The Truth About Love

by Misscar

Summary

Because he lost his chance of a happily ever after with his first love, Pike has made it his mission to rewrite Starfleet's outdated policies. This includes the policies about children in space. Spock sees this as his chance to have a family and do his part for the repopulation efforts, especially in light of the pressure from his T'Pau. The idea terrifies Jim the more it becomes a real possibility. Considering his childhood, no one really blames him. However, somebody already made that choice for the couple.

Amanda is successfully adjusting to life after the death of her husband. She is still a member of the Vulcan Council and the Vulcan representative to the Federation. She is a wonderful mother to her two adopted daughters, and she has made great friends on earth including Christopher. (Really, he's just a friend.) They have bonded over their mutual loss. Then suddenly she becomes the victim of someone else's love of power.

Professionally, Nyota is at the top years before she expected it. Personally, she's still dodging calls from her father and doesn't do anything harder than a one night stand. But unexpected circumstances are going to force her to deal with these issues head on.
Title: The Truth About Love
Original working Title: You Don't Have to be My Family.
Follow-up to the Series: You Don't Have to be my Boyfriend
Also a Trek Pod story
The overall song for the story is Pink's The Truth About Love
There are also going to be songs for each chapter. Sometimes more than one.
Sequel to: The Road to Delta Vega is Paved with Good Intentions
Setting: This takes place about 3 ½ years after an AU version of the first film. Below are some of the differences and a few reminders:
1. Jim and Spock were together before Nero
2. Spock was the one who changed the Kobayashi Maru and was put on trial by his academic rival.
3. Spock and Nyota were never together like that but she had a massive crush on him.
4. Nyota was responsible for getting Jim on the ship.
5. Amanda survived Vulcan's destruction because she was already on earth for a surprise visit to meet her son's new boyfriend, her husband did not.
6. More Vulcans survived the initial attack
7. Spock does not send Jim to Delta Vega but his former boyfriend 'Cupcake' did.
8. Said ex-boyfriend is the one strangled on the bridge and Nyota is the one to incapacitate Spock via 'sanity in a hypo'. Before the incident happened Spock had a very deep conversation with his human side named 'Marshall'
9. Winona was murdered by Frank, thus triggering Jim's lost year before Pike knocked some sense into him or at least that's what happened according to Jim.
10. Pike was more upset about losing his 'number one' then losing his ability to walk.
11. In this universe, Spock was the one who slept with Carol
If you're confused, feel free to leave a me comment.
If you haven't read the story in forever, I suggest rereading the first chapter, the last chapter, and Gone.
Don't feel bad, I had to reread my own story.
Relationships:
The only thing I'm guaranteeing is K/S.
Rating: M for violence, language, and sexual situations.
This story is going to start M and stay that way
Warning: The last section depicts the aftermath of a very violent situation. Details are kept to a minimum. However, in light of recent events, I want to provide adequate warning.
Music for this chapter:
Love the way you lie by Eminem
Sad by Maroon 5
Wonderin if I really Tried everything I could
Not knowing if I should
Try a little a harder
Oh but I'm scared to death
That there may not be
Another one like this
Timebomb by Pink
Screw fear, it's contagious
Infected everything
It makes me do such stupid, stupid stuff
I say things I never mean

See the end of the work for more notes.
October 2261
Tonight was her 29th birthday and things were good. She was the Chief Communication Officer of Enterprise and if she wanted it she knew she could be the youngest female captain in Starfleet history. But she didn't want it. She enjoyed where she was. She was appreciated and had good friends who were always there for her. This is what Nyota wanted.
Okay maybe she wanted a best friend who didn't think getting extremely drunk when you have bridge duty in the morning was a good thing. Unfortunately, Gaila and Jim thought vast quantities of alcohol was necessary to enjoy her birthday cake. Although, this was an improvement over her 26th birthday involving everybody seeing the video file of her singing Fuck You after she realized that the guy she has been lusting after for the last year was completely in love with someone else. Fortunately, having to knock the guy unconscious to keep him from murdering his ex will help you get over a crush quickly. Now she can watch Jim try to stick his hand down Spock's pants at her birthday party without getting nauseous. Actually, she can survive being their neighbor in spite of extremely thin walls. Jim was a really good friend and so was Spock. She likes seeing the two together. It gives her hope.
Personally, she thinks they were using her birthday as an excuse to get wasted or do inappropriate things. Apparently, there was enough alcohol involved to convince her and several others to play the high school adolescent standard truth or dare. They were mostly playing because apparently Spock and Chekov had never played before. She personally didn't want to because it reminded her of the first and last game she played with her sister Ivy. It was some weird icebreaker to get to know each other and it did not go all that well.
So far, Spock had to admit that he had a crush on Admiral Pike, Sulu had to send a love letter to a certain personal assistant that had a crush on him, and a drunk Gaila dared Jim to convince Spock to have sex in her bathroom as the party continued. (Nyota chose not to mention that this would not be the first time something like that happened in their shared bathroom because she didn't want something worse to be suggested.) Apparently there was enough chocolate in the cake to make Spock very susceptible to the suggestion. Everybody could hear what was going on in her bathroom. When Jim started screaming 'oh fuck, harder." everybody knows only one thing could possibly be going on in there. She will be spraying down the whole place. At least, this time she knows not to walk in there under any circumstance.
"I didn't think he would do it." Gaila said slightly surprised. Nyota repressed the urge to laugh. "It must be the alcohol." Sulu mumbled under his breath. Again, she didn't have the heart to tell anybody that Jim had actually been drinking Virgin drinks all night.
"It's best if we just ignore it. They could be a while. Can we just move on so I can leave soon?" Leonard complained.
"Fine, since you are so eager, truth or dare?" Nyota asked.
"Because I am already queasy at the thought of whatever is going on in the bathroom, I'll take truth." It took her a moment to decide what question to ask.
"Why did your ex-wife leave you?" She has wanted to ask him that several times over the last three years but every time his ex was mentioned the subject was changed quickly. Since she was too drunk to realize that probably wasn't the best thing to ask, she did it anyway, but not without adding, "Unlike most of the guys I know, you are not a dick. I just don't understand it. I actually like you." If she were sober Nyota probably would not have said that.
"She didn't." Nyota blinked at that. "I left her."
"But you were miserable after it. I remember you from the shuttle," she whispered, hoping that no one else was really paying attention.
"Glad to know I made an impression," Leonard said sarcastically.
"You got sick on my shoes. You delayed our shuttle from taking off by 20 minutes because you
hid in the bathroom and you stayed drunk the entire time."
"I was like that because the soulless monster took everything from me including my daughter, but I'm the one who ended it. I had to," he said, taking another drink.
"Did she cheat on you?" Nyota asked.
"You know, not everyone is like your former boyfriend. I think I was truthful enough for one turn," Leonard said avoiding her question. "It's your turn."
"Because I don't want to risk contracting an STI, I'm going to go with truth too," she said after a moment. He almost looked disappointed.
"Why did you throw away the birthday gift that your father sent you?" Dammit, why did he have to ask her that question? How did he know about that? Only Jim was with her at the time.
"I have to be on duty tomorrow. I think it's time to call it a night." After knowing her for nearly 5 years, her former roommate knew it was best to get everybody out when she said that. However, the one person that didn't leave was Leonard.
"You know, you didn't have to end the party just because you did not want to answer my question," Leonard drawled.
"I really do have to deal with the young and incompetent in the morning," she said as an excuse.
"That's every day," he joked.
"You do not need to stay." That is when a string of expletives in Vulcan could be heard from the bathroom. Unfortunately, she knew exactly what dirty thing Spock was asking his husband to do. Her cheeks were hot just at the thought
"I'm not going to leave you here alone with those two going at it like horny teenagers."
"I'm used to it," she said sadly. "Usually, they are not this loud."
"How long do you think they will be in there?" he asked after a moment.
"It could be hours," she said, knowing from unfortunate personal experience. She loves having the first officer room but hates sharing a bathroom with the other two.
"I think I'm going to need more alcohol," she said, grabbing a shot glass from the table. Leonard joined her.
"I'm right there with you. I promise to actually take care of your hangover in the morning," he said, taking a drink before pausing. "Why did you throw away your gift from your father?" Leonard asked again. "I know you guys don't have a good relationship, but I didn't think it was that bad."
"It is that bad. I'll tell you mine, if you tell me why your marriage fell apart. I need a distraction from the sounds going on next door." She wondered what she had to do to get soundproofing.
"I think the entire ship can hear what's going on," Leonard quipped before getting serious.
"My relationship with my ex was never good. It was always volatile. I kept telling myself every time we got together that it was the last time, but then the birth control failed and I just had to be a southern gentleman. A shotgun wedding is never the best way to begin a marriage, but I love my little girl. Things got worse when the ball and chain started law school."
"How so?" she asked, intrigued. She wanted to know why her friend was the way he was.
"The only school that would take her was in middle of nowhere Iowa. I ended up doing 20 hour shifts at the local ER and the arguing just got worse. I started finding solace in a bottle."
"My relationship with my ex was never good. It was always volatile. I kept telling myself every time we got together that it was the last time, but then the birth control failed and I just had to be a southern gentleman. A shotgun wedding is never the best way to begin a marriage, but I love my little girl. Things got worse when the ball and chain started law school."
"No, I can't give you that. She was a smart woman and ex-Starfleet. W was a regular Computer genius engineer who happen to marry a piece of shit that liked to beat the hell out of her. I can never understand why such a smart woman ended up with such an asshole." His words were bitter. "Because we are too caught up in looking for Prince charming to realize that he's just a frog," Nyota said sadly.
"This woman had her Prince charming and he died on a mission. She then married some idiot on the rebound. She finally got the hell out of there when her oldest son went missing, although the
bastard claims at the time that he just ran away. W. was convinced he had something to do with it. She had to flee the planet just to get away from the bastard." He paused to take another drink. "So what happened?" she asked. For some reason this story seemed vaguely familiar to her. Then again a smart woman getting beat up by her husband seemed to be a little too normal.

"When her youngest goes off to college, she moves back to the old family farm. Said ex-husband comes around looking for her, claiming that he's changed. She falls for this story. Things are good until she starts becoming his punching bag again and she ends up in my ER on a regular basis. Fuck, I am going to need the bottle for this," he said, grabbing said bottle from the center of the table and taking back a swig.

"It kept getting worse each time she showed up in my ER. He broke her jaw twice. Crack ribs were the norm. It's a miracle he did not puncture her lungs. By that point, we were both convinced that the only way she was getting out was in a body bag." Now that reminded her of a very long conversation she had with Jim about what happened to his mother.

"Why didn't she leave?" she asked.
"She did, she just had to do it in a body bag."
"That doesn't make sense. You can't really leave if your already dead," she said as her eyes started to fill with hot tears.
"Remember during Spock's nervous breakdown, when I told you I knew how to make someone appear dead?"
"What did you do?" she asked, confused.
"I helped her get out," he said simply, not offering any details. "After that I just couldn't let things keep going the way they were. It wasn't good for my daughter. It definitely wasn't good for my liver. So I went back home and packed a bag and left. Being the vindictive bitch that she is, the harpy managed to use the whole thing to her advantage and got everything from me but my bones." She didn't know what to say to that. Her only reaction was to hug him.

"You did the right thing," she said, holding on to him. She could actually feel his breath on her neck. It made her skin tingle.

"It doesn't always feel that way. At least, the custody situation is better now and I get the occasional e-mail. Maybe if Pike is successful next week, I will have other options. Lord knows Joanna would be better off on this deathtrap then with her absentee mother who sees her as some sort of trophy," he said, looking directly at her.

"I think you would be happier," she said in a whisper. His lips were mere millimeters from hers at that point. The distance was starting to close, until she heard a loud crash from the bathroom, followed by the sounds of rushing water. She also saw her BFF run out of the bathroom hard and with his pants around his ankles. Despite the fact that Jim and Spock managed to break the sink she was glad. It would be a bad thing if she kissed one of her friends, even if she was drunk at the time. It would be horrible even if a tiny part of her mind wished that she did.
on what was once the Kirk family property. Construction was starting now.
The second thing to go out the window was the mandatory retirement age, along with the policy regarding disabled service members. Too many people died in the Vulcan incident, many more like him were left permanently disabled. They couldn't lose well trained personnel because of something silly like age or disability.
Five years ago, he doubted he would be a member of the Admiralty, since he was paralyzed from the waist down. Despite the advancements in technology, the old guard were not comfortable with the disabled. For some dumb reason they assumed that he lost all his knowledge the moment that he lost his ability to walk. He would have been forced into medical retirement.
Now he was the new guard and they were changing Starfleet policy. You could now serve in space as long as you passed your medical requirements, even if you were the ripe old age of 70. You could now apply for Starfleet Academy if you have a visual impairment, utilize a wheelchair, have a hearing impairment, or another type of disability. He was the one who proposed the change: however, it wasn't just about him but the next generation. He could never tell the others that he came to this decision after speaking with the alternate universe counterpart of his almost first officer and hearing stories about disabled service members serving in Starfleet in the future.
The other thing he discovered during those chats was that at some point in the future families were allowed to serve together. Before the Vulcan incident, around 3% left Starfleet annually due to family issues including but not limited to sick parents, inadequate childcare, and falling in love with someone you're not supposed to because of the antiquated fraternization policy. There were days that he wished he had become part of the 3%. The number after the incident was 15%. He doesn't even know how many angry emails he has received from other captains about losing one of their best team members because he or she just couldn't do it any longer. Those numbers are just the ones leaving who have already joined, imagine how many good people did not join Starfleet just because of policies that were no longer in step with modern Starfleet. He knew these policy changes had to happen soon.
The decision to allow the disabled and to get rid of an age-based mandatory retirement went through easily. Most felt like him and easily realized that the one-size-fits-all policy was keeping a lot of good soldiers out.
Rewriting the fraternization policy was also easy. In his opinion, Captain Kirk and his husband were the sole reason why the policy was being thrown out the window. Not only did the fact that they were married not impact their ability to command the ship, it actually helped. They were the most successful team in Starfleet, proving once and for all that the old policies were stupid. They even worked well apart proving that they were not completely dependent on each other.
However, allowing children in space was a much more highly contested issue even under special circumstances. The mass casualties of the Nero incident made people wary. But the command shortage after what happened made discussion of the issue necessary. The old leadership would have tabled the issue for no other reason than the fact that they were afraid for their own jobs. The new leadership, commissioned a study. Maybe they were expecting said study to say that it was an absolutely horrible thing, but it did not. Now two years after he proposed the change it was headed to a final vote.
He was currently listening to Admiral Jackson, one of the few cronies of Admiral Johnson, that survived the purge. In Christopher's opinion that only happened because he was the head of some secret research project that no one else wanted to know about. He was against any change that Chris proposed. Personally, he thinks that's solely because he is the one proposing the changes. After the study disproved all of his initial arguments about productivity and safety, the only thing he could still argue was history.
"You're actually going to argue that because we've never done this before we shouldn't do it now?" Chris said, biting back the urge to laugh. One of his colleagues actually did snicker.
"That's ridiculous. Your initial argument was about the cost being prohibitive. The study that was commissioned proved that we would actually save money. Most of the ships can easily be retrofitted with minimal cost. New ships that we are building at higher than normal rates, due to the
losses we sustained three years previously, can easily be modified for our new needs. Also the policy only affects individuals who meet a certain criteria. A few years ago I would not be here. If we keep things as they are we will lose valuable personnel. We already lost an entire generation of cadets. We can't afford to lose anymore good people because we refuse to change."

"I have been a loyal servant of this Council for nearly 3.4 years and this is how you repay me, by forcing me out?" Dr. Amanda Grayson said, barely suppressing the urge to scream at the odious Vulcan sitting across from her.

"We are not 'forcing you out' as is your human colloquialism," he said in a voice that concealed his malevolence. Councilmember Sank was one of the few she sincerely wished fell off the rocks instead of her late husband. He was a distasteful Vulcan who despised her very existence simply for her DNA, before she became one of the most productive members of the new Council. She has been counting down the days until he relocates permanently to the colony, thereby allowing her to continue her work as the Vulcan representative to the Federation in peace. Unfortunately, he was one of the last to move permanently and it seems that it doesn't matter anymore. Today he decided to bring out obscure policies in an effort to take away her seat. Oh, she despised this Vulcan.

"The rules strictly state that all members of the Council must be Vulcan and you are not." She had to resist the urge to roll her eyes. Any display of physical emotion would be considered a show of weakness and Amanda was anything but weak. She survived the death of her husband and the planet she called home for decades. She survived losing most of her friends and colleagues. She can survive this.

"No, the rules state that all members of the Council must have Vulcan citizenship as outlined in article 70.2G of our Constitution. The rules of government have transferred to the new colony. I have had Vulcan citizenship for nearly 35 years." Amanda explained rationally, keeping the bitterness out of her voice. The slight flicker of annoyance in his eyes was her only indication that he was shocked by the fact that she knew the rules so well. He was one of the few on the Council who still doubted her intelligence.

"Yes, but you have that citizenship because of your husband, who is no longer living. According to rule 71.4 D, you lost your citizenship at his death. You no longer have a right to his council seat and therefore your position as the ambassador to the Federation should go to a true Vulcan." She smirked inwardly, but she kept her face completely neutral at his ignorant words. She has heard this argument before; however, in the last few weeks after her appointment as the Federation ambassador for Vulcan, his animosity has increased tenfold. Amanda knew he assumed that the position was his and was bitter because she was the one appointed to the position. Honestly, she was expecting him to call into question her citizenship earlier. Instead, he argued that she only received the new position because her son saved Earth, but was not fortunate enough to save the planet of his birth.

"That would be the case if I did not go through the official naturalization process. I lived on Vulcan for more than 30 years, I raised my son there. I am not Vulcan by blood, but by choice," she argued back, barely keeping the annoyance out of her voice.

"However, all naturalization records have been destroyed. There is no way to confirm this," Sank pointed out a little too eagerly. She should have known that he would try something like this.

"All records were lost except for those that were backed up on off planet servers. How can we know that you are a citizen?" she asked logically.

"It is obvious that I'm Vulcan, unlike you." On the old Vulcan Council many of his cronies would have agreed with him. The new council was made up of mostly ex-patriots that had left the planet due to extreme prejudice. The rest owed their lives to a half human, thus forcing these Vulcans to reevaluate their prejudice. However, there were still enough of those who held that opinion sitting on the screen in front of her. In addition, her favorite ally, Selek, was away on an undisclosed diplomatic mission. Maybe that's why this is happening now.

"Are you sure? You could be half Romulan?" she said, smirking as her comment instantly
disarmed the annoying individual. T'Pe, a former professor from Cambridge University had to suppress laughter. She was another target of Sank because she showed too much emotion for his personal taste. Unfortunately, she was too heavily involved in the creation of the infrastructure of the new colony to get rid of completely. Fortunately, she was safely at the colony and only had to deal with the Vulcan via video conference.

However Amanda, despite her usefulness, was considered expendable due to her humanness. Both she and her husband's grandmother had anticipated this challenge and already had a backup plan in place.

"I assume that you are aware that if you strip me of my seat on these flimsy grounds, that I will just function as proxy for Spock until he is able to take over per regulation 76.6.a." It took her years of learning how to behave in Vulcan society to suppress the urge to smirk in such an instance.

"Yes but according to regulation 76.7d, to receive a hereditary seat on the council, you must be the recognized heir of that seat. Due to the lack of records, that cannot be proven in your son's case." She was about to make a snide comment about DNA tests before T'Pau gave her a sharp look that was still effective, despite her not being in the room physically.

"Therefore, according to regulation 76.3.h the seat will go into the custody of the next closest living relative which would be me." Sank was her late husband's cousin on his father's side. It became obvious to everyone that this was just a mere power-play and revenge for her getting what he wanted. Unfortunately, her fate was being voted on by a group of individuals that were more concerned with the letter of the law, then its spirit. She was screwed.

"I move that we vote on this issue immediately." Sank expected T'Panda to second him, as was evident by him turning to her. She was one of the few actually on the Council that would take his side. She equally dislikes Amanda, but for entirely different reasons. Despite the fact that Spock was already happily married, T'Panda approached Amanda to form a marriage alliance between the two families. Amanda refused and therefore she became another political enemy. T'Panda would question her suggestions merely because she was the one suggesting it. At least, T'Panda disliked her for something she did and not because of her species. Amanda was not expecting anything good to come from this.

"If you would have simply allowed Commander Spock to take his rightful seat, I would have gone along with your plan. However, you want to strip away his seat, one that has belonged to him since birth. A seat that will go to his children someday." Amanda was surprised at her defense until she said that. Apparently, she was still under the delusion that she would be Spock's wife someday.

"Dr. Grayson has been serving as an adequate proxy for Commander Spock during his service to the Federation. I see no logical reason why we should change course now. She has done many great things for our people including organizing the relief effort." Despite knowing her self-serving motives, Amanda was surprised by her kind words.

"However, the rules clearly state that Ms. Grayson no longer qualifies to hold the seat. Therefore she should be removed from the Council at once," Sank stated once more. "You on more than one occasion have objected to Ms. Grayson's continued presence on this Council. Why have you come to her defense now?"

"It is Dr. Grayson or Elder Grayson to you. At the time, I felt that her son should do more directly to help his own people." T'Panda said as an excuse for her previous untoward behavior.

"More than finding a suitable planet for the new colony? Many of us are alive because of him," T'Pau said swiftly.

"I no longer hold such opinions. That is exactly why his family should not lose their seat. We owe him our very lives," T'Panda defended.

"Yes, but as true Vulcans, we must respect the absolute letter of the law."

"Then I move that we table this issue for 90 days to allow further examination of the situation. So far we only have your word that Elder Grayson no longer meets the citizenship requirement. The Council should investigate these matters for itself.," T'Pe suggested.

"I second the motion," T'Panda told the group.

"All in favor?" T'Pau said on the screen. All hands went up except one, not including her own. She
chose not to vote for the sake of appearance. "The issue is tabled for 90 days pending further investigation," T'Pau said swiftly, ending the meeting.

"Why did you do that?" Amanda asked when she encountered T'Panda in the facilities a few moments later.

"Spock does not deserve losing something that is his birthright because of one Vulcan's love of power and antiquated Vulcan supremacist viewpoint. When we were children, Spock was kind to me. He never mocked me because of my visual impairment. He has the potential to be a more than adequate leader when he accepts the position," T'Panda explained.

The young woman was born with a severe visual impairment and was ridiculed mercilessly by her peers. She moved to earth when she was 16 to participate in a research program to develop a prosthesis device that mimics sight, in addition to being a scholar of the law. She was currently wearing the device. Because of her research, she was safely on earth when the rest of her family died.

"It would be hypocritical of my son to do that to you when so many of his peers did that to him." The children ruthlessly tormented Spock because he was half human. He wouldn't treat anyone the way she was treated. Her son was too good for petty vengeance.

"I sought a marriage alliance with him because he is one of the few of our people that I could truly be comfortable with. I doubt that I will be able to find another possible companion among my own people who will not use me with contempt simply because of my perceived limitations." She understood. She discovered long ago that the Vulcan philosophy was not practiced as much as it should be by those at a certain level. She was hoping she could change that. Yet the Sanks of the Council were preventing her.

