etc.; you get an even higher starting rank
- Completion of any given four year Academy Track is equivalent to completing a bachelor’s degree in that subject. i.e. if you are on Command Track majoring in Tactics, then you will graduate the Academy with a BA in Tactics (this is why Science Track students don’t usually enter with a degree already under their belt).
- Completing the optional fifth year normally results in you graduating with a Master’s degree in your chosen discipline.
- Cadets have ranks the same as graduated officers. You can be promoted and demoted ranks based upon (among other things) your performance throughout your studies, your pre-academy studies, number of disciplinaries, and as an award for an outstanding action (such as saving someone’s life) or achievement
- While at the academy, the rank of cadet supersedes your officer rank; you can be a Cadet-Lieutenant and be outranked by a commissioned Crewman or Ensign. But while on off-planet assignments and training cruises, your officer rank holds more bearing than your Cadet status; while shipboard, if you are a Cadet-Ensign, then you ARE an Ensign, same as a commissioned officer.
- No-one enters the Academy with a rank higher than Cadet-Ensign. You must hold at least one PhD or equivalent to start with this. As such, 99% of new starters begin as Cadet-crewmen.
- If you entered the Academy straight out of ‘high school’, then you will likely graduate as either a Crewman or an Ensign, or as a Lieutenant if you complete an MA or MSc.
- First year Cadets are known as Plebes, seconds are just second years (boring, I know...), thirds are Underclassmen, and fourths are Upperclassmen. Taking the fifth year results in you being an Upperclassman(II).

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Images

I'm aware that some of them are rather large, but the alternative is to have them too blurry to read :P
Desktop/laptop users: you can move the images side to side easily by holding shift and scrolling :)

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Chris' Flat: Floorplans Black and White

Aternatively, the image is available HERE on Tumblr (bigger and zoom-able too!)

Glorious Technicolour!
I actually made this at my Dad's request! (he's such an enabler) :')

Jim's timetable for his very first term at Starfleet Academy, complete with his handwritten notes and alterations
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Day</th>
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<td>0900-1030</td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Intermediate Federation History LT Jovik BR-003</td>
<td>Personal Training LT Matthews Sports Centre</td>
<td>Intermediate Andorionic CDR ch’Thas LLB-U12</td>
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<td>1130-1230</td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Basic Flight Simulations LCDR Pri’Niq Hanger-3</td>
<td>Personal Training LT Matthews Sports Centre</td>
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<td>1230-1330</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>Intro Diplomatic Debate CDR Robins DDB-122</td>
<td>Tactical Simulations LCDR Novocaine QB240</td>
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<td>Astrophysics CMDRE Hague TB-Lab06</td>
<td>Tactical Simulations LCDR Novocaine QB240</td>
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</table>
Inspired by l3DBABE1999's comment on Chapter 6
Alternatively available on Tumblr!
You can blame l3DBABE1999 again for this one....
For reference, here is the Pre-Edited Image that I used of Finnegan. Obviously, Finnegan doesn't actually existed in AOS Canon (yet?) so I had to improvise a little; you'll have to pretend that this guy isn't actually one of the Cadets that attacked Jim in the Bar Fight...

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I'm by no means an artist, but I had a go at creating some of the Epicrons from Chapter 20!
Chapter Notes

So this is what I’ve been using to make sure I stay on top of the timelines for this fic :)

Should be pretty self explanatory, but do ask about anything you want to!
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<td>Marcus meeting</td>
<td>Jim volunteers to dog sit</td>
<td>Dog remains as Trip Hazard</td>
<td>Archer &amp; T'Pol → Vulc</td>
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- **3**: Chris’ virus plan
- **4**: Jim’s Birthday
  - Kelvin Anniversary
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<td>Archer signs Jim's form</td>
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<td>Chris takes Jim and Bones up in a shuttle</td>
<td>Bones shares Jim's bed</td>
<td>Jim and Bones argument</td>
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<td>Jim leaves on Expedition</td>
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<td>Chris stays at Phil's</td>
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- March 27: Chris finds out about TIV
- March 31: Chris is ill
- April 1: Last day of term
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<td>Archer and #1</td>
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*Note: Events are fictional for demonstration purposes.*
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<td>Archer &quot;yells&quot; at trio</td>
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<td>7 USS Avenger</td>
<td>8 USS Avenger</td>
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<tr>
<td>Board the USS Avenger</td>
<td>Chris speaks to Jim on the Observation Deck</td>
<td>Chris paces in Phil's room</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chris wakes up in Medbay</td>
<td>Chris escapes Medbay</td>
<td>Jim's Nightmare</td>
<td>Bed sharing</td>
<td>Phil wants bacon</td>
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<tr>
<td>30 USS Avenger</td>
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<td>2 USS Avenger</td>
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</table>
**End Notes**

My [Tumblr](https://example.com), if you feel like pestering me with questions.

**I'm dyslexic guys!** Which means that I miss typos and grammar errors no matter how many times I proof read chapters. So please, please don't hesitate to point out mistakes! It's a big help when I'm editing :)

**Works inspired by this one**


Please [drop by the archive and comment](https://example.com) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!