"Unfortunately, he is happily married to someone who sees him for himself and appreciate him completely." Amanda said kindly.

"I saw the couple together last year when I traveled to the colony with the second group of settlers. I could feel their regard for one another. It was foolish of me to ask that the relationship be dissolved because I am not sure such a bond could be dissolved even by death. However, I do not need a bond mate, but merely the means to contribute to continuing the species." Amanda wasn't expecting this type of acceptance. There has been too much animosity in the past.

"Yet, you continue to punish me for not giving you something that I could not give," Amanda said sharply. She no longer felt the need to conceal her emotions with T'Panda.

"That was unwise of me. I have tried to rectify such destructive behavior recently." Amanda has realized that the woman has been less hostile in recent months. "Sank sees my inability to see without technology the same way he sees the human blood that both you and Spock carry. However, it is not a handicap, but rather an asset. Because of your actions, you are more Vulcan than Sank could ever be," T'Panda asserted.

"I personally see you as a much more capable leader than him." Amanda quipped.

"That is because you see me and not my disability. You are that type of being. Even your boyfriend utilizes a wheelchair, yet is obvious to anybody that has seen you to interact that you hold him in the highest regard." She frowned at that. She knew that T'Panda was referring to Christopher. They were friends, very close friends but still just friends. They've known each other for years as acquaintances, but that connection became deeper when they attended the same loss support group. He lost the one that got away and she lost her soulmate. They understood each other in a way no one else could.

"Chris is a friend," She said almost automatically. This accusation has been made multiple times. Even the alternate version of her son has questioned the relationship. She's too damaged for anything more than friendship at the moment. She wonders if she will ever completely accept the loss of her husband. Amanda still wears her wedding ring. Although, now it was on a chain she wore around her neck instead of her finger. It took Amanda two years to get to that point. There are days when she forgets that he's dead. There are so many things that she wants to tell him, mostly
about her two daughters. Sarek always wanted more children, but they couldn't have any more, and with his busy schedule adoption just didn't seem like a good idea. Motherhood was easier when she had a co-parent, despite the fact that Chris was a big help. Then again it's probably easier to raise a child in your 20s instead of your 50s. She can't decide what's worse, a 13-year-old teenage girl with Vulcan level mood swings still trying to deal with the death of her parents or a four-year-old who still hasn't figured out how to share in Miss River's preschool class. However, she still absolutely loved both T'Pend and T'Pay.

"I apologize for my erroneous assumption," T'Panda said quickly. "I meant nothing by the comment. I know you loved your husband very much, but there is nothing improper about finding someone else." She has heard that many times mostly from her son in law and her friend Gaila. She is sure that when Gaila is back on planet she will be more actively urging Amanda to date again. "The Council and my daughters keep me quite busy." Amanda said in response, avoiding the real reason why she has been celibate since her husband's death.

"Of course. I meant no offense. I am still not very eloquent in standard even after being on this planet for so long," T'Panda said as an excuse.

"I speak fluent Vulcan," Amanda offered.

"No, I must practice. What I am trying to say is that you see beyond a person's disability. You want to change the way this Council does things, so do I. We are allies."

"What do you want from this alliance?" Amanda asked, knowing that even the most logical of Vulcans would want something from her.

"I want Spock to be able to get the seat that is rightfully his, when you wish no longer to have it. I want his children to be able to inherit those seats even if they are created outside the normal means. That means keeping you on the Council by whatever means necessary, even if I have to marry you myself to get you citizenship again." If T'Panda were human, Amanda would consider that a joke, but she was probably serious.

"I doubt it will come to that," Amanda said with an annoyed sigh.

"I am sure there are other means. I have studied law for two decades. There are always, as humans say 'loopholes'. I will find something if given time." If anybody could it was the Vulcan in front of her. Amanda knew that she has spent years studying the law of Vulcan. She was an advocate for disabled rights before the planets destruction. Now she was using her seat to achieve constitutional change.

"So you want me to convince my son to use you as his surrogate and to change the laws so that your child will have the same rights as a child born in a traditional marriage?" she asked, not sure she could do that. Spock wanted kids of his own to save the species. The pressure that his grandmother was putting on him was making it worse. She knew that her son-in-law was absolutely terrified of being a father. His childhood was horrible. There was no other word to describe it. There was nothing she could say to convince Jim that the opposite was true. However, maybe Jim would be more open to an option that was slightly outside the box and would not require him to do diaper duty.

"You are very astute," T'Panda said confirming her assumption.

"As I told you before, I cannot force my son to do anything he does not want to do." Her husband learned that the hard way and she will not repeat his mistakes. "However I can present the option to him and his husband. I would also be willing to support any measure that will give equal protection to those previously disenfranchised," Amanda offered.

"I accept." T'Panda said with a smile.

"Excuse me, but I have another commitment," she said looking at her watch, knowing that she had exactly 30 minutes to pick up her daughters at school before she was to meet Christopher for dinner.

"With your Christopher?" T'Panda asked.

"He's not my Christopher but yes, we are having dinner together with my daughters. As I stated earlier he is just a friend." Seriously why does everybody think there is something going on? "Because you are fluent in the language, you are aware that 'friend' and 'lover' are interchangeable
"So how did the vote go?" Amanda asked as soon as her daughters were busy playing video games. Chris had the brilliant idea to take the girls to Fun Time House at Pizza complete with vintage video games and fuzzy robots singing disturbing children's songs. Her late husband would have found the entire experience disturbing, but T'Pend and T'Pay enjoyed it, much to her surprise. At least that gave the two time to talk. She hasn't seen him since the meeting three days previously and the results have not gone public yet. She was anxious to know the outcome.

"15 to 4," Christopher said with a great smile.

"Considering that you're smiling I take it that it was 15 to 4 in your favor," Amanda said taking a drink of her water.

"You assumed correctly. The only real opposition were Johnson's old cronies."

"Why am I not surprised?" Amanda said with annoyance.

"T'Pau will be happy. I think that she pushed for this change so much just so she could get great grandbabies even if she will say such a thing is illogical. According to a very panicked conversation I had with my son-in-law, she has sent Jim multiple emails regarding the genetic engineering of a baby or in vitro. Then again she did the same thing to me at my wedding," Amanda told him with a sad smile.

"I'm not surprised. I had to listen to Jim complain about what happened when they had to shuttle her and the first group of permanent settlers to the colony. Apparently, she actually brought possible gestational carriers and egg donors with her," Chris said with a laugh. She had also heard about this. Spock was mortified, even if he would not express such a thing.

"How is the old Vulcan?" Christopher asked after a moment.

"Good, from what I can tell. We only got to talk for a few minutes before the rest of the earthbound council members arrived," she said, inhaling an entire mozzarella stick.

"You're stress eating, that's not a good sign," Chris said with a frown.

"I spent the day with morons," Amanda said, grabbing another stick.

"What happened?" Chris asked, touching her hand. She ignored the shiver that went up her spine at the contact. That's when she explained the entire Sank situation.

"God, he is such an opportunistic bastard. Before everything happened he was just an aid, and now he's trying to take over," Chris said after she was done.

"I personally think he is just upset about my appointment to the position that he believes is his birthright. Sometimes, I wish my son had not saved him," Amanda said with annoyance.

"Yes, but the Vulcan is an idiot if he thinks that he can do a better job then you just because of his DNA. Actually, I think he's the Vulcan equivalent to the disgraced and now imprisoned Johnson," Chris snorted. The former Admiral Johnson was serving a 252 year sentence on an undisclosed prison planet for everything from racketeering to statutory rape to manslaughter.

"I may agree with you, but regardless he is a dangerous idiot," Amanda said as she nervously played with her plate.

"You have 90 days to figure out how to outsmart him. I'm sure you only need three. Besides, Jim and Spock will be here by that time. I'm sure they will think of something if you can't." She couldn't help but smile when he told her that. "I wasn't supposed to tell you that."

"They're coming back to earth?" Amanda asked, ecstatic to see her son. The last time she saw Spock was two years ago when she visited Vulcan II to oversee the progress of the new development for three months.

"Yes, but you didn't hear that from me. I just told Jim about it yesterday."

"How did he take the news?" she said, not sure what to expect. Her son-in-law really didn't have any ties to earth anymore except her. His brother has been missing for years and his mother was dead. He wasn't close to any of his aunts and uncles. He even sold his ancestral home and was happy that they were turning it into the new Starfleet Academy. He wasn't that happy that they were turning his childhood home into a shrine/Museum. To Jim that was where his mother was killed. She knew he would be happy if it burned to the ground and she can't fault him for that.
"He's happy to be coming back, but not with the fact that he is going to have an Earth assignment for a few months as an instructor the Academy. Also he's freaking out about the new rules regarding kids on ships under special circumstances." Chris' words do not surprise her.

"What exactly did my son-in-law say?" she asked.

"It's not funny Chris. Spock's biological clock is already ticking because of the endangered species thing. I mean, he feels guilty because he's not helping as much as he thinks he should. He's going to start driving me crazy with a gestational carrier and egg donors search," he said, imitating Jim perfectly.

"I'm not surprised. Although, I don't know why Spock feels so guilty. He's doing more for our people than some working directly on the situation. He was the one who chose the planet that the colony is on," Amanda said, exasperated. Unfortunately, she knows that her son fills guilt harder than any other emotion. To this day, he still blames himself for not saving his father, even if she did not.

"There's a reason why your son sees a therapist three times a week. He has issues. One of those is his unrealistic expectations for himself. He thinks he was asked to be perfect."

"I personally blame Sarek for that," Amanda said with another sigh. Her husband had put too much pressure on their only child together. Long after his death, Spock was still contending with his metaphorical ghost.

I'm shocked you're admitting to that, although Jim said something similar. He also said 'I just know as soon as he finds out, we're going to be picking out booties and bassinets.'"

"I bet he was snickering the entire time," she said, smiling.

"He is terrified of becoming his stepfather," Chris said sadly. Amanda knew that was something that Jim had an issue with.

"Jim knows that hitting is bad. I personally think that he will make a good father someday. He was great with the girls before leaving," Amanda said, just as Chris's communicator went off and he grabbed it out of his pocket.

"I have to take this," he told her.

"Somebody better be dead," he answered, only to frown after a moment.

"I didn't mean that literally. I can be back in 30 minutes," Chris said, ending the call.

"That didn't sound good," Amanda said.

"It's not. When they were excavating the site of the new Riverside Academy they found a human body under what was the barn."

"That's not good," she said before thinking. "Jim's brother disappeared about 15 or 16 years ago. Nobody's seen him in that time and there wasn't much of a search because Frank owned the local police department. You don't think…" Amanda stopped there.

"I met the bastard. I know what he was capable of and it is definitely a possibility," he growled.

"I'm going with you." "You can't. I'll tell you everything later. Don't say anything to Jim until we know," he instructed her.

"Okay," she said, kissing him goodbye on the cheek, not entirely sure why she did it.

Jim and Spock have both been avoiding her whenever not on duty since the birthday incident eight days earlier. This is an amazing feat considering that their rooms are next door to each other and they still have to share a bathroom (even though it has been completely renovated, thanks to those two idiots doing something in there that managed to break the sink). Even Spock was not making eye contact with her right now. Of course, she knows this is entirely possible because she was currently avoiding Leonard at the moment. She wasn't completely ready to face him after that almost kiss.

However, unlike her, her bosses had no reason to be that embarrassed. Because Jim and Spock are married and have joined quarters, she has the traditional first officer room and the walls were unbelievably thin. This wasn't the first time that she's heard things that she shouldn't, but this was the first time major property damage was involved. So she was slightly shocked when Jim showed
up at her quarters with a large box of chocolates and a bottle of something very alcoholic.
"What are you doing here?" she asked, eyeing him dubiously.
"Is that any way to treat your best friend?" Jim said, walking past her.
"You have been avoiding me since my birthday. Apparently, breaking the sink was too much for
you and you really do have shame."
"We were not avoiding you because of the thing with the sink. I know you've seen worse." She just
gave Jim her 'you have got to be kidding me' look.
"Okay, I was not avoiding you. Once the chocolate wore off, Spock was mortified but only because
of the broken furniture. I was avoiding you because of what I interrupted," Jim said, sitting on her
bed practically bouncing.
"You didn't interrupt anything," she snapped back.
"These walls are very thin," he said with an evil smirk.
"Yes and I'm going to throw you at one," she said with a glare as she opened the box of chocolate.
"You're so touchy."
"So why are you here?" she asked with annoyance.
"Starfleet is completely rewriting their family policy. Good for Bones, bad for me. I could deal
with it in the abstract, but not now that it's becoming a real possibility. This means that we will
have toddlers running around as soon as my husband successfully talks me into it. We both know
he can convince me to do just about anything," Jim said as he opened the bottle and took a drink
directly out of it before switching to the chocolate. She would say something smart at that moment,
but she felt it was best to let Jim talk about the entire conversation with Chris that covered
everything from the policy change to Jim's very irrational fears about fatherhood. He also
mentioned his irritation over the fact that his childhood home was being turned into a Museum,
even though he wanted to burn it to the ground. Finally, he told her about his new assignment.
"They want me to teach," Jim said in a whiny voice. Nyota's response was to laugh.
"It's not that funny," he said, eating another one of her truffles.
"I'm just laughing at your reaction. You're acting like dealing with new recruits is the worst thing
in the universe. At least they are not sending you to some remote research facility like Delta Vega
without your husband. Also, I'm going to be with you."
"That's like the one silver lining. That and the fact that Spock will be with me. I just can't believe
any member of the admiralty would be stupid enough to make me teach Leadership 101. I think
Delta Vega would it be better as long as Spock was there and not in 'let's make a baby mode'."
She couldn't help but laugh at Jim's comment.
"I don't think Delta Vega would be better. Also, as much as he wished he could send you there I
don't think Johnson's BFF can touch you," she said, referring to Admiral Jackson who was now the
new chair of the We Hate Jim Club.
About 80% of those who were in charge when she and Jim were cadets were no longer there. Most
did not survive the hearings after the Vulcan incident. A few were incarcerated like Johnson. Some
like Jackson only survived by the skin of their teeth and because they still had friends in high
places. Jackson hated Jim for multiple reasons. He also had multiple reasons to hate her as well.
Her testimony regarding the fact that everyone ignored the message she intercepted from the
Klingons was the reason why most of his cronies were gone.
"Shouldn't you be whining to your husband or has the baby talk already started?"
"He wants to go over options," Jim said with a frown. "That may be the reason why I decided to
break into my emergency chocolate supply and make amends."
"So instead of speaking to him like a rational person about why you are scared, you're hiding in my
bedroom?" she asked, mimicking Spock's trademark eyebrow raise.
"You've known me for how long? When have I ever been rational?" he asked, taking another drink. "Good point."
"Also, how many emails have you ignored from your father today? Did you even thank him for the birthday present that you trashed? It was a really nice necklace that I rescued in case you decide to act like a grown-up."
"Six, and I am acting like a grown-up," Nyota snapped back.
"I doubt that," Jim mumbled under breath. "Are you actually going to read any of the letters?" He asked this out loud.
"Are you going to speak to your husband about why talk about children makes you squeamish?"
she asked in turn.

"So when are you going to tell Bones that you want to jump his bones?"
"Do you want to watch a movie?" she asked trying to ignore everything Jim just said.
"See, I think we're friends now because we are equally screwed up and we believe avoidance is an acceptable coping strategy."
"Probably," she said before thinking better of it. Of course, just as she pressed play they were both called out of their free time for a distress call from a science outpost under attack. She was already looking forward to her planet side assignment.

"I did not say that we must make plans immediately to produce a child. Now that the regulations have changed, we should examine the possibility," Jim's husband said ever so logically as they marched through the jungle-like environment. He was beyond annoyed that they couldn't just beam directly into the research facility. Instead he, Spock, Bones, and three members of the security team were slowly walking to the research facility. Seven hours earlier they had received a distress call from planet NCX17, also known as the backup for the Vulcan colony. The planet that was ultimately not chosen for the colony was currently serving as a new Starfleet research facility where they were working on a project so top-secret that Jim barely has the clearance to know that there was a lab on this planet. The fact that they were being attacked by ground troops made Jim uneasy.

Of course, most of this uneasiness was because before the feed went dead, they saw footage of the person making the distress call being shot in the head by someone who seemed to be human. It was hard to tell when a person is wearing an old-school ski mask. They have been unable to contact anyone since the initial call.

"Do you really think I should be responsible for a small life?" Jim responded. The whole reason why he was hiding out in Nyota's room was to avoid this argument. Instead, thanks to this crazy distress call, they were going to have to have this out now. He and Spock have a good marriage filled with love and copious amounts of sex in inappropriate places. There was just this one little thing: his husband's ticking biological clock and Jim's perfectly logical fear that he shouldn't be allowed within 10 feet of a growing adolescent. Once the honeymoon period was over, the concept started to terrify him again.

"You are responsible for 1000 lives aboard the ship. You perform your duty more than adequately," Spock said, grabbing his hand in a not so discrete kiss. Even after knowing each other for more than four years, Spock still enjoys his hand-holding make out sessions even when they're fighting. Actually, those sessions usually end their fights really quickly.

"Adults are different. I don't have to change their diapers," Jim said with a frown.

"If that is the major issue, adoption is a viable possibility," Spock said, being way too logical.

"You two are freaking insane," Bones complained. "You're arguing about kids now? Can you two table this argument until we're not walking through a unknown jungle trying to access a remote Starfleet research facility. Especially when we don't know if we're going to run into a group of thugs with big guns. We are not even sure if the group has left the planet or not. If anyone was still there they would hear you from here." Bones looked like he actually wanted to slap both of them upside the head.

"That does not seem possible. All scans show only one life signed located in a room that prevents
"Forgive me for being worried. After you warp into a trap one time you become a bit wary. Who knows if they left us some nasty surprise. It just makes perfect sense that we would get blown to pieces six weeks before vacation and my six month assignment on solid ground," Doctor McCoy said with his normal biting sarcasm.

"Which is why we are the ones doing the reconnaissance," his husband said with an annoyed look. "We will send others down to take care of the bodies after we know it's safe. You're here to help stabilize the one person that's not dead," Jim snapped.

"Fine, but I don't need to hear your foreplay. Save it for the bedroom. I'm a Doctor dammit, not a therapist. Work out your daddy issues on your own time."

"I do not have daddy issues," Jim said in his defense. 'You have to have had a dad to have daddy issues and I never had one and I don't count the bastard,' he said mentally, and judging by his husband's raised eyebrows he heard that. Sometimes having a husband that can hear your thoughts is a really bad thing.

"The true reasons for your objection to us having children together is your stepfather and your fear that you could not be an adequate father due to your lack of role model?" Spock asked cautiously as he caressed his husband's hand. The gesture was the only type of affection he showed when the couple were on duty. He wished he could do more but the situation was too critical for that. They needed to keep moving.

"Possibly, and we don't have time for you to give me all the reasons why you don't think that way. I will make you a deal, if I can survive taking care of your four-year-old sister for a day without having to call the police or the fire department we can discuss options," James offered. Spock felt that it may be a good idea. Jim's opposition would most likely dissipate when he is able to prove to himself that his fears are illogical.

"Okay." Spock agreed simply because he knew when not to push his husband after more than three years of marriage and they really did not have time for further discussion.

They stayed silent until they arrived at the research facility. Contrary to Dr. McCoy's assumption, there was no ambush or incendiary device waiting for the group. However, they did encounter the bloodied bodies of several colleagues. Spock recognized one as a friend of his former girlfriend Carol. Her name was Rebecca and she was kind enough to bring Spock an entire chocolate cake after Carol ended things the way she did. Rebecca also stopped speaking to her for a year because of the incident. He will have to call her mother personally.

"I think they took the server," Jim said, pointing to an empty space where something was obviously missing.

"What the hell were they working on here?" Dr. McCoy asked.

"Something so classified that they sent us to check out what the hell happened," Jim responded.

"I am sure they took other stuff. We will need to take a closer look as soon as we find the one person not dead," Jim said as they moved forward. Suddenly Jim stopped moving as he took a deep breath.

"Spock, don't look," he said, grabbing Spock's hand again as if to hold him back.

"Why?" Spock asked.

'I'm pretty sure that the person lying in front of me is your ex-girlfriend. You don't need to see her like that."

Mentally, Jim added 'I'm so sorry.'

Spock ignored his husband's advice and walked towards the body. Despite the blood, he knew it was her. Despite the device in his hand telling him otherwise he placed two fingers on her neck to feel for a pulse but felt nothing. He felt shaky. After three years of therapy, he was more comfortable with feeling his emotions. Right now he felt overwhelmed.

"I know it's hard but we have to keep going," Jim said, putting an arm around him despite the fact that they were on duty. "Judging by the phaser in her hand and the body across from her she at least took one of them down with her," Jim said with a whisper.

They followed Leonard into what appeared to be the kitchen area. Spock could not get the scene
from before out of his mind. A woman that he loved once upon a time was dead.
"Check the cabinets," Jim said quietly. "I used to hide there a lot when I was a little kid. I'm sure a
small adult could do it too."
"Or scared little kid being hidden by his mommy," Doctor McCoy said, opening the door to find a
small child of approximately 3 years of age with brown hair. "He has a pulse. I want to get him up
to the ship, now," the doctor said scooping the young child up.
"This is why I don't want to bring a small defenseless kid on a starship despite what the regulations
now say. Considering his hair color and what we saw outside, I'm pretty sure that Carol died
protecting him, so I guess I have to hate her a little less," James said sadly. "Another Starfleet
orphan."
Spock really did not pay attention to his husband because he was too preoccupied with the fact that
the young boy had ears like his.
To be continued.
Emotional Grenades

Chapter Notes

I'm probably going to try to do smaller chapters because I think I can get out two small chapters during the week instead of one large one for one story. I really do want to try to update more than once a month on all my stories. Also, I think the 10,000 word chapters are a little overwhelming.

A/N or possibly story spoiler alert: Some of what you read below may seem familiar to those of you who have read the wonderful My Own Interrupted Iowa by T’Pinto (Great story that everybody should read and please send encouragement for her to start the sequel). With her permission, I did borrow the circumstances behind the conception of Carol's son but because Carol did it to Spock instead of Jim, we felt it was different enough.

Pairings for now: Established Jim/Spock, Pre Bones/Nyota, and it's complicated Chris/Amanda

Music: Bruno Mars

Grenade

Gave you all I had and you tossed it in the trash

You tossed it in the trash, you did

This song embodies Spock's relationship with Carol in this universe better than anything I could come up with.

*Count on Me.

This is to show contrast between Spock's relationship with Jim now and what he had with Carol. Also, the song has pure lullaby potential.

According to his husband, Spock was not supposed to have anything to do with the current situation or subsequent investigation into the murder of 38 Starfleet researchers. Due to what happened during the Nero incident it was easy for him to be declared emotionally compromised. James actually named Nyota as acting First Officer temporarily. He did not argue because James knew him better than most and he was emotionally compromised.

Seeing the bloody body of someone he once cared about was jarring. James could feel his complicated emotions through their bond. Spock hated her but he did not want to see this.

A part of him remembered a time when he would do anything for her. He was so lost in what he thought was love that at the time he would have died for her. She would not have done the same. After being married to James for three years he knows now that what he felt was not real love. Maybe it was immature love or merely infatuation, but it wasn't real.
Spock did not think Carol was capable of love until he watched the security video files. Per James’ orders, Spock was not supposed to watch the files, but James knew him too well and did not restrict his access. The attack was unexpected. One of the scientists began randomly attacking the other researchers before the others arrived. Carol's response was to go straight to her son.

"David, I need you to be a good boy for mom and stay quiet, okay?" From the footage, Spock can see the young boy nodding his head.

"Mommy loves you." That's when she injected him with a substance that according to Doctor McCoy mimics death. Spock could only reason that a desperate Carol assumed that if the attackers thought that David was dead they would leave him alone. Spock saw her quickly hide the child in the kitchen area just in case. He then saw the woman who treated him so horribly die protecting her child. As James surmised, she killed one of the attackers and wounded another one so severely that he or she retreated.

Young David was currently in sick bay in stable condition but still unconscious. Dr. McCoy believes that the unconsciousness is a side effect of what Carol gave him to 'play dead'. Spock believes that it is a side effect of a broken parental bond. Even as an adult Vulcan, losing his father was quite painful. All research indicates that it is worse in young children and has been known to trigger a healing trance. Even without a DNA test Spock knew that David was at least partially of Vulcan ancestry.

The required DNA test confirmed that David was in fact Carol's child. In Spock's mind, a DNA test was superfluous. Her actions prove that this was her child. Actually, the name David proved that he was Carol's child. She wanted to name her first child after her grandfather. Spock like the name so much that despite his bitter feelings regarding Carol, he did not take the name off his perspective baby name list.

Unfortunately, the DNA test also identified him as the other parent. Again, Spock did not need a DNA test to prove something he already knew. When he took over carrying the small child from Doctor McCoy, a parental bond locked into place. Actually he already had his suspicions when he saw David. He resembled Spock as a child, except his hair was much lighter. It was the same shade as James'. The DNA test just confirmed the obvious, but it did not explain how he could have a child under the age of three with his former girlfriend.

Other than being forced to be in her company 4.5 years ago when she was doing a speaking engagement at the San Francisco campus, he has not seen the first woman he thought that he loved for 7 years two months and 23 days. They have not engaged in sexual intercourse for eight years, three months, and 19 days. Judging by David's age, he had to be conceived sometime during May or June of 2258. Spock was in space with James for the majority of that time.

Even if David was significantly older, Spock would still be surprised by the child's existence. As embarrassing as it was, his mother spoke with him about the necessities of using contraceptives, especially due to his high social standing. She said it would make him susceptible to paternity suits. Unlike his full Vulcan counterparts, his reproductive system followed human norms. Pregnancy was a possibility at all times, not just once every seven years or with the aid of fertility drugs.

He always used prophylactics. Also Carol was supposedly on the contraceptive shot. However, the woman lied about loving him so it is only logical to assume that she probably lied about being on some form of contraceptive. Spock also distinctly remembered not being able to use spermicide because Carol was supposedly allergic.

The technology did exist to remove a fertilized embryo and transfer it to another during the early stages of fetal development. It was also possible to freeze an embryo for decades and then have a
successful pregnancy once the embryo was implanted in a uterus. It was possible that Carol could have gotten pregnant during their relationship and had the fetus removed and 'stored' until a more convenient time for her to bring the child to term.

There was also the possibility that Carol could have secured some of his genetic material by other means. Again, she would not allow spermicide. Is this what happened? Would she really have done something like that to him? According to Rebecca, she already used Spock to satisfy her interplanetary sexual curiosity. Using his DNA to create an offspring without his consent seems completely within the realm of possibilities.

He always wanted children. Due to the endangered species status of Vulcans, it was more necessary than ever. However, he wanted those children with James and not with her. But as Dr. McCoy has said on many occasions, it was impossible to get the bull back in once the door was open. This is the first time that saying has made complete sense to Spock.

Spock was brought out of his thoughts by his door chime. It was Nyota and she had a box of dark chocolate truffles with her. He has not seen her outside a duty since her 29th birthday party. He was not embarrassed about her catching him and James engaged in extremely intimate activities due to destroying the sink in the bathroom. They have been neighbors for nearly 3 years and have witnessed each other in various compromising positions.

No, he was embarrassed because he interrupted her interactions with Leonard. He knows that the doctor was attracted to Nyota and she was equally attracted to him but refused to acknowledge it. He also knows that the young woman was more jaded than he was before he became attracted to James. It also seems that their courtship is moving equally slow.

"Your husband brought these over earlier before everything went to hell, but I thought you could use the rest of the box," she said, handing over a large box of chocolates that only had two truffles missing. The chocolate most likely came from the weekly supply that his mother and sisters send him.

"Thank you," Spock said, allowing her in the room. She quickly went to the couch.

"Jim sent me here to make sure that you're not watching the surveillance footage on repeat. It was disturbing the one time I had to watch it." Spock is tempted to roll his eyes. James would do something like that.

"Where is James?" Spock asked her. He needed his husband desperately.

"He is around the ship somewhere. He referred to it as cleanup duty." That was James' codeword for dealing with the aftermath of a mass casualties situation. The current situation certainly qualified.

"I'm sorry," Nyota said after a moment.

"Why are you apologizing?" Spock asked her, confused.

"I'm sorry about Carol. We both know that you feel things deeper than anyone else, you just don't show it. I know she used to be important to you before she screwed you over. I remember when Jordan died. I hated him and I still loved him at the same time. When it was confirmed that he died, it felt like all the air went out of my lungs. It had to be worse considering how you found out." Her voice was low and sad as she spoke.

"You mean because I was part of the team that discovered her body." He cursed his photographic
memory when images of her blood covered body entered his mind. He never wanted to see those images again. He was thankful that David was unconscious and did not see or even hear what happened. How was he going to explain to a child not even three years old that his mother was deceased?

"Yes. It's been years and I still have flashbacks to my mom," she said sympathetically.

"I am okay."

"That tells me that you are anything but okay. You hate that word. Marshall's not back?" she asked, referring to the personification of his human side that materialized during the aftermath of the destruction of Vulcan.

"No, I have not seen 'Marshall', but that may be because of the medication I am still on," he said as a joke to relieve the tension of the moment.

"You did take your medication?" she said, eyeing him suspiciously.

"Yes. The situation is not as emotionally detrimental as you assume it to be and I doubt that a complete breakdown will occur. In retrospect, I did not love Carol, I was just infatuated with her. Between seeing who she truly is and comparing what I felt for her at the time to my feelings with James, I can see that it was not love. I hope you will eventually come to know the difference with Doctor McCoy in comparison to the feelings you once had for Jordan." Spock added this last part to get away from any conversation related to Carol. He wished not to discuss the woman.

"I'm going to give you a free pass because of what happened today with the crazy ex and completely ignore your little comment," Nyota said with annoyance.

"I was under the impression that you are attracted to Doctor McCoy. I also am well aware that he finds you intriguing," Spock said.

"I am convinced that you really want to avoid all Carol related conversation so much that you're bringing Leonard into this. He's just a friend," Nyota said defensively.

"I believe James was under the impression that we were just friends for the majority of our courtship," Spock pointed out to avoid the real issue.

"That's only because he didn't know about the Vulcan handholding make out sessions. Could you please have him refrain from sucking your fingers in the cafeteria. I'm pretty sure I'm not the only one who knows that's obscene," she said, giving him a dark look.

"Would you prefer that we talk about your father?" Spock suggested, knowing that was an equally uncomfortable subject for her.

"We can talk about the fact that you are now a father. That's why Jim sent me here. I'm supposed to break the news gently without bad mouthing she that we will no longer name," Nyota said sharply. "The fact that you're not freaking out tells me that you already know."

"When I touched David, a parental bond fell into place. The DNA results confirm my initial hypothesis." Thankfully, Nyota did not ask him how he found the DNA test results.

"Well, I know what you have been doing Mister Hacker." Because she automatically assumed correctly what he did do. "You are as bad as your husband and Gaila. I'm assuming that's how you found out what his name is?" she asked after a moment.
"That was how Carol referred to him in the video file. You are aware of the DNA test results?" Spock asked.

"I was there when Bones told your husband. You'll be happy to know that his response was 'how the fuck did the evil bitch get her hands on my husband's sperm.' Then Bones went on a very long speech about how she could have just gotten pregnant when you were dating and put the zygote on ice for a few years. It may be best for everyone that she's dead right now." Spock had a feeling that Nyota was severely censoring James's reaction. The bond between the two has been closed off for the majority of the last few hours.

"So he does not believe I engaged in sexual intercourse with her recently?" Spock asked.

"Not at all. Jim trusts you implicitly and if we all did our math right, baby David was conceived when we were inching our way back to earth. The evil bitch did tell me she was only a few weeks pregnant right after we got back." This confused Spock. When did Nyota ever have an opportunity to speak to Carol?

"When did this conversation take place?" Spock asked.

"We didn't tell you this at the time because you were still in a bad place after your dad died, but Carol crashed the wedding," Nyota explained, looking guilty.

"She was there?" Spock asked.

"Well, for the reception part anyway, but your other self and I kicked her out in the nicest way possible after Jim saw her there. I don't know why she was there," Nyota said, shaking her head.

"Probably to make me as miserable as possible," Spock mumbled under his breath.

"Well, she is the type of person who will smile to your face and then rip the brakes out of your car." Nyota's voice was bitter.

"I do not own a motor vehicle," Spock told her with a puzzled expression.

"It's an old song lyric. I've been spending way too much time with your husband."

"That seems highly probable."

"She's an evil person who just takes from people and I'm pretty sure that she took some of your sperm at some point when you were dating and put it in the freezer. I really hope she didn't do what Bones suggested. This is why you should always use spermicide," she said, almost lecturing him.

"She claimed an allergy," Spock said, defending himself.

"Fucking bitch. Now, I'm positive it was the sperm thing. The other option was most likely cost prohibitive," she mumbled.

"I know I shouldn't talk badly about the dead, especially because I saw what she did to keep David alive. What she did to you was wrong. At the reception I made some crack about her finishing her champagne as quickly as possible and she said she was only drinking sparkling cider because she was just a few weeks pregnant. My response was 'I pity that child and the poor bastard who knocked you up. I hope he gets full custody. On the bright side, we know it's not Spock's because he hasn't touched your skinny ass in at least five years.' Then I told her to leave." He could tell Nyota was angry just remembering this incident. He was also glad that she took care of it so he did not have to deal with Carol at what was supposed to be a happy occasion.
"What was her response?" Spock asked.

"It was, and I quote 'You will be amazed what can be done these days with technology and a DNA sample.'" The words sent a shiver down Spock's spine.

"I thought she was talking about maybe using a sperm donor. I didn't think she was talking about you, but I should have." Nyota seemed guilty.

"I assumed you told James about this?" Spock questioned.

"He saw the whole exchange and sent your other self to help me get her away from you before she ruined the happiest day of your life. Maybe she was there to tell you about the kid. Unfortunately, Jim wasn't close enough to actually hear the exchange and I didn't tell him exactly what she said."

"I would have sued her for custody immediately if I was aware of this," Spock said, knowing exactly what he would have done despite the ban on children in space at the time.

"Funny, your husband said the same thing," Nyota said as Spock's communicator chirped. There was a simple text message from his husband.

The baby Vulcan is up and crying for his mom and Becky. I need you here to help me tell him. Bring teddy bear.

Jim's message referred to the giant stuffed animal that Spock won for him at an amusement park. James kept the bear because it was a gift from Spock.

"David is awake and he is asking for his mother," Spock explained as neutrally as he could.

"God, this is a mess. No matter how he got into this world, he needs you right now. You should bring this," Nyota said, grabbing the bear from the couch.

"James suggested the same thing," he said, taking the bear from her.

"And the man says he doesn't have parental instincts." Spock heard her say as he walked out the door with her following behind him.

"I swear to every omnipotent being in the galaxy that if she wasn't already dead I would kill her for this. How dare she pull some shit like this," Jim said as he walked back into sick bay after sending his initial report to Pike. Considering that from the security footage they knew that this was an inside job, he decided it would be best to avoid Jackson until they had a clue of what was going on. The fact that all signs of the ship that had obviously left with the remaining attackers had mysteriously disappeared worried him. Pike was the only one he really trusted.

"I see work has done little to calm you down." No, work did nothing to calm him down. No, it gave him more time to think about this entirely fucked up situation. Jim is not sure if he is madder at Carol for using Spock's DNA to make herself a child or for not telling Spock that he had a child. Jim knew better than anyone else how much Spock wanted children. Jim was terrified of children and now he has one because of the evil one. Yes, technically that child was Spock's, but if Spock has a child then Jim has a child. They were a team.

"Well, it's a little hard to calm the fuck down when you're trying to find out who killed about 40 scientists including the one who had a child with my husband without his consent or knowledge by most likely pilfering his sperm," Jim said, looking at the door. Poor kid. He wondered if the 2 ½-year-old will remember this day. He hoped not.
"Do you have any leads on what happened down there?" Bones asked.

"According to the surveillance footage, it was an inside job. One of their own went rogue. The computers are trying to do a visual analysis against the Starfleet database but it's taking a while. The DNA tests on the victims are more important than ever. Whoever isn't dead most likely was responsible for everyone else being dead. How much longer?" Jim said with a sigh.

"We should have everyone processed in an hour. It was more important that we take care of baby boy Marcus." The name alone may Jim cringe. He liked to pretend that little child in there had nothing to do with that woman.

"Don't call him that. If I hear her name right now, I may break something. He is Spock's son. Also, according to the surveillance footage his first name is David." Of course, the evil one had to name him one of Spock's and his top baby name choices. Yes, despite the thought of actually having children terrifying Jim, he still had names picked out just in case Spock won the argument.

"You can barely pronounce your full last name; I don't know how you expect me or a three-year-old to do it." Bones said sarcastically.

"Try David Kirk for now or just David. I know you can pronounce that," Jim said sarcastically.

"You're more okay with this than I thought you would be," Bones said as he pulled something up on his screen.

"I'm not okay with this. But I can't be mad at an innocent two-year-old, especially one that's half Spock. Even though I think his mother is a monster, she was still his mother." His eyes started to water at the thought.

The scene earlier made him realize the real reason why he was afraid to have a child with Spock; he didn't want to leave another child behind like his father left him. Actually, like his mother left him. He was an orphan. Jim hated growing up without a father and he didn't want to do that to his own kids. Actually, he didn't want to leave Spock alone to raise their children if one day a mission went horribly wrong. He saw how hard everything was on his mom. Maybe that's why she fell head over heels for the asshole.

How exactly were they going to tell a 2 ½-year-old that his mom was not only dead but murdered by a supposed colleague? He really can't relate because he always knew his father was dead.

"If the situation was reversed and one of my previous 'relationships' showed up with the results of a one night stand that went badly, Spock would be there for me. He would also treat any child as his own because he's just that type of good person," Jim continued.

"We know he would do that. Remember when that crazy woman was all over TV claiming that she had your love child," Bones said, referring to that foolish woman who sued him last year claiming that he was the father of her daughter when Jim actually never met the woman before.

"Turns out she was just trying to get money from me, but Spock was supportive. If we found out about this before Carol died we would have suited her for full custody. If Nyota told me exactly what Carol said to her at the wedding, I would have asked for a DNA test." He was kicking himself for that. They just should have known she was there for some evil purpose.

"You could not have anticipated something like this happening. I mean, the last time your husband had sex with her was about five years before she got pregnant," Bones said, trying to be reassuring this time.
"Thanks to my husband's baby kick, I know all the ways you can get pregnant and the majority of them don't even require sex. Even you told me about a possibility that I did not consider. She didn't even need to get Spock's actual sperm. A blood sample would have work if she decided on genetic engineering. She probably went the engineering route because she was just that type of person. Nyota did say that she treated the pregnancy as some sort of science experiment," Jim said bitterly.

"After identifying all the victims, can you please do a profile on my stepson? I don't trust his biological mom," Jim said, wanting to know if there were any little surprises in store for him and his husband.

"I'll take care of it," Bones said just as Christine walked in. Technically she was working as a nurse because she was still in med school. Due to the shortage caused by the Nero incident, a lot of cadets were finishing their Academy training on-the-job, so to speak. Christine was one of these. She would be finishing her certification during their extended time on earth.

"Mr. Marcus just woke up and he's asking for someone named Becky, a teddy bear named Mister Spock, and his mother," she explained before going into Doctor mode.

"Fuck!" Jim wanted to cry. He also wanted to ban Christine from saying that name.

"Can I go in there?" Jim asked, not sure what to do. He should probably get Spock, but Jim knew that he was currently with Nyota who was right now trying to get Spock drunk on chocolate to help him deal with this whole mess. Nyota volunteered (Jim begged her) to tell him about David because Jim was not sure he could refrain from bad mouthing his husband's ex-girlfriend. She left to go there an hour ago, but it may have taken her a little while to work up to telling Spock what happened.

"Better you than me. I think I probably would just terrify the kid. I better call Doctor Cruz just in case," Bones said, referring to his husband's personal shrink. Doctor Cruz was actually very good with the Vulcan psyche although Jim wondered how good she was with a kid who just lost his mom and is about to find out he has a dad who is married to another guy. His head hurt badly.

"Where am I? Where's mommy?" David asked as Jim walked into the room. He wasn't that surprised that David could speak in complete sentences. Amanda's daughter T'Pay could do so when she was about two years old. Also, Jim heard some pretty embarrassing stories about what Spock said to some bastard who called him a derogatory name when he was three.

"You're on a big ship called Enterprise. I'm Captain Jim. Where you lived was attacked by bad people, so we came to help," Jim explained. The 2 ½-year-old just nodded his head.

"I'm sick?" The little boy asked, most likely recognizing that he was in a hospital or a doctor's office.

"You were unconscious for a little bit but you're okay now. The grumpy doctor will be here in a little bit to make sure you're okay. Just call him Doctor Bones. Another doctor name Margarita will be in soon too. She always keeps lollipops on her desk even though all her patients are grown-ups. She works with your daddy." Okay, Jim did not mean to tell the boy that. He almost cursed before he remembered he was dealing with a small child. See, this is why he should not be around small children.

"I mean…" Jim stops not sure what to say. How exactly do you explain to a two-year-old that his mother created him with genetic material from your husband without his consent? Jim was an adult and he did not completely comprehend what actually happened.
"Spock?" Okay, Jim was not expecting David to say that.

"You know your daddy's name is Spock?" David answered by nodding his head yes. Jim finally let go of the breath he had been holding. Then he remembered that Christine mentioned he had a stuffed animal name Mister Spock. Maybe Carol wasn't that cruel.

"So your mom told you about your daddy Spock?" Jim asked the boy, but he just shook his head no.

"Becky," the child answered. Jim assumed that the child was referring to Lieutenant Rebecca Murakami. Spock identified her body before Jim decided it was best for Spock to sit out this mission. Apparently, she was a good friend of Carol's before she screwed Spock over. She was the one who filled Spock in on Carol's intentions, if Jim remembers correctly.

"Do you want to meet Spock?" Jim asked. David nodded his head. He quickly sent a text message to Spock asking him to come quickly to sick bay and to bring the giant teddy bear that Jim could not bear to get rid of because Spock got it for him. (He didn't open their bond because he didn't want Spock to hear all his nasty thoughts about Carol.) At least, it would come in handy right now. Jim should probably send somebody down to the planet to get David's toys and other things.

After that, he decided to tell David some of Spock's finer points. He also decided it was best to tell David that he was married to his daddy Spock. The two-year-old didn't quite understand, but he was two. Of course, then he had to ask that question again before Spock got there.

"Where's mommy?" That question felt like a punch to the stomach.

"She's not here," Jim answered, not wanting to say the D word yet. He was waiting for Spock to arrive or at least for Doctor Cruz to come in to supervise so he did not actually traumatize the child.

"Aunt Becky?" Jim repressed the urge to curse at that question. He did not want to be here. He would rather deal with Nero again then tell this sweet little kid that his mom and Becky were dead. The sweetness must be all Spock or probably Amanda. It definitely didn't come from Carol. Although, it could be 'aunt' Becky's influence. She already seemed like a much nicer person than Carol, despite sacrificing her life for her child.

"Spock will be here in a few minutes. Let's do something fun," he suggested, trying to get David's mind off of the whereabouts of his mom and Becky.

"Sing a song." Jim knew lots of songs, probably because of his photographic memory, although the majority of them were not appropriate for a small child. Although he did remember one that his mom sang to him as a little kid. As an adult he discovered that she change the word friend to family.

"Okay, there's one song I remember from when I was little. My mom always sang it when I had trouble sleeping," Jim said, closing his eyes trying not to remember the last time he heard her voice.

"Where is your mommy?" Okay, Jim was really not liking the fact that Vulcan children develop speech so early.

"She died a few years ago," Jim said honestly.

"Died?" David said the word the word like a question.

"That means that a person is not alive anymore. Their body has stopped working. Okay, I'm not
sure how to explain this to you. Doctor Margarita will be here soon and she can help." He hoped to God that the ship psychologist had worked with children before.

"Why dead?" David's question was missing a few words but he still understood. Maybe if he explained what happened to his mom, it might be a little easier to explain what happened to Carol.

"She was hurt by a very bad man and the doctors were not able to help her get better. His name was Frank Williams." At that moment, Bones dropped something in the background and started cursing. "Doctor Bones, the big grumpy doctor who needs to learn to not curse in front of small children, can help lots of people get better, but sometimes people are too sick and he cannot help. Sometimes a person's body just stops working when they get really old or sick." Jim closed his eyes trying not to see either his mother's body or Carol for that matter.

"You're sad," David said as he hugged him. Must be Becky, because he doubted that Carol would be a hugger.

"Yeah. It's okay to be sad. I miss my mom, but even though she's dead I know she loved me. Your mom loved you too," Jim said, completely positive that the small child would not pick up on him using the past tense. He hoped so, at least.

"Let me sing you a song my mommy used to sing to me, okay?"

David just nodded his head and Jim started to sing.*

"If you ever find yourself stuck in the middle of the sea,
I'll sail the world to find you"

Spock walked into the sick bay with Nyota and Doctor Cruz behind him.

"If he is already asking about Dr. Marcus, I think it would be better just to tell him the truth. It is not good to lie to children. If you say that she just went away he may feel abandoned," Dr. Cruz explained. Thankfully she did have a pediatric rotation prior to enlisting in Starfleet.

"If he had a maternal bond with her, he can feel her absence, but he is not old enough to process what that means. That may be why he continues to ask about her," Spock explained, remembering what he felt when his paternal grandfather died when he was four years old.

"You're going to have to meld with him at some point to check on that. You are the only one here that can. I'm going to have to consult some of the doctors on the colony who are more familiar with the sort of thing," Doctor Cruz said with a sigh.

"What about addressing the fact that he's Spock's son because 'she who we will not name' decided to 'borrow' Spock's genetic material without permission?" Nyota mentioned.

"It may be best not to tell him about the circumstances surrounding his conception. He may also feel that you don't want him. It may be hard for him to understand, being so young," Doctor Cruz said in a low voice.

"I'm an adult and I don't understand what the crazy B- women did. Great, I am not able to curse now that we have a small child on board. God da—oh, I hate you," Dr. McCoy said, joining their conversation. For some reason, the Doctor seemed more distant than normal.

"Technically, that type of language is inappropriate on a starship," Spock chastised automatically.
"Would you like me to tell everybody what you said at my birthday party when you broke the bathroom sink?" Nyota said, referring to what Spock said when he was having sex with Jim on the bathroom sink. Contrary to what they thought, it could not support James' weight.

"You understood that?" he asked, shocked. Spock knows for a fact he never taught her any of those words.

"Remember, I'm fluent in Vulcan, even the curse words."

"Can we get back to the kid? The good news is he knows who you are. Apparently, his aunt Becky told him about you because I have a feeling the b- that woman would not have told him anything. The bad news is he's asking about Becky and his mommy. Jim is resorting to turning old Bruno Mars' songs into lullabies." Apparently, Doctor David, this is Spock. Don't let the Vulcan exterior fool you. He's a big teddy bear. I know he didn't bring your Mister Spock, but you can borrow my Mister Bear," Jim said as the two-year-old quickly took the bear out of Spock's hand.

"You're daddy Spock?" The young child asked.

"Yes." Surprisingly, David's response was to hug him.

Chapter End Notes

To be continued.

Remember to give me feedback. Comments and kudos make me wake up early and work on this story when I should be sleeping.

I also am taking song suggestions. This time I'm trying to do songs for characters and emotions.
Chapter 3: Tears of a Vulcan

Chapter Notes

Thank you to everyone who read or reviewed the last chapter.

I did not say this in the first chapter, because my original A/N was already about four pages long, but not every chapter is going to have its own song(s). Some will just go with the overall theme song for the story. Originally, that was going to be the case for this chapter but I got stuck and hated everything I actually wrote. However, iTunes had a sell and I ended up getting Motown number ones. There, I found the classic song that gave me direction.

Inspired by Tears of a Clown by Smokey Robinson and the Miracles.

“Now if there's a smile on my face
It's only there trying to fool the public
But when it comes down to fooling you
Now honey that's quite a different subject”
The chapter title is adapted.

“How can we help?” Those were the words out of Nyota's mouth as soon as Spock walked into the sterile hospital room where his son was waiting. She can see that he is terrified even if he tries to play the big brave Vulcan. She knows better. That stoic face isn’t going to fool her. Next to Jim, she is the best at reading Spock and she knows when he is terrified, or any other emotion, for that matter. You can always see it in his eyes. When she sees David hug Spock just as the door closes, she lets out a breath of air she did not know she was holding. Maybe, just maybe this would not turn into the disaster that she was sure it would turn into.

However, to make sure it doesn’t become a total disaster, she knows that Spock (and Jim) need her help. She’s just not 100% sure how to help. Helping your best friend with the child that suddenly pops into his life because his ex-girlfriend is a manipulative bitch is not covered in command school, or anywhere else for that matter.

“I would ask the same question, but she beat me to it. This has to be hard for the hobgoblin. Even though I despise the cow, it would shake me down to the core to find out that she was dead. Though I think she’s a word I’m not allowed to say anymore, she’s the mother of my child and I would probably be a drunken blithering idiot by this point, if it were me. Unlike the walking computer, I’m able to acknowledge that without being drugged up. Unfortunately, he’s just getting extra Vulcan. I’m willing to listen to your suggestions. I really don’t want another visit from Marshall,” Leonard told the psychiatrist with a shiver.

Nyota knows that Leonard is right. She was worried about Spock closing down again. It was why she let Jim talk her into telling Spock about David’s paternity. Although, maybe her mission to get him drunk Vulcan style was not the most healthy thing to do.

“If it was just what you described, it would be bad, but it’s worse than that. Leonard, imagine if your ex just disappeared after you got her pregnant and never told you about your child. Then three years later, she mysteriously pops up in your emergency room after a vicious attack. Not only are you not able to save her, but you discover that she kept the existence of your daughter from you for
the last three years. How would you feel?" When explained like that, she can understand why Spock’s coping strategy was to hide himself in his bedroom and go into research mode.

“Fuck,” the Doctor exclaimed and she gave him a sharp look. “I would probably be punching down the walls. Unfortunately, Spock’s reaction is to become a wall.”

“You’re not allowed to say that word anymore either. Although, it’s appropriate under the circumstances,” Nyota teased him.

“Not all of us can curse like a sailor in Klingon, Romulan, and Vulcan,” Leonard quipped and Dr. Cruz just rolled her eyes. She may have also said something about unresolved sexual tension, but Nyota wasn’t familiar with all dialects of ancient Spanish. The psychiatrist tended to go into her native tongue whenever she was annoyed.

“As cliché as it sounds, just being there is a big help. Spock is going to need all of his friends right now. You guys may be the only thing that keeps him from shutting down. That can’t happen this time, because there’s a little kid in there that needs him.” Nyota just nodded her head in agreement.

“Except the big baby has a tendency to push people away whenever he actually has an emotion. I know you read the real report about what happened during the battle of Vulcan,” Leonard said with a sigh.

“You mean the fact that he had you knock out his boyfriend because he couldn’t deal with him trying to get him to talk about his father’s untimely demise. Compared to that, this is already going a lot better. For example, Spock has already acknowledged that he is emotionally compromised, without putting his ex-boyfriend in a coma.” If it was anyone else, Nyota would think that the doctor was joking by the way she said that.

“He hasn’t kicked Jim out of the room yet, that’s progress,” Nyota quipped.

“Anything short of running through the halls naked as he carries on a conversation with the walls would be an improvement,” the doctor said darkly.

“The medication will hopefully keep ‘Marshall’ at bay. The most important thing is you need to make sure you don’t enable Spock to push you away this time. You have to push back,” the psychiatrist advised. “I would say the same thing about Jim but…”

“No one can make Jim Kirk do something he doesn’t want to do,” Leonard worked out.

“Exactly,” Dr. Cruz said. “The other thing is that both Jim and Spock have been thrown into the role of parents without any notice whatsoever under circumstances that would be difficult even if you didn’t add in the fact that neither knew of the child’s existence 24 hours ago. Spock and Jim are going to need your guidance more than anything else, Leonard. Unlike the rest of us, you have actually raised a small child,” Doctor Cruz told Leonard.

“I think the judge that handled my original custody case will disagree with you,” Leonard said darkly. The situation with the original ‘she who will not be named’ is still something that they rarely talk about. Nyota and Leonard were good friends now and their conversation at her birthday party was probably the most that he’s really talked about what happened in the last three years.

“Yes, but the new judge and lawyer will completely disagree with the first idiot,” Dr. Cruz said with a laugh. The woman rarely laughed and therefore it was not long before a very serious look came across her face.

“That reminds me, we need to contact L. The custody situation on something like this is precarious
already, not adding in the fact that the child we rescued is related to someone on board.” Nyota tuned out a lot of the legalese after that point. Because her mother decided to kill herself before she turned 18 (just barely), she had the misfortune of dealing with the Federation child welfare system on a very intimate level. Because she doesn’t want any child to have to deal with that, she volunteers to handle it. She still had some contacts in Starfleet legal.

“How can we help David?” she asked. Her heart went out to the young boy because they had both lost their mothers. She felt like she had a moral obligation to help, and not just because he was the son of two of her most trusted friends.

“We need to create a stable environment for him. Would you be willing to change rooms? I think it would be good if we could create a space for David that could be his.” She knew it was a good suggestion, even if it made her uncomfortable, but she would say yes anyway. She remembered all too well about being forced to live in a new home after everything went psycho. She was just not looking forward to sharing a bathroom with her former roommate and two other people. Also, her new room would be about a quarter of the size but at least she would still have a room to herself.

“Of course, I would be willing to move. You did hear about the incident with the sink at my birthday party?” she said jokingly.

“The whole ship heard about that incident. Therefore, I’m sure you’re inclined to have a roommate that won’t do that sort of thing,” the psychologist said with a gleam that Nyota didn’t quite understand.

“I’ll do it, this just means I’m going to be spending quality time with my best friend and sharing a bathroom with three other people. Despite the fact that Jim and Spock occasionally used the bathroom for ‘private time,’ it was nice sharing with two guys who are minimalist when it comes to grooming.”

Of course, she doesn’t mention the fact that Jim Kirk never quite mastered the art of locking the door and she has walked in on him completely naked taking a regular shower 14 times, she’s caught him engaging in ‘personal private time’ 4 times (all during that month that Spock was on special assignment), and she’s caught him with Spock doing things married people do more times than she personally cares to remember. She also is not going to mention the sex toys that are kept in a nondescript plastic box under the sink. She should probably be a good friend and ‘childproof’ the bathroom before David can be traumatized any more than he already is.

“Even though technically you’re just Second Officer on paper, you’re really a first officer. That means that you should take the room next to Leonard.” The woman was honestly smirking at that point.

“Yes, but there’s that pesky little rule about sharing a suite with people of the same gender. The only reason why that did not apply last time was because my roommates were married and Jim called the regulation something I can’t say anymore. I would be sharing a suite with you, if it wasn’t for the fact that you’re married and in the spouse quarters,” she said to the psychiatrist.

Dr. Cruz’s husband was a member of Nyota’s linguistics team and surprisingly, he was a few years younger than her. Dr. Cruz probably wouldn’t even be in Starfleet if she didn’t fall in love with a young cadet when she was going through her residency.

“This is Enterprise, we don’t follow the rules, especially stupid ones. Besides, if things go well, you two will be in spouse quarters soon.” Nyota didn’t get to respond to that because they heard the 2 ½-year-old start screaming and crying hysterically. The door opened just in time to see Jim get repeatedly hit with a giant teddy bear.
It just got worse when Jim got called out of the room by their least favorite Admiral, Jackson. David started crying even harder when Jim left, even though he was beating him up with the teddy bear previously. The two doctors were arguing the ethics of sedating the child when she saw Spock touch David’s forehead and he instantly calmed down. Dr. Cruz said that it was some sort of Vulcan mental healing technique that Spock was employing. Nyota didn’t have the opportunity to see more.

She was called to the bridge just in time to see Jim get in a fight with a wall. The conversation with Jackson had to be bad because she was now acting captain for reasons she’s not entirely sure of. Officially, Jim and Spock were on paternity leave for the next few days. She was positive something else was going on, but Jim said she needed plausible deniability. It's never good when he says something like that.

So not only was she now in charge, but she also had to move. Lovely, this just gave her a new reason to hate the wicked bitch. She blames Carol for this disaster.

Xxx

Spock can count on his hand the number of times that he had been inside his father’s mind. It rarely happened and usually involved some time of great distress such as contracting H1N1V when he was six years old. Despite being violently ill, his father’s mental presence was soothing. Spock always assumed that his father did not meld with him frequently because he found his mind to be horribly unorganized and human. According to his grandmother, that assumption was highly illogical. Yet, despite her assertions that his father actually loved him, he doubted that to be the case despite having evidence to the contrary.

Now as Spock held his own child in his arms, he thinks that it is impossible not to love your own child. There is no logic in not allowing yourself to love a being that is an extension of you. Despite the circumstances of his conception, he loves David. It is something instinctive and unquantifiable. Notwithstanding his extensive vocabulary, he cannot verbalize his emotions. There are no words to express how he feels. It is overwhelming.

Because of the instant love, he feels sick when he and James try to explain that Carol is dead. David understands death to some degree, but not completely. He screams for Carol and cries out for Rebecca. He feels David’s distress and confusion through his touch. Spock is sure that Carol has raised David by human social norms and that he is unaware of the need to suppress his emotions. Spock is not certain if that is a positive thing in this instance. Although, the fact that David decides to attack Jim with his teddy bear leads Spock to believe that maybe a balance between the two approaches is necessary.

Lieutenant Cruz, Doctor Cruz’s husband, notifies Jim that Admiral Jackson desires to speak with him immediately. When the name is said, Spock feels a spike of fear from David. Although, David could be scared because Jim utilized several words that should not be spoken in front of a small child. When Jim leaves the room, David becomes more violent and Spock is not sure how to respond.

Parental instincts take over and he is inside of the toddler’s mind. It’s sterile and dark. It reminds Spock of a research lab. He wonders what type of life his child lived where his mind resembled a lab. Even as a child, Spock’s mind resembled that of his mother’s Rose Garden (now it resembles the bedroom of the townhouse where he and James first lived together, down to Jim’s dirty T-shirts being everywhere).

There are screens on the walls playing images. There were happy moments such as David playing with his aunt Becky. He could also see images of Carol arguing with Jackson. There was no sound
but body language conveyed that this was not a pleasant conversation. Spock is very concerned about what he sees, but this is not the purpose of this venture into his son's subconscious. He needs to find the broken bonds because he is sure that is the major cause of David’s distress.

He projects emotions of love and peace. Spock tells David that he is safe and that no one can get him. He knows that it is irrational to pledge something like that but it is something he needs to convey to his child.

He wanders the lab until he finds another room. Spock opens the door to find his own bond with David. It is a strong cord covered with a substance that resembles glitter. For a new bond, it is very healthy. There is a smaller one next to it, yet equally strong. He recognizes the signature as belonging to James. He is surprised that a parental bond is forming. It’s not unheard of for an adoptive parent to form such a bond with their Vulcan children. He knew that his mother has a parental bond with her youngest daughter, but it did not occur spontaneously but rather under the guidance of the family matriarch, and then most mind Healers were shocked that a human was able to have such a bond.

Spock left the healthy bonds alone and searched for what would most likely be the broken remains of David’s bond with Carol. He finds it in just a few minutes. The bond is broken and ripped apart. It lies in tatters. He was not skilled enough to repair the damage completely. This was one of those skills that he missed out on by choosing an earth-based education and his grandmother has had very little time to improve his skills in this area. However, he was at the point where he could at least lessen David's psychic pain. At that moment, Spock was quite thankful that Carol took actions to make sure David did not see what actually occurred. The pain would be much worse.

XXx

He came out of David’s mind after what seemed like mere minutes, mentally exhausted, after he did everything he could for his son. The clock on the wall told him it was 2.3 hours later. Jim was sitting in the chair next to him in a state between sleep and wakefulness. At that point Jim has been awake for 28.3 hours and Spock is not surprised by this behavior.

“You're back! I thought I was going to have to go in after you,” Jim said with genuine worry, as he kissed Spock’s cheek.

“I am fine,” he said, unsure of what else to say. No other response would be truthful because he was anything but optimal. Also, Spock did not want to say he was emotionally overwhelmed because that would require him to specifically discuss his emotions and he was not able to do that at this time, even with James.

“Okay, now you really have me worried. You hate that word. Marshall’s not back, is he?” Why does everyone keep asking him that ridiculous question?

“I am not sure if there is another way to express that I am not completely adequate but you should not worry about this, without using that particular descriptor. No, Marshall is not back,” Spock explained.

“Okay, we will go with fine. How is mini Spock?” James asked with genuine concern as he ran a hand through David’s hair. He probably should warn Jim not to do that but young David most likely needed the physical contact.

“I’m not sure that I like that nickname for our child.” He says the word ‘our’ absently, but when he sees a smile on Jim’s face he feels relief. Of course, the bandages on James’ hand has Spock very worried.
“What happened to your hand?” Spock asked running his fingers over Jim’s damaged hand.

“Jackson was a pr--his usual self and I may have taken it out on a poor unsuspecting wall. Jackson is using the fact that your ex-girlfriend was murdered to keep us from investigating. Thankfully, I was smart enough to take you off the investigation immediately and I have decided to take his order about me not investigating quite literally. I don’t want to talk about it.” There is something that Jim was not telling him, but he is too mentally exhausted to push.

“Why has the doctor not yet repaired your damaged hand?” Spock asked, referencing the bandages.

“I’ve been a little too obsessed over you. You were in there a while. I can only imagine how much a woman like David's egg donor could screw with a kid's mind.” Again he is too mentally exhausted to address the specifics of what James has just said. Spock is concerned about the egg donor reference, but does not have the will to question it.

“He is better,” Spock tells his husband with a certain level of uncertainty, but he does not voice it.

“I hope he will no longer be throwing teddy bears at me. Does he blame me for what happened?” This question worries Spock. This was the type of question he asked himself in the aftermath of Vulcan’s destruction. Yet, Spock was starting to ask himself this question again.

“It is impossible for him to attack you with a teddy bear again because he is asleep now. How can David blame you for his mother’s death when you were not directly responsible for it?” he asked James this question, but his husband looked away.

“It’s obvious that he’s asleep now,” Jim said avoiding Spock’s question.

“According to the Idiots Guide to Parenting, that your therapist asked me to read, the first rule of being a new parent is you’re supposed to sleep whenever your kid is asleep. Now, normally that rule just applies to newborns, but I think it can be applicable to toddlers that have had their entire lives turned upside down in less than 24 hours. You need sleep.” Jim’s words were more of an order than a suggestion.

“This chair is an adequate place for rest. Due to my Vulcan physiology, I do not need as much sleep. However, I feel it is advantageous for you to return to our quarters,” Spock suggested.

“You’re really not going to try the ‘I am a superstrong Vulcan and therefore I don’t need any sleep, even though I have been up for 30 hours and had to deal with finding out I have a child from a woman whose body I also discovered today’? That doesn't work on me and it never has. I’m not leaving you here,” Jim said with an expression that Spock knew not to argue with.

“I feel that it would be best for you to leave. However, I realize it is impossible to make you do something that you do not wish to do,” Spock said in defeat.

“Good, and it only took you about three years to figure that out. I also knew that you wouldn’t leave, so I sweet talked Margarita into ordering Bones to bring another bed in here, but we’re going to have to share.” Because Spock craved being close to James, he did not find this a hardship.

“That is acceptable,” Spock said, getting up from the chair.

“I promise I will share the blankets. Also, your supercool therapist brought us hot chocolate,” Jim said, pointing to the food and drinks on a small table nearby.

“My psychologist is encouraging inebriation?” Spock asked.
“Just drink the cocoa and enjoy the blanket,” Jim said as he pushed Spock onto the bed. Several minutes later, when James was finally asleep in his arms he allowed his eyes and cheeks to become moist.

To be continued
Reach out for me

Chapter Notes

Thank you to everyone who read or reviewed/left a comment for the last chapter. Also, thank you to everyone that favorite this story or gave kudos. We have another classic Motown song for this chapter. Again, I was completely stuck on how I wanted to write this chapter until I heard this song again. Inspired by Reach Out and I’ll Be There. Performed by the Four Tops

Now when you're lost and about to give up
'Cause your best just ain't good enough
And you feel the world has grown cold
And you're driftin' on your own
When you need a hand to hold
Darling, reach out
Reach out, for me.
I'll be there to love and comfort you

There are certain calls that no one in Starfleet likes to make. Anything involving the illness or death of a family member usually falls under this category. Admiral Pike made a lot of those calls over the course of his long Starfleet career and it never got easier. He was secretly thankful for his incapacitation during the Vulcan catastrophe, because it would have killed him to have to make that many calls to unsuspecting mothers, fathers, siblings, or lovers. The one he received about his former first officer was hard enough. The tears always got to him. It broke his heart every time.

Yet, it was worse when he had to tell one of his crewmembers that a family member died. Maybe it had something to do with the fact that in Starfleet death was expected. It seemed like once a week, a redshirt managed to get him or herself blown up. But those living on planet were supposed to be safe, partially because of what they’re doing in Starfleet. When something happens that shatters that illusion, it is disconcerting at the very least. The body of a teenager who died of blunt force trauma, most likely at his stepfather’s hands, shattered that illusion into a billion pieces.

Christopher wasn’t looking forward to telling Jim Kirk that the body found buried in his old barn was that of his brother who disappeared nearly 15 years ago or that the experts are sure he died a very violent death. Chris was trying to delay it as long as possible, but he was already getting pushed from Amanda to just man up and do it. (Don’t ask him how she knows, because the woman could get him to confess to the things that the Romulans could not.) He was half tempted to let her call her son-in-law and tell him but technically she wasn’t even supposed to know. This would be so much easier if she was with him.

He couldn’t wait any longer when he started getting ‘special’ emails from Jim. The first was a basic status report regarding the massacre on NC17X. Not exactly what you want to read first thing in the morning, especially when Jackson was already pounding on his door. The guy was furious that Jim sent everything to him. He wasn’t happy, but Pike reminded him that Enterprise was his ship and anything that happened would be reported to him and not Jackson. Personally, he would love to know how Jackson found out about the report, but Chris is sure that it was probably illegal and would induce a headache. The completely distasteful encounter involved lots of fighting and
several unpleasant orders that he now needs to convey to Jim personally, because he sure as hell wasn’t letting Jackson do it.

After the meeting with Jackson, that made him want to run over the guy with his chair, he really had no choice but to contact Jim. Due to the sensitivity of the issue a ‘live’ chat was necessary. Of course, a ‘live’ chat would be a red flag because everybody in Starfleet knows that when that happens usually somebody is dead.

Of course, he wasn’t expecting to see Commander Uhura on screen when he told the junior communications officer to put him through to the captain. The last time she was acting captain, Jim and Spock were kidnapped during a First Contact that went badly and he had to deal with an hysterical Amanda.

“Do I even want to know why you’re acting? You'd think after three years they would remember the regulation about not participating in the same idiotic ‘guaranteed to get you killed or greatly injured’ mission. Jim I understand, but I thought Spock had more common sense than that. Just tell me they’re not dead,” he said with a sigh.

In the last three years Jim and Spock have been simultaneously incapacitated 14 times. There’s a reason why Commander Uhura has most of the traditional roles of first officer. Mostly because he and the majority of the admiralty believe that Jim and Spock will do something on a mission together that will get them both killed eventually, and they needed someone to be in charge. Don’t get him wrong, they are a great team, but the two were responsible for the gray hair not caused by Amanda’s teenage daughter.

“I'm glad you don't want to know why I'm acting, because I’m not even 100% sure why I’m acting captain right now. Jim just said it was my turn, after a really bad ‘call’ with Jackson a couple of hours ago.” In his head, Pike is almost positive that Jackson visited him after yelling at Jim. That just made him suspicious of Jackson’s motives. Also, if Jackson ordered what he told Pike to order, he had a pretty good idea why he was now talking to Acting Captain Uhura. Only Jim would try something like that to circumvent a direct order. Of course, this made Chris wonder why Jackson even showed up at his door this morning, unless he already knew that Jim wouldn’t listen to anything coming from the man.

“Jim and Spock are alive and breathing. Due to the bundle of joy we found on NC17X, Jim and Spock may have to actually follow that regulation from now on. They are also preoccupied with said bundle of joy right now,” she said with a snicker.

“Bundle of joy? I assume that you’re referring to the child that was found. Why would that impact anything?” he asked in confusion.

“Did you get Jim’s report?” the acting captain asked, raising an eyebrow.

“Yes and I have the headache to prove it. Jackson wasn’t very forthcoming with explaining why the 2 ½-year-old was at the research facility,” Jackson wouldn’t answer any questions about that. Although, he did say he wanted the child in Starfleet custody and he didn’t consider Enterprise ‘Starfleet custody.’ That was a red flag right there, considering that any child recovered in such a mission should be placed into Federation custody until guardians can be found, and that would be Jim or Dr. Cruz until they arrived at the nearest Starbase. Something wasn’t right.

“I would love to find out the answer to that especially, because he sees David as a science experiment. Check your email for copies of all the messages that Jackson has been sending. Most are direct orders for Jim to stop investigating. Of course, Jim is not in charge at the moment but…” He cuts her off then, knowing where this was going.
“Don’t tell me, I need plausible deniability.” He also didn’t want this to be on the record and unfortunately this conversation was on the record.

“How’s the kid doing?” he asked with concern. No child should have to deal with something like that.

“He’s sleeping after Spock did what we are referring to as a medical mind meld. It was the only way to calm him down after he found out about his mom and his ‘aunt Becky’. It was horrible. He kept crying and throwing his teddy bear at Jim. Jim is now down there sleeping in sick Bay with Spock and his stepson.” Okay he wasn’t expecting her to say that.

“Stepson?”

“I’m guessing you didn’t get that email entitled: ‘Congratulate me I’m a stepfather because my husband’s ex-girlfriend was a sociopathic bitch that like to play God’,” she joked; however, considering this was Jim Kirk, he probably did send Chris an email like that. What followed was a long conversation about the whole sordid situation.

“I think I would’ve called sooner if I knew any of these details,” he said in shock.

“I am sure Jackson intercepted that message or anything else related to baby David. I know what he said to Jim during their initial conversation and the guy wants David away from Enterprise.” Chris now understands the strange request involving the child found on the planet. He didn’t understand why Jackson wanted the child so badly. Although, it probably has something to do with the fact he doesn’t want anyone on Enterprise to look at any of the data files or possibly the child's DNA profile. He almost wondered if the two-year-old bi-species child, created without parental consent, was part of that research.

“I’m not surprised considering the conversation I had with Jackson an hour ago. If I had known this then, I would be asking Jackson harder questions about the two-year-old being at the research facility, considering he was created without his father’s knowledge. No wonder he’s trying to send his own people to take over the investigation and arranged for Enterprise to be busy playing diplomatic ferry,” he said before giving her the details.

He also told her that he was going to do anything in his power to stop that because he doesn’t trust Jackson. Most of the new regime didn’t trust Jackson at all, so it wouldn’t be that hard. He may have also reminded her that Jackson, unfortunately, had applied his orders to Jim, not to the Captain of Enterprise. Therefore, because she was now in charge, she could do what was in the best interest of Starfleet.

“At least, Ambassador Selek will be among the diplomats we will be picking up. That might not be a bad thing,” she said, looking away.

“Probably not, considering the situation. He is a recognized mind Healer and that might be needed right now. However, we both know this is just a means to get Enterprise away from that planet. Unfortunately, the connection to Carol gives him enough grounds to justify sending another team to investigate, now that Enterprise has secured the scene, despite the blow to the budget.” That was annoying. Jackson nickeled and dimed every other project in Starfleet, but would break the bank for his own special projects.

“Too bad the as--idiot underestimated Jim Kirk. Jim officially prohibited Spock from participating in the investigation to avoid a conflict of interest. Maybe that’s why he named me acting captain, to avoid any appearance of impropriety,” she said with a twinkle in her eye as she just figured out why she was now acting captain.
I’m sure that’s the reason. Marshall’s not back, is he?” he asked, knowing all about that. Other than Richard, he was one of the few that knew how bad things really got during the Nero incident. (That was mostly because Amanda tells him everything.)

“Wait, how do you know about that?”

“You don’t think that I wouldn’t know if a member of my command team has a history of mental illness?” Chris told her. Of course, the real reason why he knew was Amanda, but he wasn’t going to tell anyone that.

“Are you sure it’s not because you are practically dating his mom?” she asked so pointedly that he started coughing profusely.

“Maybe you should just let me talk to Jim. These type of calls are not cheap,” he said as his breathing started to return to normal.

“Will I need to bring him chocolate or liquor afterward? The fact that you’re actually calling and not doing this in an email has me worried. That usually only happens when somebody is dead.”

Unfortunately, he couldn’t keep a straight face. Her response was to illustrate her vast knowledge of Klingon curse words.

“It’s not Amanda?” she asked, worried.

“No.” He wasn’t even sure he could make that call. It would kill him. Amanda was the most important person in his life right now.

“I didn’t think so. You’re too calm for it to be her.”

“Why does everyone think I’m in love with my best friend?”

“I didn’t say love, sir,” she said with a smile that he found disconcerting.

“Just put me through to Jim,” he ordered.

“Not until I know what I’m going to have to deal with. Jim is my friend and I’m not sure how much more he can take right now. Also, he kind of needs to sleep. He was up for 30 hours straight because of what happened.” Considering this was the woman who managed to incapacitate a full-grown Vulcan on the verge of a nervous breakdown for the sake of friendship, he was afraid of her. She may be a subordinate, but she was terrifying. She would do anything for her friends.

“When demolishing the old barn on the Kirk farm property they found the body. A forensic anthropologist has confirmed that the body is that of George Samuel Kirk, Junior.” Again, he heard lots of Klingon curse words before he was able to explain the details of what happened. She became extremely detached as he spoke.

“I will tell him,” she said sternly without blinking.

“No, I need to,” he argued back.

“No right now. It’s been a bad couple of hours. Jim is already upset that he got there too late to save anybody but David. Then, he finds out that the child he rescued is his husband’s biological child created by means and for reasons unknown. Finally, we have been having to deal with Jackson, who keeps calling and sending emails like crazy. Which is why your call was sent directly to me,” she explained. He was definitely going to have to speak to Jackson earlier than
planned.

“I really think I should do it,” he argued again. If this was anyone else he would consider this insubordination.

“I’ll take care of it, Admiral. Besides, we are starting to lose our signal and you should concentrate on making sure Jackson doesn’t get his hands on David or get rid of the research material left behind.” He’s not surprised that the captain of Enterprise hung up on him. (It wouldn't be the first time.) He’s just surprised she did. Considering that she’s the Chief communications officer, when she is not acting, he is sure that he will not be able to get back through for hours, if not days.

Of course, he knows Amanda could get through and he probably should go break the news about the grand baby as gently as possible.

XXX

How exactly do you tell your closest friend that the body of his brother, who has been missing for the last 15 years, has been found in his old barn? Even under the best of circumstances, that would be a difficult conversation. She remembered all too well making that highly uncomfortable call to her aunt when the paramedics were unable to revive her mom. She hated giving this type of news. She has only had to do it a couple of times in the line of duty and each time it hurts.

Maybe she should have allowed Pike to do it, but she was sure Jim would take the news better from her. At least, he could curse at her and not worry about being brought up on charges. (Of course, she probably will get in trouble for the ‘communications malfunction’ if anyone will be able to prove what she did. Fortunately, she’s friends with most of engineering and they’ve taking care of it. Besides, it was worth the risk to avoid further communication from Jackson. You can’t violate orders that you don’t receive.)

She had a very long talk with Leonard, mostly against her will, because he caught her crying in her brand-new bathroom when she moved the first of her things in there. (She’s 100% positive Dr. Cruz was playing matchmaker with the room assignment, but she’d rather share a bathroom with Leonard than Gaila.) Leonard pretty much told her that she had to tell Jim the first chance she got. Delaying would just make it worse. Of course, she wasn’t expecting that to happen an hour later when she finally had a chance to move everything else out of her old room for David.

“You really don’t have to do this,” Jim said as he folded one of her many uniforms into a box.

“We can come up with some other arrangement for David. Besides, he won’t even leave Spock right now. I’m pretty sure I’m going to be sharing my bed and husband with a 2 ½-year-old for at least the next month.” Considering that Jim was not smiling, he was not joking at all. After David woke up this morning, he wouldn’t let go of Spock. He has even followed Spock into the men’s room.

“Although, maybe you are looking for an excuse to be Bones’ new neighbor,” Jim said with a lascivious smirk that she wanted to wipe off his face as quickly as possible.

“Is David still holding on to Spock for dear life? I’m personally surprised he managed to maneuver through the cafeteria with a two-year-old clinging to his leg.” She mentioned this to avoid all Bones-related comments, but that really did happen this ‘morning’.

“Essentially yes, but it’s been less than 24 hours. Margarita said things should calm down once he
is sure that Spock will not just disappear. Spock said his emotions are all over the place and the physical contact is soothing. Once your BFF gets here with his personal effects, maybe he will calm down just a little.”

In an effort to honor the letter of the law and not its spirit, they sent Gaila to go down with the security team to retrieve David’s things and try to recover as much data as possible. Jackson specifically ordered Jim not to do that, but he didn’t say anything about anyone else on Enterprise. After listening to Jim’s conversation with Jackson, she knew it was best to not follow these particular orders. Something wasn’t quite right. When the lab was attacked, someone initiated the self-destruct sequence and most of the computers were fried.

Under normal circumstances, the research was gone for good. However, Enterprise has three of the top computer minds in the galaxy. Short of incineration, it was still highly probable that they can recover everything.

“I thought Vulcans don’t like being touched,” she said, sort of confused. “Spock only lets me hug him on my birthday,” she joked.

“Not by hostile strangers or horny cadets who have a crush on their professor,” he said, referring to her extremely embarrassing behavior at the Academy. “But being held by a parent that loves you unconditionally can be quite comforting. At least, that’s what my husband told me and that does explain why he secretly made out with me when I was convinced we were just friends.” She laughed at that. Really, it was hilarious that he was completely oblivious to the fact that Spock was hitting on him for about nine months.

“I think it’s just easier for everybody if I relocate because I know you’re not going to want a 2 ½-year-old interrupting fun chess playing make out sessions,” she said laughingly. Maybe if she keeps the conversation light she can get around to telling him about Sam.

“Very funny,” he said, folding another of her uniform tops. Okay, she was never going to be able to tell him about his dead brother.

“You know you don’t have to help. Don’t you have captain things to do?” she asked, because the longer he stayed here the more likely she was going to be forced to tell him about Sam and she really did not want to.

“No, because you’re captain now and that means you have to deal with Jackson. May I just say, I think your solution of us having unexpected ‘communications issues’ is brilliant.”

“I didn’t do anything to the communication system. You know we have problems sometimes,” she said, not looking at him.

“Don’t tell me, I need plausible deniability. I don’t blame you for avoiding Jackson. Although before your brilliant move he did already order me not to go anywhere near the lab. As you know, despite the exorbitant expense, he’s planning on sending his own special team to clean up. Apparently because my husband’s ex-girlfriend was one of those slaughtered, I have a conflict of interest and therefore should not take part of the investigation,” Jim said with annoyance.

“I know I may have played back that particular conversation after you stepped down to avoid said conflict of interest. Also, I realized he didn’t say anything about sending another computer genius down there to recover everything before his cleanup team gets here.”
“God, you’re good. I’m glad I’m not the only one who does not trust Jackson. Something is just not quite right about this entire situation. For example, why was David even on the planet? The new regulation about kids on missions has not gone into effect yet. Also, why does he want us to turn David over to the security team, when we’re going to be carrying a bunch of delegates back to earth anyway, even if he wasn’t related to anyone on board?” She has been thinking the same thing. The scientific mission on NC17X is essentially an urban legend of Starfleet. Considering that its scientific designation is very close to the old earth rating for explicit movies, there were a lot of dirty jokes about the mission. It would be highly ironic if it did have something to do with bioengineering or the creation of life. Unfortunately, they’re not going to have any idea what’s really going on until the team recovers something.

“I don’t blame you for being suspicious. I know I am,” she told him honestly.

“This whole thing has been suspicious since we got the distress call. One of the scientists murdered everyone else and easily got away. I sent a report about what happened to only Pike and somehow Jackson knew about it before the message even arrived in San Francisco. My stepson is 43% Vulcan, when he should only be a quarter and we’re not completely sure what type of project they were working on. Also, Jackson is in charge, which right there sends a giant red flag up. The guy should’ve been kicked out with everyone else after the great purging, but somehow Jackson gets to stay around because of some ministry project that is so classified that I barely have the clearance to know that there is such a project.”

“That still doesn’t explain why you’re helping me. You really don’t have to.”

“I feel like I owe you. You’re helping me deal with the Jackson thing. Again the communications thing was brilliant.”

“I didn’t do anything. And if I did, it wasn’t just about Jackson. I--- where is Spock?” she asked abruptly. She just couldn’t bring up Sam.

“Father-son therapy session with Doctor Cruz. I thought I would give them a moment.” She translates that as ‘I’m helping you pack because I don’t want to deal with the big scary therapist and toddler’. “Besides, I should help you turn this into David’s room,” he said as an excuse.

“So that’s why you’re here. I’ll be fine. Go and find your husband. I’m sure he can use you. Have you even talked to him about everything?” she said poignantly.

“I’m not trying to avoid him.” Nyota just gave him the look again. “I’m not. Okay, I may be trying to avoid Margarita, but she scares me with the parenting books and other things. Spock and I talked a little this morning before David woke up and was discharged from sick Bay. We don’t want to say anything around David that will upset him.” That would sound logical to anybody but her. She knows that Jim and Spock talk to each other in their heads most of the time.

“Yes, but you guys don’t always need words.”

“It’s a little hard even psychically with David around. He kind of picks up on everything right now. He’s essentially psychically eavesdropping without even trying,” Jim explained with a sigh.

“Everything?” she asked, raising an eyebrow.

“I’m not sure, but I do not want to find out. I think we traumatize the child enough. Also, he keeps throwing his teddy bear at me.” She laughs at that before she notices Jim sad expression and shuts up quickly.
“Why?”

“I personally think he’s mad at me for not saving his mommy or more likely his 'Becky'. The first time was after Spock and I told him about everything.” She remember that.

“Yet, that’s not the worst reaction you have received from a grieving person. Didn’t someone punch you once?” she said, looking poignant. She hoped his reaction wouldn’t be that bad when she told him about Sam. She knew he would never hit her, but the wall was fair game. How was she going to do this?

“Yes, and I really don’t want to find out how strong a two-year-old Vulcan is,” Jim said with a shiver.

“You’re freaking out for no good reason. He’s two!” she exclaimed.

“My brother blamed me for my dad dying and two-year-olds are even less rational than four-year-olds.” Her face fell as soon as he mentioned Sam. She hoped that he didn’t see that.

“I doubt your brother really thought that.” It took all of her inner strength to repress the desire to cry as she spoke.

“That’s what Sam said when we were little. It’s not like I can ask him about it now. He’s been gone for a long time. I kind of wish he was still around so I could ask what it’s like to lose a parent from the perspective of a four-year-old.” Her only response was to hug him. She couldn’t tell him the truth. The words were stuck in her throat. “A part of me hopes that someday he will pop up on one of these distant planets alive and happy.” She wanted to cry but couldn’t because that would tell him too much. “I have no idea what I’m doing right now. I just wish I had a mom or a brother to talk to.”

“You still have a mother-in-law who is currently raising a four-year-old. You’ll be fine. You’re good at jumping in headfirst,” she said, pulling out of the hug as she put on a fake smile.

“I don’t want to be Frank.” The name made her shiver. After her talk with Pike, she had a pretty good idea who killed Sam. It was probably the same bastard who killed his mom. She felt sick.

“You won’t be. Go play with your stepson before you have captain things to do. You know I hate taking over for you longer than absolutely necessary,” she said, literally pushing him towards his own room.

Once he was gone, she was halfway tempted to break into her emergency alcohol stash, but she remembered that was already safely in her new bedroom. She needed a drink and therefore decided to take the things already packed to her new room. Considering she was acting, she probably will get called out again at any moment. She was glad nobody saw her in the hallway because she was already on the verge of tears. She barely made it to the safety of her new room before she was crying. She was too distraught to engage the privacy lock and Leonard walked in on her. Because she knows how thin the walls really are, he must have heard her crying.

“Are you okay?” he asked with concern.

“I couldn’t tell him,” she said with another sigh.

“Who is this ‘him’ you are referring to? 45% of the crew self-identifies as male,” Leonard joked as he wrapped an arm around her.

“Jim. I couldn’t tell him about Sam. I tried to and I just couldn’t do it. For some odd reason, during
our conversation about how much he is terrified of his new child, he mentioned how much he
wishes he could talk to Sam about the current situation with David and I almost lost it. I barely got
out of the room without crying or throwing up,” she told him, sobbing again.

“It’s okay,” he told her as he held onto her.

“No, it’s not.”

“We can try again in a few days.” She noticed his ‘we’ instantly.

“Will you go with me this time?” she asked.

“Of course, darling,” he said as he placed a kiss on her forehead. She didn’t want to think about the
traitorous part of her mind that wishes he would’ve kissed her lips instead.

XXX

Kids scared the hell out of him, and not just in the hypothetical. They didn’t like him either. Okay,
that wasn’t true. Nyota can probably produce dozens of cute cuddly pictures of him posing with
small children hanging on his every word. Bones little girl absolutely adores him along with his
baby sisters-in-law. Although, the two oldest were at that age where the admiration was taking the
form of a little crush.

However, Jim raising his own children was a completely different story. Yesterday's little fiasco
showed him that. David showed him that. That wasn’t the strangest response he has ever gotten
from a grieving crew member, but this was a lot more painful. The fact that David asked for his
aunt Becky again this morning, made it a lot worse. (He has yet to have time to analyze why baby
Spock has not been crying for the wicked witch that will not be named.). He just couldn’t bear to
see that look that said ‘I hate you because you couldn't save my mommy’. He knew that look. He
received it every single time they had visited the new Vulcan colony in the last three years. Of
course, coming from his stepson it was a lot worse.

He was avoiding his own quarters because he can’t deal with a baby Spock (big Spock said that he
can’t use mini Spock anymore) looking at him like he shot his puppy. That was why Jim was
hiding in Nyota’s room next door. Besides, thanks to Margarita’s brilliance or insanity, and his
need to outsmart Jackson, Nyota was in charge for the next 48 hours and was being forced to move
to another room. She needed his help and maybe a little push for her to jump Bones in the
bathroom. He was almost willing to put money on the fact that something would happen before
they made it to earth in 5.2 weeks. Of course, Nyota being Nyota, she was forcing him to deal with
his fears. It was so hypocritical of her. He was so going to get her back. Maybe as soon as the
‘communications malfunction’ was over he will make her call her father.

He walked into his bedroom to see Spock with purple paint on his nose and Green paint in his hair.
He had to stifle a giggle when he saw little handprints all over the plush white couch that Spock
just had to have for their quarters. He was going to let Spock explain to the budget people why that
needed to be replaced. David was currently sitting in front of Spock drawing something involving
lots of black and red. That’s probably not a good sign.

The fact he was getting an 'I am an absolutely horrible father' vibe from Spock was not making the
situation any better. He was picking up a lot of frustration and confusion.

“I thought finger painting would be considered a cultural taboo for Vulcans?” Jim asked as he
kissed his husband chastely as a means to break the tension. He remembered from his own childhood that he didn’t like seeing Frank practically molest his mother, so he was keeping the PDA use to a minimum to keep the future therapy bills from getting completely outrageous.

“Dr. Cruz suggested art therapy as a means to help David deal with the situation at hand. I felt it is in our best interest to raise David by human social norms rather than Vulcan norms since that is what he is most accustomed to.” That was Spock Speak for ‘I will raise my child anyway I feel like and if my kid wants to finger paint, he will finger paint’. He has a feeling there’s probably a story there. Especially considering the image of Jim currently on his nightstand that was obviously painted by someone older than two.

“Shouldn’t Margarita be here to monitor David’s efforts?” he asked, not sure if he wanted to talk to the doctor. He liked Margarita, but not when she was trying to analyze his daddy issues.

“She was here until she asked the question about…” Spock started, but he was unable to continue.

“You know who?”

“I despise that moniker.”

“Yes, but neither one of us want to use her name, especially because of baby Spock,” Jim told his husband.

“That may be best considering David’s response of pouring purple paint on her.” Jim laughed and Spock gave him the ‘you're being an idiot’ look. He could also tell that Spock completely feels like he felt because of what happened.

“David has just resumed painting after a 15 minute timeout.” Okay he and Spock will definitely have to work on coming up with creative punishments. He was picking up more vibes of frustration and disappointment from Spock.

“You’re not a complete failure. Neither one of us has parented a small child before. We were expecting at least nine months to practice. We can get through this. If we can take on Romulans, we can deal with a small child. As long as we are together, we can do anything,” Jim told his husband mentally, more for his sake than Spock’s. Maybe if he said it enough, he will actually start believing it.

“I know you’re upset and angry at just about everyone right now, but throwing paint is not appropriate and you shouldn’t have done that, David,” he said, walking over to the small boy and sitting down beside him. He uses a kind tone, not the screaming that the evil stepfather used. His only guide for this situation is to do the exact opposite of what Frank did. The two-year-old was currently beating up a piece of paper, as paint splattered everywhere. He wondered how Margarita found drawing paper and old-school finger paint.

“I don’t want to talk,” the two-year-old said, going back to his painting.

“You don’t have to. We can just paint,” he said, grabbing a sheet of paper.

“Sorry I threw Mister Bear at you,” he said, looking at Jim with Spock eyes. They were adorable on the two-year-old.

“It’s okay. Someday you’re going to have to ask your daddy what he did to Cupcake when his daddy died.” Of course, David’s response to that was to get up and give him a hug, resulting in child size hand prints being on the back of his uniform. Spock’s response was to mentally reassure him that they would get this parenting thing eventually, and that he has already found several ways
to get ancient finger paint out of uniforms.

To be continued.
Chapter Notes

Thank you to everyone who read or reviewed the last chapter. There may not be too many more updates between now and mid-May. I am going to focus on getting Starfleet Family Values done before the new film comes out. I also am tempted to wait on writing more chapters until after the film comes out so I can decide how much of that film is going to be incorporated into the story or if I’m going to ignore it completely. (For those of you who read my Ugly Betty story Gossip Mode Style, that I did live with the final season, you know that I can work with anything the writers can throw at me.) Of course this story is already unbelievably AU just for the fact that Amanda is alive. I may do one more chapter before then but it just depends on how much time I have. I cut this chapter short so I could post something sooner rather than later and I may do that next time to prevent digital pitchforks. I would love to hear your opinion on this.

Inspired by

Love is Blind by Eve
I suggest listening to the whole song because I can’t choose just a few lines.

Keep Ya Head Up by Tupac
“But please don’t cry, dry your eyes, never let up
Forgive but don’t forget, girl keep your head up
And when he tells you you ain't nuttin don't believe him
And if he can't learn to love you you should leave him
Cause sista you don't need him

She sat in Christopher’s office shocked and slightly angry and it had nothing to do with an entire day of Vulcan Council mind games. She was already having a difficult week because a certain odious Vulcan who wanted her job keeps undermining her despite the decision of the Council to not decide on her fate at the moment. In the past, he just questioned her proposals and called her various synonyms for prostitute when no one was around to hear him.

Now he has resorted to mind games on a much more public scale. This included press conferences where he called her out directly. Although, at least he stopped mentioning her humanness as something abhorrent after his office was inundated with negative emails. Amanda is sure that he or his staff were responsible for an unflattering and extremely false story about her engaging in a sordid sexual relationship with a certain member of the admiralty for the entire course of her marriage that was now making the rounds through the net. Actually, several articles of a similar nature have come out during the last few weeks. Considering that this man has called her a Vulcan word that literally means “female who sleeps with farm animals for money,” she sure that he is responsible.

Just this morning he sent an interior designer to her office to get it ready for when, not if, he takes over her seat. She knew that was done solely to unnerve her. If it wasn’t for Chris constantly telling her to ignore the idiot in question, she would just give up. But Chris believed that she could deal with anything, including Sank’s power-play, so she did too. The whole reason why she ended up in Chris’s office was that she needed his comforting words.
Because she had Chris’s emotional support, Sank’s games did not have their intended effect. Although this may also have something to do with the fact she was no longer worried about Spock losing his hereditary seat, but only keeping her own position on the Council until Spock was ready to take over. Although T’Panda has yet to find a way to prove her Vulcan citizenship to the satisfaction of the Council, they were able to prove that Spock was Sarek’s official heir because he filled out the necessary paperwork naming Spock so. Sarek was smart enough to have the documents saved in multiple places off planet. She was shocked to find out that despite the precarious state of their personal relationship, Sarek formally named Spock his successor if Amanda was no longer living at the time of his death. (He probably assumed that was going to be the case, not expecting to precede her in death, even if he did prepare her for the inner workings of the Council. That’s okay because she wasn’t expecting it either.)

This will prevent Sank from taking the family seat, but if they cannot prove her Vulcan citizenship, she won’t even be able to serve as Spock’s proxy according to a new change that a certain council member managed to pass in a closed-door session that was barely legal and she wasn’t told about until after the fact. Non-Vulcan proxies were no longer allowed and therefore Spock would either have to leave Starfleet or give up control of the seat to the next of kin. She was almost tempted to have a certain computer genius create the same background for her that she created for her other child, but now that things were nowhere near as chaotic, Amanda doubted that such documentation would be able to pass as authentic again. She was hoping that her late husband placed all necessary documentation on an off planet server, but they haven’t found anything yet.

A part of her wondered if her ally was really helping her or merely using her for her own purposes. Amanda wasn’t entirely sure if T’Panda truly no longer desired to be with Spock and was merely using her as a means to curry favor. Of course, she could just be doing exactly what she said, which was to make sure that Spock could hold onto to the family seat so that his future children will be able to inherit once the laws were adjusted to recognize heirs created via gestational carrier.

Of course, her main purpose for this was to make sure that her future children, that she wanted to have with Spock, would get to claim that seat or at the very least would get to claim her seat. Of course, that wouldn’t happen now due to the news she had just heard (if they actually got the stupid rules change to recognize heirs created outside of a bonding, her previously unknown grandson David would be the first in line).

She never liked Carol. She never trusted the woman and always felt she had an ulterior motive for her interactions with Spock. Personally, Amanda wished that Spock was never assigned to work with Carol due to somebody else getting sick. Her using him as a means to satisfy her curiosity hurt Spock profoundly, and if it wasn’t for Jim she doubted Spock would ever be willing to open his heart that much again.

Of course, Amanda never suspected that she would do something so horrible as to create a child without her son’s consent and then hide said child from his father and grandmother. Amanda was most upset about the fact that her grandchild was kept away from her for nearly 3 years and he almost died without her even knowing that he existed. It was almost unthinkable that anybody would do such a thing, but she’d always found Carol to be quite selfish. Amanda even had a hard time believing the part of the story where the young woman sacrificed herself to protect her child. Amanda will give her the benefit of the doubt because she knew she would do the same for any of her children.

When she saw the images of David, she just knew this was her grandson. He has her smile, Sarek’s ears, and the sweetness of Spock at that age. Other than hair color, David got very little from Carol, which Amanda was thankful for. Considering how light Jim’s hair was, they can always tell David that they chose an egg donor with that trait so he would look like his other daddy when he was
older. She wanted to wipe out all traces of Carol from existence. She despised the woman. How dare she keep a grandchild from her? If she was alive, Amanda would kill her with her bare hands. She actually broke the glass that she was drinking from when Chris told her.

Amanda had so many questions for Chris (and her son, once he actually called her). Why did Carol do this? Why would somebody kill all the scientists? Did what happened have anything to do with what they were researching? Why was David at a Starfleet research facility when the rule change about children does not even go into effect for another 73 days? Why was Admiral Jackson trying to cover-up whatever happened on that planet by sending his own people, despite the great expense at a time when she had trouble getting grant money to feed the poor? How was her son handling his sudden foray into fatherhood? More importantly, how was Jim handling it?

She was more worried about her son-in-law, mostly because she was now completely aware of how crappy his childhood truly was. After they found Sam’s body, Chris was kind enough to let her see every police report related to Frank Williams. Chris tried to fill in the blanks, but it was hard for him to talk about the woman who he considered a mentor during the early part of his Starfleet career. Amanda was pretty sure Jim’s fears about fatherhood were caused by the fact he was raised by such a horrible person.

After spending decades in the child advocacy world, she doesn’t understand why anybody in their right mind would have allowed Mr. Williams to retain custody of his two stepchildren. A couple of weeks before Sam’s ‘disappearance,’ James ended up in the hospital with three broken ribs, a shattered pelvis, and internal bleeding. Because Frank’s family owned Riverside for all intents and purposes, child welfare services didn’t have the good sense to remove Jim and Sam. Maybe if they had done their job, she wouldn’t be planning a funeral for a boy who didn’t make it to 16.

That was one of the other things making her miserable this week. Jim had told her how hard it was for him to plan his mom’s funeral, complete with scattering of her ashes. He also mentioned something about running away to get completely drunk after Frank had the audacity to show up at the funeral (not that she blamed him, considering she was sedated for the first six months after Sarek died). Now that Jim has a two-year-old to take care of, he wouldn’t have time to do it. It was the least she could do for a man that she considered her other son.

Despite all the questions she had, only one would come out, “Why didn’t Spock tell me this himself?” She always believed that she and Spock had a good relationship where he could tell her anything. That included his horrible disaster of a relationship with the guy who he put in a coma. So she’s a little upset that Spock didn’t trust her with this. She should be hearing this from Spock not Chris.

“Well, technically Enterprise is having long-range communications issues. I’m sure he would have contacted you otherwise,” Chris said as he avoided eye contact. That usually meant he was lying to her by omission if nothing else. She was good at telling when he was lying to her.

“Why am I sure there’s more to this than that?” she asked.

“I haven’t been able to get back in contact with the ship since I called to let Jim know about Sam and was informed that you are a grandmother. I’m sure it’s intentional, but I could never prove it,” he said with a sigh. She could see Jim doing something like that as a sort of temper tantrum of a response to what happened.

“How did he take the news?” she asked, slightly worried.

“I don’t know because I didn’t get to tell him. Nyota said she would break the news at a more opportune time and then said that they were having transmission issues and the feed went dead. Of
course, before the line went dead it was suggested that I look into why Jackson was trying to get custody of your newly discovered grandchild.” Now, after being married to a politician for several decades and working with other politicians for the last three years, she’s able to understand what she’s not being told. The feed was purposely cut so Chris could not break the news to Jim.

“I knew I always like that girl,” she said with admiration.

“I thought you told me that you did not like the fact that she was trying to sleep with your son when she was at the Academy?” he told her with a smirk.

“I like her, just not as a future daughter-in-law.” Chris chuckled at that.

“There may be also Jackson-related reasons why Enterprise is having communications issues, but you didn’t hear that from me.”

“You can’t be punished for ignoring orders that you never received,” Amanda mumbled under breath. “So what’s the other reason why I’m finding out about my grandson from you?”

“Because what happened on that planet is about as top-secret as you can get at this point and that includes David’s existence. Spock cannot tell you about it,” Chris said in all seriousness.

“Then why are you telling me about it?” she asked, slightly confused. She knew that despite their personal relationship, Chris would never tell her something that he wasn’t supposed to.

“Because I don’t feel like getting punched out when you find out. Besides, you have a top-secret clearance and obviously a need to know.”

“Considering David is my grandchild, I really have a need to know,” Amanda said just as her personal communicator chirped.

“You know you’re not supposed to bring those things in here?” Chris said with a chuckle.

“I forgot,” she said sheepishly. It was a call from her daughter’s preschool. It was the third call this month because her four-year-old doesn’t play well with others, or rather others don’t play well with her. She gets bullied a lot for having pointy ears and the ability to read on a seventh grade level at four. Both of her daughters get in a lot of fights and she gets a lot of phone calls. Amanda told herself that if she did it once, she could do it again, but it really was so much easier when she had a husband. She just hopes that T’Pay did not do any property damage this time. The four-year-old didn’t know her own strength.

xxx

Chris decided to go with Amanda to deal with the four-year-old situation because young T’Pay likes him and respects his authority (unlike her big brother and his husband). Sometimes she calls him Admiral daddy and he really doesn’t have the heart to correct her. Amanda said it was okay because he was the most solid male role model in her life.

Okay, maybe he went with Amanda so he could prolong his time with her. He enjoyed anytime he slept—he means, spent with her. Sex was not part of their relationship and it wasn’t going to be. Considering he was in a wheelchair, he doubted that was going to be a part of his life with anyone for a long time, not that he thinks of Amanda like that because he doesn’t, really he does not.

In all honesty, anything else would have been preferable to spending time around Admiral Jackson. The man was currently flipping out over the fact that he still can’t get a hold of Enterprise after 24 hours and he was taking it out on Chris by being as nasty as he could. Chris despised the fact that
the prick technically outranked him. Chris tried to remind the man that it was normal for a ship to go off-line for a little bit, especially if they are in an extremely remote place.

Of course, the man ran away as soon as Chris asked any questions about David. He still has yet to receive an explanation of why the two-year-old was at the research facility in the first place. Also, according to Jackson’s assistant, who used to be Pike’s assistant before Jackson took him away to be spiteful, Jackson broke a chair and a window when he found out that Spock now had legal custody of David (he was sure that Dr. Cruz had some friends in the legal department and that Enterprise had no problems whatsoever getting transmissions from that office).

It was reported that he broke another window when he found out that David was being given permission to stay on Enterprise until the ship arrived back on earth. The video file that he just received proved that to be the case. Watching it repeatedly kept Chris entertained on the ride to the school.

Preston Academy was one of the better private schools in the San Francisco area, filled with children from all over the galaxy, and had stellar academics. It had top-of-the-line equipment and teachers that knew not to touch the telepathic kids. From what he’s heard from his two favorite girls, Mrs. River (he was informed by T’Pay that her favorite teacher had a wife last week) is an excellent teacher and was the only one who had had the chance to keep the young Vulcan from doing all sorts of crazy things. She also could keep the bullying down to a minimum, which others couldn’t do. Any other teachers would have given up on T’Pay after summer session. That was probably because they couldn’t deal with a four-year-old that actually was smarter than they were. The year before, T’Pay went through six babysitters and three different preschools.

However, Mrs. River could handle her better than most to the point where she was only calling Amanda on a weekly basis and not daily. This time T’Pay locked herself in the bathroom after one of her classmates called her certain things that Mrs. River would not repeat over the phone. After an hour they still have not been able to get her out of the bathroom.

It probably helped that unlike her predecessors, Mrs. River wasn’t some hapless twenty something whose only exposure to small children happened when they were a child. According to his favorite little Vulcan, her teacher was in her 50s and had a daughter named Georgia, who was a couple years older than T’Pay, who played with her after school whenever Amanda was kept away by the Council of the idiots and the babysitter was unavailable. That was happening more since that asshole started actively trying to strip Amanda of her Vulcan citizenship and Council seat. Considering how much T’Pay talked about Georgia, the older girl was probably her best friend.

Because both Amanda and T’Pay spoke so highly of this Mrs. River after only a few weeks of school, he wanted to meet her. When he saw the dark headed woman and her young daughter pleading with T’Pay, he sincerely wished that he had gone to parents’ night with Amanda last month. He recognized that voice because he heard it every single day for two years when they served together on the Clinton. Winona Kirk was (?) a good friend of his.

They first met when he was trying to finish his dissertation on the Kelvin. He may have come off as a bit of a George Kirk fan boy, even though he wasn’t trying to. She was still nice to him despite that. They started to build a friendship after that, until she decided to marry the asshole. He didn’t hear from her again for nearly a decade. That was immediately after the Tarsus incident and she was doing some cultural program on Vulcan. She mostly apologized for not listening to him. Unfortunately, his suspicions about Frank were very right.

Their friendship continued where it left off, even though they were both in various parts of the galaxy. She was the one who tried to talk him into making a move on ‘Number One’. Chris wished
he would have listened to her now. Unfortunately, he was too stubborn.

Winona was just as stubborn. He told her not to go back to Frank after the guy showed up at her door telling her that he had changed. Chris knew people like that did not change, but Winona wanted to see the best in him. She was too much of an optimist for Chris’s personal taste. The only good thing was she opted not to renew their wedding vows.

Calls and emails became less frequent, and he found out why when he stopped by her house one time when he was babysitting cadets in Riverside. There wasn’t enough makeup in Iowa to cover her bruises. If he had actually run into Frank at that moment, he would have met with Chris’s Phaser and it would not have been on stun. That outcome was more likely to happen now in light of what was found at the old Kirk family farm.

He had tried to get her to leave again, but she wouldn’t. He was half convinced that she was convinced that if she left, Frank would kill her. At that point, he knew that was going to be the outcome regardless. She stopped returning his calls. She called him one last time to let him know that the asshole got her pregnant at the age of 47. Pregnancy in your late 40s and 50s wasn’t that unusual nowadays considering 60 is now middle-aged for most people, but it wasn’t something she wanted under the circumstances. She was crying hysterically the entire time. He made her promise that she would get out. She also made him promise that if anything happened to her, he would look after Jim.

Three weeks later, she did get out, in a body bag. If it wasn’t for ‘Number One’ holding him back, Frank would have joined her. That prick had the audacity to show up to help the family mourn a life that he took.

Jim was nowhere to be found. He found out a few years later that Jim was getting completely wasted at the same bar Chris found him in a year later. It took him a little while, but he did keep his promise to his presumably late friend to look after her son. Although apparently she wasn’t as late as he thought she was.

His suspicions were confirmed to when she turned around and he saw her eyes widen as she recognized him. He was thankful for his chair, because if he had been standing, he would’ve collapsed. It’s not every day that someone you assumed to be dead for nearly 7 years turns out to be your girl—friend’s daughter’s preschool teacher.

Because the school day ended about 30 minutes ago, the room was devoid of all other children except for who he assumed to be Georgia. She looked like Winona with an unfortunate amount of Frank in there. The name Georgia cemented in his mind that this woman was Winona. Of course, she would name her daughter after her late husband and child.

“Sorry we couldn’t get here sooner. Traffic is a nightmare from the Academy to here,” Amanda said as they walked into the room.

“I know.” Chris was sure Winona did, considering she spent a good four years at the Academy.

“I’m sorry I had to call you. Your nanny freaked out and pretty much quit.” That was the fourth nanny this year. Because of her job, Amanda needed someone to take care of the kids after school sometimes, because her hours were a little unpredictable at times and she still felt T’Pend was too young to be left unattended for long periods of time. Unfortunately, due to the girls’ penchant for science experiments and hacking into computer systems that they should not be breaking into, they had a tendency to scare people off quickly.

“You must be Admiral daddy. T’Pay talks about you all the time. Although, I had no idea that
Admiral daddy was the great Christopher Pike, who finally decided to get married. Although, I really don’t watch the news that much, so I wouldn’t know,” Winona said, looking at him directly with a smile that scared him.

“We are not— Chris is just a friend— T’Pay calls him that because he’s the closest thing she has to a father because I’m a widow,” Amanda stammered out as she was blushing. He would say something similar but he was in a little too much shock at the moment from the fact that he had just found out that Winona Kirk was not dead. “I’m going to go see if maintenance has a key or a code for the bathroom,” Amanda said, as an excuse to get out of there as fast as possible. Of course, she turned around seconds later. “Where is the maintenance office?”

“I can show you, Dr. Grayson,” the little girl said, grabbing Amanda’s hand and dragging her out of the room.

“I see that reports of your death have been greatly exaggerated, Winona,” he said, turning to her as soon as Georgia left the room.

“I see that you’re still too afraid to let the woman that you love actually know that you love her. You’d think that you would know better after what happened last time.” If there were any doubt left in his mind that this woman was Winona Kirk, it was gone.

To be continued.
Chapter 6: Every Story has Two Sides (The Truth Usually Exists Somewhere In Between)

Chapter Notes

Thank you to everyone who read or reviewed the last chapter a good three months ago. Also thank you to Unforgiven1290 for being the beta on this chapter. I really was planning on doing one more update before the new film came out but I became preoccupied with finishing Starfleet Family Values before May 17 (which didn’t happen). In doing that, all other stories fell to the wayside. But now that I only need to write one more chapter for that story, I decided to work on my other stuff and begin new stories.

Spoiler alert: The remaining A/N will contain spoilers for the new film as well as my plans for upcoming stories including this one.

Now that I have seen the new film, I can tell you that this will not be a complete rewrite of Into Darkness. (I will be doing a rewrite of that movie but probably not until it hits DVD.) I thought long and hard about it and I decided that certain events in the first story made it impossible for certain things to unfold exactly how they did in STID. First of all, this story takes place about 28 months after the events of STID. I strongly believe a Spock that willingly changed the Kobayashi Maru would not send in a by the book report, especially if it meant he would be throwing his husband ‘under the bus’.

Also, I am not sure Spock would be as suicidal with all the therapy and psychiatric drugs he is on. In this universe, Spock has already had his flipping out moment and is more well-adjusted. (For those of you who have forgotten, Marshall refers to Spock’s other personality.) He also has his bond mate to ground him emotionally. Then there is of course the fact that his father’s death will affect him differently than his mother’s death.

The other thing is the Kobayashi Maru trial incident in the YDHTBMBF universe made a lot of people cognitive of corruption in Starfleet. The fallout triggered a massive investigation. I honestly don’t see how Admiral Marcus could have survived the great purging of the admiralty or get away with his special project. This chapter will explain how some things are different.

Of course, the more things change, the more they stay the same and I will be incorporating elements from the new film in to TTAL. Any elements that occurred before the dividing point, which will be when Spock became Carol’s TA in a class, may have some influence on what’s happening. One thing I will say is I’m not using Khan as my main villain in this because considering some of the angry things I’ve read on message boards the character is viewed as sacred and I’m not touching him. I’m going to go with something original-ish but do expect some interesting parallelisms.

There will be some spoilers from the new film in the story such as Christine and Carol being friends but it will be mixed up with a lot of crazy stuff from my imagination. Also, there’s a little bit of an inconsistency with how Spock met Carol compared to what was in Unmistakably T’hy’la. I had to change it to make it fit better. Go with the new interpretation.

Also, a little reminder in the YDHTBMB universe Jim dated Christine a couple of times before realizing that if he slept with her and did not call the next day Bones would kill him. Of course, Christine was going to remember things a little differently.
This chapter was inspired by To Zion by by Lauryn Hill

Lyric excerpt: Woe, this crazy circumstance
I knew his life deserved a chance
But everybody told me to be smart
Look at your career they said
"Lauryn, baby use your head"
But instead I chose to use my heart

see the end of the chapter for more notes

Christine Chapel became very good at keeping her emotions in check over last the two years. No one was aware of her discomfort at serving under a man that she was slightly in love with who didn't feel the same way about her. She thought that there was something there when they went out a few times but she obviously missed all the signs that she was not his type at all. She was female and human. If he wasn't happily married she would be far away in the frontiers of space despite what her best friend made her promise. The fact that he was in love with someone else made it tolerable in a weird way.

She was there because Carol asked her to be aboard Enterprise in case the worst happened and the worst did happen. Carol was dead and it was now her job to make good on her promise to make sure David had a happy life with his father and stepfather. (Of course, Christine was not completely sure how to do that yet.)

Because of her experiences with keeping her Kirk related emotions in check, she could keep her emotions to herself as she picked up the dead body of her closest friend. (They have been friends since Carol's final year at the Academy in San Francisco before she switched to her first love biology just to spite her father and transferred to the London campus.) She stayed as professional as possible despite the urge to cry. She stayed focus on her job of identifying the bodies and taking care of her dead friend's son.

Thankfully, David did not let anyone know that he recognized her from his mother's pictures, if nothing else. She did spend some time with Carol when David was firstborn, right before Carol convinced her to come to Enterprise just in case after Carol decided to accept the position as head of the research facility on the isolated planet. Although she doubted David would remember that, she made the little boy promise not to tell his new daddies anything. She would take care of that herself once things were calmer. Although, she doubted that was going to happen anytime soon. Her commanding officer was going to kill her when he discovered that she knew his husband had a son and said nothing during her time on board. She was not sure if her reasons for doing so will lessen that anger. She kept quiet for David's safety because even though Alexander Marcus was no longer a member of the Starfleet Admiralty, due to his plans to start a war with the Klingons being discovered, he was still a formidable man. Formidable enough that he survived the incident with only losing his job and not prison time. She didn't want a sweet child like David being at his mercy. Carol made her promise to do everything possible to keep David from her father.

The fact that Carol had a child from her first love was a closely guarded secret that only she, Rebecca, and Carol's secret benefactor knew the details. The fact that Mr. Marcus was responsible for Carol and Spock's relationship falling apart was also a closely guarded secret. (Of course, Carol got him back in the end. It was his fault for believing she was still his perfect little girl after what
Christine literally had to bite her tongue as she was forced to listen to her Captain (and others) criticize Carol when he had no idea what she gave up and did not understand why she had no choice but to conceal David's identity. They had no idea what really happened. They thought that Carol didn't love Commander Spock, mostly because of the lie she told him when she was forced to end the relationship. They didn't know that Carol died thinking that the guy she was in love with didn't love her even though Christine tried to convince her otherwise. They didn't know that the whole story was practically a Shakespearean tragedy of star-crossed lovers and controlling fathers. However, Christine knew both sides of the story.

Carol started at the Academy at the age of 15 because of her father's position and her above normal intelligence. It was hard enough being the Admiral's daughter without your classmates realizing you're a 15-year-old physics major that can do quadratic equations mentally. She tried to act like every other freshman at the Academy and maybe she did some things (or people) that she should not have done including lying about her age and last name. During her second semester, she fell head over feet for her Vulcan TA in one of her physics classes. He wasn't even supposed to be there but the other TA, Mr. Johnson, was kicked out of the class for inappropriate behavior with one of the students. Mr. Spock was three years older than Carol but they were drawn to each other due to their mutual intelligence. They were friends first and eventually they became more than friends. Then there was a little science experiment that deactivated Carol's contraceptive shot. That's when everything fell apart.

But Commander Spock and Captain Kirk did not know that and it wasn't her place to tell either man. Carol may be dead but she will not betray her memory by breaking her promise.

Christine focused her energy on trying to find the person who murdered her friend. She volunteered to compare the DNA samples collected from those that died at the research facility to the crew manifest. Doctor McCoy didn't trust the computer to not screw this up. She was glad that she did because due to her friendship with Carol she had a greater understanding of what was going on in the colony. Within an hour, she knew that the not dead crew member was Erin Williams, a longtime friend of Carol's father, that she didn't trust at all. Despite her position, Carol could not get rid of the guy. He was a close associate of Admiral Jackson.

Also, because of her friendship with Carol, she knew that there should have been at least one more person on the colony. Carol mentioned her by name several times because she helped save David's life when the child stopped breathing once, (that was an over simplification of things, David was clinically dead for at least 10 minutes.) Unfortunately, she could only remember the woman's nickname of JJ, that came from her initials. If the name would have been on the manifest of personnel on planet Christine would've recognized it but she knew it wasn't there. No one had that particular combination of initials. The best thing to do would be to look through her old emails from Carol. She knew she would need to turn over some of the less personal ones for the investigation anyway. Of course, before she could look through her old messages she saw one on top of her email box from a woman who died nearly 48 hours earlier. Christine knew she needed to talk to her Captain now.

Jim doesn't know how they did it but somehow miracle of miracles they managed to get David to take a nap after finger paint therapy. Jim was looking forward to taking a nap himself, but nap time waits for no Captain, even when Nyota was the one in charge. Unfortunately, Nurse, or was it Doctor, Chapel showed up at his door. He can never remember if Christine has actually finished med school yet. Spock was going to yell at him later for forgetting things like that about crew
members especially one that Bones made him go out with. He could instantly tell that she was distraught by her fidgeting.

"What brings you here?" He asked letting her into the room. "If it's anything work related, you probably should talk to Nyota right now."

"It is, but this is something you and Commander Spock need to know because it relates to the David situation." The woman said taking a deep breath. "Permission to speak freely, Sir?" She asked instantly slipping into the mode of the trained soldier that she was, almost as a defense mechanism.

"Permission granted." Jim said rolling his eyes, hating the formalities of Starfleet sometimes.

"I asked Dr. McCoy if I could help work on identifying the dead because Carol was a friend of mine and I wanted to help find out who killed her. I probably know the most about what's going on in that facility than most." Christine started.

"I doubt that." Jim mumbled under breath. He wanted to say a lot of other things along the lines of 'how can you be friends with a person like that' or ask her if she knew about David. However, after being a Starfleet Captain for over three years he's learned the importance of keeping your mouth shut in certain situations.

"The facility on the planet is really the relocated special and supposedly nonexistent research facility that was hidden beneath the Kelvin Memorial Archives until two years ago after parts of the project became public knowledge during the great Admiralty Purging. This was the section developing advanced weapons for Admiral Marcus's personal war. After Carol's father was kicked out for trying to incite war with the Klingons, allegedly." Of course, Christine said that allegedly in a way that made him sure that there was nothing alleged about it even if Jim did not already knew the sordid details.

"Admiral Jackson was given control of the projects that were not obviously in violation of the Federation charter. The facility was also moved to the rejected site for the Vulcan colony. Because nobody understood Admiral Marcus better than his daughter, Jackson asked her to relocate to the planet to head up the research project and allowed her to bring David with her." Jim felt a headache coming on because he just knew something bad was going on here.

The story of what happened to Admiral Marcus was legendary, even if the bastard just got a slap on the wrist for almost causing a interplanetary incident. The man was already slightly unbalanced after his wife, Commander Wallace-Marcus, was killed by Klingons during a mission. Then the destruction of Vulcan happened and the man just fucking lost it. Because of the man's paranoia, he allegedly did something that was so bad he lost his command because somebody had the good sense to report it. According to rumor, the man was trying to antagonize the Klingons in hopes of bringing tensions to a head and starting a war. For reasons unknown, he was planning on using Enterprise as the bait hoping to get everyone on board killed in the process, allegedly. Like Jim said, the man lost it or at least that was what Chris told him in regards to his former mentor.

Jim groaned when he realized that this man was his stepson's grandfather. Now he can understand why Carol turned out the way she did if she was raised by that guy. The guy almost made Frank seem like a nice person.

"Okay, you know more of what's going on than we do." Jim said rubbing his temples. Spock was standing beside him at that point.

"I don't know what they were working on though. Carol never told me anything except it was supposed to help people. She said it was safer if I didn't know," Christine explained.
"That was probably true," Jim mumbled under his breath.

"Why was she granted special permission to bring David with her?" Spock asked because he was kind of David centered at the moment. Jim knew Spock really wanted to ask 'why did she bring David with her?' or possibly 'why the fuck did you not tell me I had a kid in the first place?' Of course, his husband wouldn't say that out loud. He was being all super Stoic Vulcan right now. Any Carol related conversation usually did that.

"David was really sick when he was a baby and she couldn't bear to be away from him. The doctors said it was a side effect of being born premature and the embryo freezing process," Christine said covering her mouth after realizing she said way too much. "Shit, I wasn't supposed to tell you that." Spock was displaying the Vulcan equivalent of falling down shock with two eyebrows raised as high as possible. Jim was not surprised because Spock was just essentially told that he accidentally got Carol pregnant when they were sleeping together and she put the baby on ice for reasons unknown.

"Considering that Carol is now dead, I think we need to know. Obviously, David is better now. Actually, he's really doing great for a half Vulcan kid, that is supposed to be a quarter Vulcan kid, if he really was created the old-fashioned way." Jim said snidely.

"I concur with my husband. I have a right to know if during the course of our relationship I impregnated Dr. Marcus." Spock said the name as coldly as possible, even using her title for the sake of emotional distance. Jim quickly grabbed Spock's hand. He knew his husband needed his support more than anything else at this moment.

"Yes, you got her pregnant due to a lab mishap that deactivated her birth control. Because her father was a high-ranking Admiral, the doctors at Starfleet medical disregarded doctor-patient confidentiality and told him everything. Admiral Marcus was not happy that his little girl managed to get pregnant by the wayward son of a Vulcan ambassador. Let's just say both men tried to convince her that termination was the best option. Actually, your father told her that you were engaged to a Vulcan Princess and were merely using her to study human sexual behavior. He also told her that you would not want to have anything to do with a child created outside the sanctity of a traditional bond." Okay, Spock was beyond angry and he completely believed what Carol told Christine because he knew his dad would say something like that. He knew that Spock's relationship with Sarek was complicated but he didn't think it was this bad. What he was experiencing through the link was overwhelming.

"My engagement was terminated at that point and my father had no right to say such things to her." Spock spat out in the iciest tone he has ever heard from his husband. It was frigid. "He most likely told her these things to encourage her to terminate." Of course over the link he heard Spock wondering if Carol broke up with him as harshly as she did because of what his father said to her. Jim wouldn't blame her. Apparently, Spock didn't either because his Carol hatred was starting to subside.

"Fuck! Not to speak ill of the dead but your father was a real piece of work." James mumbled under breath before he decided that maybe it was not good to mention anything regarding his father. It was already a very sore subject for Spock and he really did not want to deal with 'Marshall' right now. "I should not have said that. There's no point of us being angry, your father is not around to give his side of the story and obviously she decided to take a different path because David is here." He said wrapping an arm around his husband, not caring that Chapel was in the room. "I don't know why your fathers made such a big deal out of it. She was over 18 anyway and it was her life. It wasn't like they could force her into doing anything." He has learned enough about being diplomatic in the last couple of years to leave off 'although, apparently, emotional blackmail was
on the table.’ Despite that, he still noticed Chapel biting her lip. "Why do I have a feeling you are not telling us something?’ Jim asked with a sigh.

"Actually, this all happened a month before her 17th birthday and Admiral Marcus used you to convince her to do what he wanted." She said turning to Spock. "If she stayed pregnant he was going to kick you out of Starfleet and have you arrested for statutory. He was going to make sure that your diplomatic immunity from being the child of a ambassador would be useless."

Considering the rumors that he has heard about the Admiral, Jim was not that surprised. Everything else was a little shocking. He knew that Spock wasn't as straight lace as everybody assumed (their sex toy collection was testament to that) but Jim didn't expect his husband to screw the underage (even if Spock wasn't quite 20 himself at the time, if Jim was doing the math right).

"I am sure that would be my father's doing. Sarek was quite displeased with me at that time due to the termination of my engagement." Spock said darkly.

"You got the underage daughter of an Admiral pregnant?’ Jim asked still in shock.

"Apparently," Spock remarked dryly.

"More importantly, you impregnated the underage daughter of the Admiral that, according to rumor, tried to use Enterprise and everyone on board as Klingon bait to start his personal war. Actually, Admiral Marcus wanting you dead makes perfect sense now. Shit, Spock! You're supposed to be the responsible one. Me getting an underage cadet pregnant, I understand. But you're supposed to be the good one in this marriage." Jim said raising his arms in the air.

"I was unaware that she was under the age of consent by Earth standards during the course of our sexual relationship. I was only 19.8 years of age when our relationship ended." Considering the Vulcan curse words that Jim was hearing over the bond, he knew that was true. Spock believed that Carol was only a year younger than him not three. Now Spock was mad at her again.

"He wouldn't have been. She lied about her age because being a 15-year-old super genius is difficult. She even used her mom's last name for most of her time at the Academy to keep people from figuring out she was the Admiral's daughter. She told me that Spock was one of the few people who knew her real last name." Christine explained and he understood because he did a lot of dumb stuff too at that age and he hated being viewed as George Kirk's son. Also, considering how much he was in love with Spock, Jim personally would not care about the age of consent either.

"Let's just stop talking about the age thing. It doesn't matter anymore. Obviously, she didn't go through with it and Spock was not arrested, so what happened?’ James asked trying to keep this conversation on task. He would like to know how this all relates to the current investigation before David wakes up from nap time.

"Carol knew she couldn't carry the baby to term so she lied to her father about terminating her pregnancy and had the embryo frozen instead. She did this despite believing everything Spock's father said." Jim decided it was best to not ask how a 16-year-old could afford to do that procedure behind her father's back. It was not important right now. "She instantly loved David before he was even born because he was a part of you. Carol still loved you but she hated you as well…” Chapel said looking directly at Spock as she tried not to cry. It was obvious that the woman was having trouble processing her friend's murder.

"Therefore she had Rebecca convince me that she was doing to me exactly what my father said I was doing to her," Spock said out loud.
"Essentially, yes," Chapel said with a sigh.

"Okay, how does this all relate to how Carol and everyone else on that planet died?" Jim asked because at this point he was confused and overwhelmed.

"It's all connected in the end. After Vulcan happened, Carol decided that it was the right time to have David or more like she felt she had to do her part. She told her father that she went through invitro because she wanted to have a child with her girlfriend. She was working in London during her pregnancy at the 'Kelvin Archive' and her father told her too much including he was trying to use Enterprise to start his own war. That was the final straw and she told on him." Jim was sure there was more to this story but he was afraid to ask.

"Everyone knows about what happened next," Jim started. "Thanks to the great nepotism of Starfleet and the fact that they couldn't exactly prove everything Marcus got a slap on the wrist because his lawyer blamed the whole thing on him going crazy after his wife died. Basically, he just lost his job and spent a year in mental health rehab. The man is now working for some private tech firm making 10 times the money." Jim said bitterly.

"It could have been a lot worse if Carol said nothing. The whole situation was too much for her and she went into labor three months early. David spent a week in neonatal intensive care," As Chapel said this Jim could feel worry and concern coming from Spock. "The doctors were not sure if David was going to make it, despite all the advancements in technology. Jackson promised her that the research they were working on would help children like David. Carol was desperate and was willing to do anything for David, even sell her soul to somebody like Jackson. Rebecca just went along for the ride," Chapel explained.

Jim was not sure how true this story was. He doesn't know a lot about Carol's character in this dimension or any other for that matter. There must have been something about her that made his other self almost married the woman. Maybe, she wasn't the devil. She did die for David. They say the greatest way to show love was to give one's life. It was obvious that Carol did love David.

"When David was four months old, I got an email from Carol telling me that David stopped breathing in the middle of the night. Actually, she believed that David was dead. They were not able to revive him until Dr. JJ injected the infant with some new drug they were working on. Not only does David survive but he's healthier than ever. I sent a copy of that email to both you and Commander Spock." It felt like she wasn't saying something and Jim was sure it had something to do with his stepson's DNA.

"He's also now 50% Vulcan." Jim said snidely. Internally, Jim was thinking about what type of drug brings a baby back from the dead and changes him at the genetic level. Spock was thinking the same thing.

"I do not remember a Dr. JJ listed among those who were on planet. I assume that is not the doctor's real name." Jim's response was to growl at Spock's words.

"You weren't supposed to be reading that. For once, I'm trying to avoid the appearance of impropriety. You can't touch this investigation. I shouldn't even touch it. You are going to need to repeat the non-personal parts of this conversation to Acting Captain Nyota." Jim said as he quickly sent a message to Nyota telling her to get here as quickly as possible because he knew the situation was bad. He also had a feeling they were going to have to call Pike because something very strange was going on and Jim was sure that this was the rumored Section 31 at work.

"That was Carol's nickname for Dr. Jane Jackson. I looked at the list of crew twice and that name wasn't on there."
In her last email three days ago, Carol mentioned that JJ was still there." As Doctor Chapel said this she passed a PADD to Spock. "I guess I shouldn't say last email because I received another message 20 minutes ago from my best friend containing her last will and testament in the event of her untimely demise." Christine said bitterly as she showed the message to Spock.

Jim on the other hand was trying to remember why the name sounded so familiar. Jackson was a common last name. The Admiral that despised him had the last name Jackson. He was married to some scientist name Jane. That's when Jim realized why Jackson did not want him looking too closely at what was going on. Considering the look Spock was giving him his husband obviously pieced it together as well.

"Shit,"

Chapter End Notes

I was originally planning to get back to Chris and Winona in this chapter but the plot needed to be moved forward. I really would like to avoid a 200,000 word plus story if at all possible.

Note about updates: On Wednesday night, my computer died and until I get it back from the repair shop, I am using my old computer with voice recognition software that is dreadful. There for regular updates will not resume until maybe the end of the month.
In Search of Absolution: Part one

Chapter Notes

Thank you to everybody who read or reviewed the last chapter. I know that the last chapter seemed a bit jarring but there is a purpose to my madness and it was always my intent for Carol to not be the absolute villain of the piece (although her father being such a horrible person in STID is a gift that I will be taking full advantage of because now I don't need to use an OC to play that part as originally planned). Right now, you are only seeing little pieces but I do have a master plan. I am taking a few elements from STID but that’s mostly Section 31 and Carol’s father. As mentioned in the previous chapter, most of what happened in STID did not occur in this universe because Carol did not keep her mouth shut. Every action has consequences and we will see if things turn out to be a lot worse in the long run. (If you’re craving a STID rewrite/remix, check out the first chapter of my story Dear James)

I have my computer back although the good voice recognition software is just now starting to work correctly. Apparently, when your computer's hard drive dies a horrible death you lose access to the good voice recognition software. I had to use my backup software that requires way too much programming for my personal taste and it gave me a sore throat when I wrote this chapter. This chapter is about half the size I was originally planning because my voice just got too tired.

The song for this chapter is The Heart of the Matter because I actually started humming it while writing the chapter (although, the more traditional interpretation of the lyrics will apply more to part two).

Originally by Don Hensley
The version I have on my iPod is performed by India Arie.
Lyric excerpt:
I'm learning to live without you now
But I miss you sometimes
The more I know, the less I understand
All the things I thought I knew, I'm learning again
This chapter begins right where chapter five left off.

Warning: Description of past domestic violence

For somebody who was trying to hide from an ex-husband, who would kill her if he ever found her again, she did too many stupid things that would get her caught one day or another. She should have gone to a far off colony, instead she stayed on Earth. She couldn’t bring herself to be that far away from her youngest child, even if for his own safety he needed to believe that she was dead. (She knew Frank would kill Jim just to get to her if he actually believed she was still alive.)

She ended up in San Francisco because Jim was there. It was a dumb thing. After a long career in Starfleet, the city was teeming with people that may be able to recognize her. Winona lied to herself and said it would be ok because nobody would be able to see past the superficial changes to her appearance and her new identity as the mild manner schoolteacher Whitney River.

Even though she was hiding to keep Georgia safe, she couldn’t just stop being Jim's mom. She
even visited her son’s favorite off campus dive bar actually called the Dive Bar a few times. It was the only drinking establishment that Jim went to on a regular basis where a 50 something wouldn’t be totally out of place, even if she barely looked 40.

That’s actually where she met her wife. Kayah was 15 years younger than her with dark, curly hair and a wicked sense of humor. She had no trouble with accepting her two year old daughter and the fact that Winona was essentially a woman without a past. The way Winona feels about her reminded her a lot of how she felt around George in the beginning. Kayah definitely made her skin tingle with every single touch.

The way they met was even similar. Winona was trying to make sure that Jim did not see her and she ran straight into Kayah. When Kayah handed Winona her purse, their fingers touched and she received that same tingling feeling that she experienced the first time she touched George. She just knew there was something about this woman that made her willing to consider doing something harder than a quick fuck before picking Georgia up from the sitter.

The fact that she didn’t run away when Winona told her the absolute truth after Kayah proposed was the only reason why Winona walked down the aisle for a third time. Kayah knew that Whitney was really Winona and she was on the run from her ex-husband who would kill her if he ever found her and that was before she turned state’s evidence on her former lover (of course they still haven’t been able to convict the man for anything, despite the truckload of computer files that she gave them). Before today, the only people who knew the complete story of what happened were her handlers, Kayah, and the doctor who helped her get out and even then he didn’t know her real name. (Considering, he was now working with her son that was a good thing.)

She considered it a small miracle that her son or someone else never caught her (until today). Jim came close on his wedding day. Kayah told her not to go but she couldn’t not be there on such an important day in her son’s life. Of course, Jim saw her but she was able to get out of there before he caught up to her. Unfortunately, on the way out she ran right into her former boss Admiral Marcus. Thankfully, he was too distracted arguing with his only daughter about getting pregnant again before getting married (the ass was always a little too old fashioned and paranoid for her taste) to recognize her. He didn’t believe the story about the sperm donor or whatever. Winona was too busy trying to get off the Starfleet academy campus without running into anybody else that can see past the contacts and expert dye job to actually pay attention.

After that incident, she should have been more careful but she wasn’t. Really, the moment that she ended up having her son’s sister in law as a student, she should have convinced Kayah to move several light-years away (or at least put the little girl in a different class). Of course, the little girl reminded Winona way too much of Jim and she did not want to run away. She even made the mistake of offering to take care of the little girl whenever Dr. Grayson was running late. She remembered all too well what it was like being a single parent due to widowhood with a child who was prone to cause parent teacher conferences on a daily basis. They were even both widows because of the same madman.

Her wife said it had something to do with all the stories that T’Pay told her about her favorite brother in law and babysitter in space. She allowed Winona to safely check up on Jim. Or at least Winona convinced herself it was safe because Amanda never met her and Jim was supposed to be in deep space for at least the next year. T’Pay Grayson would be safely in another class before Winona would have to deal with accidentally being found out. Of course, she wasn’t anticipating being caught by her best friend, who her little student referred to as Admiral Daddy. She should have known this was going to happen.

“Winona, I can’t believe you did this to Jim!” Chris screamed at her. The last time he yelled at her
like this was when she went back to Frank.

“My name isn’t Winona anymore, it’s Whitney. Winona died several years ago when she had to do the only thing she could to save her family,” Winona told him with bitter sarcasm.

“Can we not do this right now? Your girlfriend will be back any moment and there’s a small child on the other side of that door. She probably can hear everything,” she did not want to talk about this at all. Yes, she trusted Chris in the sense that he would not betray her location to Frank. The problem was she knew he would tell Jimmy and he would be fucking furious. He wouldn’t get why she left. He would assume that she abandoned him, when she didn’t. He was never going to forgive her for what she did, even if it came out of a place of love.

“Amanda’s not my girlfriend. She is your fellow mother in law of.” Chris said in the iciest voice she has ever heard from the man. “Her son is married to your son. You know, the one you abandon to play happy family with that woman who looks barely 30 years old,” he said this as he pointed to the image on her desk. "I think she is younger than what Sam would have been if…” Chris stopped right there, as if he just realized that he let his temper get the best of him.

“Don’t bite your tongue Chris. Sam is dead and Frank is the reason why. I already knew. He told me that the last time I tried to get away from him before I took the option of last resort. Of course, he was holding a knife to my stomach at the time. He said he had no trouble killing another one of my children, starting with the one that was in my stomach. He also said that just like the first time, they would never find the bodies. That’s why I had to get out by whatever means necessary.” Winona closed her eyes as she remembered the incident. She’s personally surprised Georgia survived the beating that she suffered. He said that he would kill Georgia first and then go after Jim. He said he would slit his throat right in front of her if she ever thought about leaving him. The bastard knew the only way to destroy her would be through her children. She would do anything for Jim and Georgia, even if it meant leaving her entire life behind to go into witness protection.

“The bastard didn't do that good a job since we found the body when we were excavating for the new academy,” Chris said as every word of his dripped with sarcasm. “Your excuses are bullshit. Why the hell did you not come to me or one of your other friends? What the FUCK were you thinking?”

“That I didn’t want to raise another kid with that abusive prick. I did what I had to,” Winona said fighting back tears. She was not expecting absolution, she just wanted Chris to understand why she did what she did. “Can we just not talk about this now?”

“I’m not sure I’ll get another chance. Tomorrow, you will be gone,” Chris said bitterly.

“I’m not going to uproot my wife and daughter when I haven’t really been compromised. You’re not going to tell Frank. I trust you,” she knew Chris would never betray her.

“I’m not sure about that. If you did trust me, we wouldn’t be here. I’m not going to tell that fucking ass where you are. However, I sure as hell am going to tell Jim. Do you have any idea what your ‘death’ did to him? Again, how the fuck could you do this to him? He’s going to be back planet side in six weeks, sooner if Jackson gets his way. He is pissed at Jim.” It was obvious that Chris was not telling her something.

“Marcus’s favorite lackey is now a member of the Admiralty?” Winona asked not wanting to talk about her son. He was never going to forgive her for leaving the way she did even if it was the logical choice.
“When my former mentor and your former boss ‘retired’, due to ‘personal problems’, they had no choice but to turn over his projects to Jackson. He was the only one who had half a clue of what was going on.” Winona snorted to herself. She knew the man too well to believe that story. Even she knew that her former captain had a nervous breakdown of ‘most likely to start a war with the Klingons’ proportions. The man always was a warmonger. Of course, that may have something to do with the fact that her classes are filled with the children or grandchildren of ambassadors, members of the Admiralty, and other of the San Francisco elite. She was placed at the school for a reason. Also, her handler always gave her the best gossip. She was going to have to call her as soon as Chris and Dr. Grayson left her.

“We can talk tomorrow at the Dive Bar. If I find that babysitter, I will bring my wife.” She suggested.

“I think that’s the bar I had to pick your son up at way too many times, before he met his husband, anyway.” She was sure there was a story there but she did not ask.

“That’s not going to work. I would like to know what the hell is going on before I have to speak with Jim again and because of what’s going on that’s going to happen sooner rather than later. How about tomorrow morning at the Butterfly Café? There’s a play area to keep Georgia occupied, even if you can’t find a babysitter.” Chris suggested.

“You would know all about which restaurants have play areas. Really, just friends?” Winona snickered and Chris blushed. “I will meet you there at seven.”

“I just suggested it because they have your favorite ice caramel latte.” Chris said with a snicker. She almost wondered if that was his way of apologizing for overreacting. She doesn’t get to ask Chris anymore questions because she heard the footsteps of Dr. Grayson and her very energetic seven year old.

“Okay, apparently there’s an override code for situations like these.” Amanda said walking into the room and Chris focused only on her again. Nobody with eyes will mistake those two for merely friends. Nobody does denial like Chris.

Of course, they don’t need it because that’s when her favorite little Vulcan decided to actually open the bathroom.

Her long suffering wife believed it was funny when Georgia recounted the entire incident over the dinner table. She thought it was less funny when she told her about Chris but she called her friend Casey to baby sit Georgette just in case.

Nyota had the worst headache ever and she blamed it on the fact she was acting captain during a situation that just screamed conspiracy theory (she really wished Jim put Sulu in charge for this mess). After her crying attack, she was hoping that she would be able to tell Jim about the Sam situation. That didn’t happen because Christine decided it would be the perfect time to come clean regarding the situation with Carol and David (or at least her version of it). She was fucking pissed that Christine kept her mouth shut. They needed to know what they were getting into before they arrived on NCX17. Christine had that information and she didn’t say anything. Her actions put the entire team in danger.

The personal stuff she didn’t care about. It was all just another reason to despise Carol. How the fuck could she not have told Spock what was happening? (If she was trying to tell Spock the truth
at the wedding after supposedly retrieving little David from frozen storage she was an even bigger bitch then originally assumed). It wasn’t her choice to make such a decision without at least telling Spock what was going on, if that’s what really happened.

She wasn’t so sure. Carol seemed overly smug when she tried to crash the wedding. That could have just been bravado and maybe there was some sort of purpose to her madness. There also could have been some more sinister reason behind her actions. She didn’t seem like the type of person you could trust. If you lie about your age and your last name, what else are you going to lie about?

Even though Gaila has yet to recover any data from the research facility or get the remaining systems back online, Nyota just knew something was very shady about what was going on and that was before the revelations about David. She wondered if the facility was part of the fabled Section 31. If they really were working on something that could for all intents and purposes bring a child back from the dead (and change said child on a genetic level) that seemed highly probable.

Nyota personally did not feel that you can trust anybody who would be a part of something like that and it was pretty obvious that whatever was going on in the colony was not really Federation sanctioned (Jackson’s bazaar orders was evidence of that). Anyone who was a part of something like this was essentially a professional liar and could not be trusted. That fits in perfectly with how Nyota saw the woman.

Nyota was not even entirely sure they could trust what Christine was saying about the mysterious Dr. Jane Jackson (mostly because the information came from Carol). Other than a couple of society articles on Jane Jackson in her capacity as Jackson’s wife at various Starfleet events, they were not able to find anything on the woman, not even her marriage license. Although, that may be a sign that at least part of Christine’s bizarre story was true. There had to be a reason why Jackson did not want the group investigating. If his wife was part of this, that would explain why he is trying to keep Enterprise from asking questions. There was obviously something going on that he didn’t want to come out.

Nyota was trying very hard to stay professional and not smack her colleague upside the head for lying and concealing evidence. At some point, Jim, of all people, had to pull her out of the conference room with the flimsy excuse of calling Pike. She knew it was an excuse because that conference room had the ability to contact Pike directly. (Jim made them go to the conference room closest to his quarters because he did not want Spock to listen in on the conversation because it was obvious Jim was worried about Spock’s reaction to Christine’s ‘true’ confessions and did not want him to have to listen to it all again.)

“Deep cleansing breath, remember she is your friend and you really don’t want to piss off somebody who is in charge of your medical well-being,” Jim said cheekily as they continued on to wherever Jim was taking her.

“You do it to Leonard all the time,” she mumbled under her breath. “If she really was my friend, she would have told me that my best friend had a kid who was being hidden from him by a delusional, lying, psychopath bitch. Do you actually believe the bullshit that was coming from her? It sounded like something straight from a trashy Harlequin novel.”

“About as much as I trust Spock when he says he is fine right now,” Jim snorted.

“That’s because when your husband uses the word fine it means he’s falling apart. He hates that word and any of its equally ambiguous equivalents. He is definitely not fine right now,” she snorted.
“I don’t think Spock completely believes this version of events either, even if it does sound like something Sarek would have done. But I don’t know what the point of lying would be now. Even if it was true, I don’t know if Spock would ever be able to forgive her even if she was alive to receive forgiveness.” Jim said sadly.

“That’s true,” Nyota said bitterly.

“I don’t know if we are ever going to know the truth. Two of the three people involved are dead, and depending on what Pike tells us, it may be in our best interest not to talk to the third about it. I’m more concerned about Jane Jackson and the fact that we cannot find anything about her older then my stepson, not even her marriage license. It’s like she didn’t exist before three years ago. The only reason why we need to verify this story about how David came into existence at all is if my hybrid husband managed to get his 16 year old girlfriend pregnant the old fashioned way, that means that they were working on something that could not only bring a child back from the dead, but also change that child on a molecular level. That is some dangerous shit.” Jim said with worry in his voice.

“That’s what I’m afraid of.” Nyota said echoing James worry.

“Yes and whoever shot up the place now has that research and we don’t. You know they uploaded everything before they wrecked the computers. The way they did it was strange because it would have been just easier to blow everything up. We don’t even know how they got on and off the planet. There was no evidence whatsoever of any ship in the vicinity.” James said worriedly.

“Well they could have done what you did to get back on the ship when your ex-boyfriend* decided to send you to the ice planet of the damned.” She said jokingly until she realized that was a possibility. “Didn’t Starfleet force Scotty to give over the equation?” she said becoming very serious.

“Shit. Okay, now we really need to talk to Chris,” He said as they walked into Jim’s office.

“Fuck,” or rather she said the Klingon equivalent when she realized that she was out of time.

“Before we try to contact Chris, I need to tell you something,” she started ominously.

“I already figured out that our long range communications capabilities are not as out as you said they were,” Jim joked.

“That is not what I want to talk about. They really are out, they will just happen to conveniently come on in about 3 minutes,” she joked to get rid of some of her nervousness. It did not work.

“That’s not it. I need to tell you something and I’m not sure how,” Nyota started again.

“Unless it involves the current crazy situation, it can wait,” she had no choice but to go along with his command. Her only consolation was she felt it was highly unlikely that admiral Pike would mention the Sam situation.

Although she exhaled when she found out that the admiral wasn’t there. Jim started laughing when he found out he left with Amanda until he was told that Amanda was there for a ‘briefing’ on David. That’s when he let out a few curse words before deciding to contact Pike through alternate means.

“I’m so sorry to hear about your loss.” Pike’s assistant or whatever said just as he was about to end the call. Nyota was repressing the urge to curse in Klingon again.
“I really didn’t know Carol very well but losing a parent is always hard even when you’re little. I will pass your condolences on to Spock and our son.” She was too touched by Jim referring to David as his son to realize what was about to happen. She should have ended the call right there. She was so fucked.

“I was talking about your brother. I thought the Admiral told you that they found his body when they were preparing the site for the new academy in Iowa.” Judging by James expression alone, the assistant realized it was a very good time to end the conversation. Her response was to let out a string of Klingon curse words.

“Explain now!” Jim demanded. The look he was giving her told her that she was completely screwed.

Chapter End Notes

To be continued.

All positive and/or redirected feedback appreciated and encouraged. Please review.
Forgiveness Is for the Living

Chapter Notes

Thank you to everybody who read or reviewed the last chapter. The second part of this chapter will contain some dialogue from the last chapter of this story’s predecessor, but the entire scene will be flipped so that we see it from Carol’s perspective. For those of you who read Starfleet Family Values you know how much I love doing flashbacks and using nonlinear storytelling. The truth will be coming out in this chapter (some of it anyway), and it’s scarier than you can imagine. I cannot remember if I gave Admiral Jackson a first name. I looked through the previous chapters and I haven’t found anything, so just go with the first name now.

Songs for this chapter:
The Heart of the Matter
lyric excerpt:
I got the call today, I didn’t wanna hear
But I knew that it would come
An old true friend of ours was talkin’ on the phone
She said you found someone
And I thought of all the bad luck and all the struggles we went through

In a World Like This
lyric excerpt:
In a world like this where people fall apart
In a time like this when nothing comes from the heart
In a world like this, I’ve got you

Did you really think I could get through this entire story without using a Backstreet Boys song? I admit I was going to try to but this song just was perfect. It’s unbelievably fluffy, but it perfectly represents Jim and Spock’s relationship in this chapter.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Spock lay down cautiously next to David, who was cuddling the plush that he referred to as Mr. Spock. His son was still peacefully napping, unaware of the story told by Ms. Chapel and the inner turmoil it caused his father. Spock does not remember seeing anything in David’s mind that contradicted the secondhand version of Carol’s side of events. At least now Spock understands David’s closeness to Rebecca and why he did not find it that strange that Spock was engaged in a romantic relationship with another man. The woman was another mother to David and at the very least Carol’s lover.

However, there was not much in David’s memories that supported Ms. Chapel’s narrative. There was evidence that she became very wary of Adm. Jackson in David’s most recent memories. He also may have seen Carol arguing with her father in one of the memories.

Spock was wary to trust anything that came from Ms. Chapel because Carol was the source. If her
story was true that meant that the only thing Carol never lied to him about was her feelings for him. If what he was told was true, that meant Carol concealed her pregnancy and her confrontation with their fathers. If Ms. Chapel’s narrative turns out to be true that means his father deliberately conspired to keep David away from him. He is uncertain if he wants to discover the truth. However, the truth may lay in the files forwarded to him by Ms. Chapel. He opens a message with trepidation due to the dubious subject line of "please read in the event of my disappearance or death".

Xx

I'm sorry, Christine. I have been keeping a lot of things from you lately. I wanted to keep you as safe as possible by keeping you in the dark, to the best of my abilities. It's best that you don't know what I have accidentally become involved in. I'm a prisoner of my own making and David and Becky are stuck with me. I don't want you to be as well.

If I told you how bad things have gotten on the colony, I’m sure you would have told Spock about David in an effort to rescue Rebecca and me. That’s why I never told you how bad things have become. I no longer trust Jackson. He was never the father figure that I thought he was. He only used Spock and me as his own guinea pig to create his prototype perfect soldier. Now David is his toy and I’m not sure how much longer I can keep him safe.

If you receive this message, then it was not very long and I am most likely dead or incapacitated. I set up the program to forward this message if I do not log in for 48 hours. My only hope is that David and Rebecca have remained unscathed.

XXX

Spock stops reading the message as he runs a hand through David’s hair, thankful that he is still here and mournful that Rebecca is not. He trusted Rebecca more than Carol. If they were lovers, then obviously not all of his preconceptions about Carol were accurate. He is also concerned about Carol’s ominous words regarding Admiral Jackson. This is why he starts reading again.

XXX

However, I don't think that is the case. If I’m gone, I’m sure Rebecca would follow behind me. In that event, I’m trusting you to make sure David is taken care of. (I do not want to contemplate a scenario where David is gone too. I will die myself first.) Do not let Jackson turn my son into his personal experiment (more than he already has). Tell Spock everything if you have to. Although, I prefer that you don’t. I don’t want him to realize how much of a coward I truly was. Just tell him enough so that he will take David. I have listed Spock and his husband as David’s guardians with Starfleet. If protocol is followed (which I sincerely doubt) he should go to Spock. If Spock is unavailable or unwilling David should go to his uncle Selek on the New Vulcan colony, Spock’s mother, or yourself. There are very few I trust and my father and Jackson are among those I do not trust. Whatever happens, make sure David does not go to my father and he’s somewhere where he can be happy.

XXX

It seems like the thing Carol was most concerned with was David’s happiness. He is slightly worried that she referred to Elder Selek as David’s uncle. If she was a member of the fabled Section 31, she most likely had the clearance to know of his counterpart’s existence.

It is obvious that Carol was very wary of her father and Admiral Jackson for reasons that were
disconcerting at best. Spock thinks back to his conversations with Carol about Admiral Marcus. She loved her father, even if the relationship was slightly contentious. At the time, she was mostly annoyed at the fact he was forcing her to focus on physics and weapon design when she preferred the biological sciences. Since the death of Carol’s mother, the man had become obsessed with war and weapons. If rumors were to be believed, it is highly possible that that preoccupation led to his dismissal from Starfleet. Also, if rumors were to be believed he needs to keep David away from the man at all cost.

Spock has been suspicious of Admiral Jackson for years. He was naturally wary of any crony of the now disgraced Admiral Johnson. How did the Admiral use him and Carol for his own purposes? Spock has a feeling, as his husband would say, that the answer is attached to Carol’s message to Ms. Chapel. It includes several important files such as a copy of Carol’s last will and testament and excerpts from her personal log. (The entry from his wedding day will most likely result in a highly uncomfortable conversation with his other self about his selective disclosure of important information.)

She also included a copy of what she gave Starfleet stating that she wanted custody of David to go to him and James in the event of both her and Rebecca’s demise. The final document that he opens contains a personal message to him from Carol. It was heavily encrypted but Carol did not use standard encryption, but rather a system that Spock created sometime during the course of their relationship.

XXx

Dear Spock:

I don’t know how to start this letter except with if you’re reading this, then I must be dead or presumed dead. I sent this to Christine to give to you, because I’m sure you would delete any message from me without reading it first.

I guess I should start with an apology. I apologize for lying to you about a lot of things, especially about why we needed to end our relationship. I should have told you the truth as soon as I left the meeting with my father. Even if I did believe your father’s version of the truth, I should have broken up with you in person. I should have told you I was pregnant instead of listening to my father’s friend. How was I supposed to know I should question the motives of a man I have known since I was five years old? Never trust a man named John because he is the type of person who has no qualms about secretly replacing a 16-year-old’s birth control with fertility drugs. Everything from our first meeting until the miracle that kept our son alive was entirely engineered by a man who is fascinated by genetically engineered ‘Supermen’ of the late 20th century and he thought he could do better with a little Vulcan DNA. He’s so cocky about it that he put everything in writing. Two months ago I came across his secret project file. He just wanted David and he used me. Did you know that David was a twin? No, I don’t know what happened to our other baby.

The only answers I have are in Mr. Spock and David is the key. Ask him why the caged bird sings. Make sure you bring all of his things with you, but don’t get anything out of the basement. Jackson keeps his pet project down there. You should call your brother first before you mess around down there. You may accidentally defrost something you should not.

XXX

The last part of her message seems somewhat incoherent. Most of the message actually makes no sense except for the implications that David’s conception was not accidental. That was the main reason why he did not believe Miss Chapel’s account of events. The probability of accidentally
impregnating Carol was too small. However, Carol’s words point to the possibility that they were both manipulated by the now Admiral Johnson. That scenario seems more plausible.

Spock does not have time to reflect on this because James and Nyota returned to their quarters abruptly. Spock can sense the anger from James before he actually entered. His husband is in great pain.

“Why the fuck did you not tell me that they found his body?” James yells loud enough to cause any child to wake up, including David. Spock realizes that he will need to apologize to Nyota, because obviously the walls are not as soundproof as they should be according to the regulations, and she most likely heard certain activities that he did not want her to hear. The problem will need to be remedied if this room is to become David’s permanently.

“See, this is why I did not tell you. I knew you would act like this. You already had too much to deal with. Now you’re yelling at me and I hate this,” Nyota replies in a tone that from anyone else would be considered insubordination.

“Why are they fighting?” David asks groggily from the bed.

“You have two reactions to bad news, you either do a really good imitation of Vulcan indifference or you go crazy. God, you and Spock are the perfect match when it comes to this. I’m not sure which to reaction I prefer.” Nyota actually laughs at that part.

“I am uncertain,” Spock tells his son, because he is uncertain what could be causing James such turmoil, but he knows his husband is in great pain.

“I think I would’ve reacted a little bit better if I did not accidentally find out from a communications officer that can’t keep her mouth shut, as opposed to my communications officer, who is really good at keeping her mouth shut, that they found Sam’s body buried under my old house. Fuck you!” Spock finds the words slightly jarring.

Now he understands the pain that is radiating from James. Even though James’ brother disappeared more than a decade previously, James always held out the illogical hope that his brother was alive somewhere. This revelation obviously has hurt his husband. It would also signify that he had no biological family left, unless you count uncles and aunts that Jim has never met in person.

“They remind me of mommy and Aunt Becky,” David says in a soft voice as he clutches Mister Spock more closely. “They yelled a lot when they thought I was asleep. Aunt Becky never liked Mister Jonathan and wanted to leave, but mommy was afraid to.” His words cause Spock to stop paying attention to the conversation outside. Spock’s instinct is to wrap an arm around his son. His mother did this to him several times before he told her that such gestures of physical affection were illogical and culturally inappropriate.

At that moment, James walks into the room that they were setting up for David. For a moment it seems like he is going to begin a classic tirade against any number of individuals, but he stops himself when he sees David. Instead, he walks over to the sleeping area and sits down next to David and hugs him for a few minutes without saying anything.

“I am sorry I woke you up,” Jim says after a moment, placing a kiss to David’s temple.

“I’m just really mad at your aunt. Sometimes she’s the bravest coward I know. She’ll go toe to toe with your daddy when he’s crack-- having a very bad day because something very bad happened to him, but never ask her to talk about her feelings. She is absolutely terrified of emotional confrontations. Maybe that’s why she is your dad’s best friend,” James quips.
“You should give her Mister bear,” David says quietly and James smiles just a little.

“Actually, I think she needs her Doctor Bones, especially if we can finally get the two to play Doctor,” James replies cheekily.

“I presume that is a double entendre of sorts,” Spock says with a glare.

“Of course it is.” Jim responds as he gives Spock a chaste kiss on the lips. “We have a two-year-old. That means no dirty words or using the fun stuff under the sink. Our s-e-x life is pretty much going to go to h-e-l-l. We are not going to be able to do more than this until we have Grandma Amanda around to babysit,” James says, wrapping his fingers around Spock’s in a discreet kiss. He can tell that James craves the physical comfort of his touch. Spock feels the same way after reading Carol’s words. He just wants Jim.

“Well, if you didn’t yell at me, I would offer my quality babysitting services so that you can find time for s-e-x. I did take care of my sister Ivy,” Nyota says, walking into the room.

“I really don’t want to see you now. Although, as soon as this mess is over with, I’m taking you up on the babysitting offer. I’m sure I will be less mad at you if I get to you know what,” Nyota looks away at his angry words. “How did you get in here?” James asks with a resigned sigh.

“You haven’t changed the code yet,” she replies smugly.

“I’ll try to do that when we’re not dealing with-- something that I can’t talk about in front of my two-year-old,” James finishes and if he were human Spock would smile at the fact that James referred to David as his son.

“I know you’re mad at me, but Gaila just found something on planet that both of you need to look at now,” Nyota starts ominously.

“Thanks to Margarita, I’m on leave. You’re in charge. May I suggest you actually make a decision this time instead of waiting for someone to make that decision for you,” he shoots back.

“Look, I’m sorry. I was going to tell you, you know that I was going to tell you. It just wasn’t the best time,” she says softly. “Look, we don’t have time for this.” Nyota places a PADD screen in front of James’ face.

“What the fu-what is that?” James asks, barely catching his profanity.

In front of them are images of things that look very similar to caskets. However, there is a glass window and Spock can see a body inside. They remind Spock of an image of something he read in his history class about pre-warp space travel on earth. His instinct is to push David away from the screen, but his child has already seen the images. Worst of all, David does not seem surprised by the images. This tells Spock that whatever this was down there, David already knows. That worries Spock most of all. Actually, he is more worried because the incoherent part of Carol’s letter to him was starting to become coherent. His instinctive response is to clutch Jim’s hand harder.

June 20, 2258

Carol stood back at the edge of the reception hall, nursing another flute of apple cider as she tried to avoid her father. It was the only thing non-alcoholic and even though she just found out that the embryo re-implantation was successful two days earlier she wasn’t going to risk anything that would damage her unborn child. Technically, she was six weeks pregnant, even if the implantation only occurred a week and a half ago. She knew the Admiral would be furious with her and would
doubt her story about her and Rebecca wanting to start a family together. Of course, she didn’t expect him to start yelling at her in the middle of the Starfleet function that he was making her attend.

He was already displeased that her relationship with Rebecca transitioned from tentatively reconnecting, once Christine forced her to tell her oldest friend the complete truth, to becoming lovers. Apparently, xenophobia and homophobia are two sides of the same coin. He hasn’t been very happy with her since a low-level Starfleet medical personnel broke several regulations and told her father that her Vulcan boyfriend, who outside of fertility drugs should not be able to get her pregnant, (forget about the fact that they were both using contraceptives) managed to actually get her pregnant.

The fact that she is carrying another (from his perspective anyway) child of Vulcan ancestry threw him over the edge to the point where they were fighting at a commendation ceremony. That was why she chose that moment to tell him he was going to be a grandfather and there wasn’t anything he could do to stop her this time.

Of course, it wasn’t any commendation ceremony; it was a ceremony for her former lover’s husband. Those words stuck in her throat. The first guy she ever loved who merely saw her as a science experiment and a means to study human sexuality was married and would be having a renewing of his vows later that day. She broke a glass when Christine told her about the wedding, because despite moving on it hurt her.

Rebecca and Christine tried to convince her that Spock was not who she thought he was, to the point that Christine actually tried to date him. (They fought for weeks about that.) Yet, she still believed Spock’s father over the words of her friend and girlfriend. Vulcans do not lie. Of course, a voice in her mind told her that could not be the absolute truth, because either Spock was lying to her when they were together or Spock’s father was lying to her when he told her "it is impossible for my son to have affection for you because he is engaged to a Vulcan of his station. Any interactions with you must be a means to satisfy his curiosity about the human species. Due to the low probability of my son actually being able to impregnate you I believe that this is merely a form of extortion and I doubt the viability of your claim.”

Maybe a part of her believed that Spock was not as horrible as his father led her to believe. If she believed him entirely she would not be risking her father’s wrath to bring her and Spock’s child to term despite her desire to help the Vulcan people. Between her own guilt and the urging of a man who gave her the ability to save her child, the newly minted Adm. Jonathan Jackson, she was convinced that now was the best time to have the procedure done. Rebecca supported her entirely and felt like she should have done this as soon as she was safely in London, no longer under her father’s direct control.

Jonathan was always supportive of her growing up and was more of a father to her then her own father. He was the one who nurtured her interest in the study of biology, unlike her father, who kept pushing her towards Physics and weapons design. She despised weapons. She was interested in the creation of life, not destroying it. When her father forced her to ‘end’ her pregnancy, she decided that she no longer wanted to spend the rest of her life doing something that she was going to hate just to make the man happy. The fact that her father forced her to transfer to the London Academy campus to keep her away from Spock made her even more willing to defy him. Jonathan supported this decision and helped her get set up. He was also the one who found her crying after the confrontation with her father and Spock’s father when they gave her the ultimatum of terminating her pregnancy or risk Spock getting arrested and ruining his career. He was the one who presented her with a third option in this messy situation. So when the man asked her to consider going through with the pregnancy now, she said yes.
"What the fuck are you doing here?" The profane words had the effect of breaking her out of her morose thoughts. She vaguely recognized the woman from when Christine introduced her to her friend, a cadet Uhura or something, after a panel on women in science that Carol participated in last year. Later Christine told her that the young linguistics student was trying to date her former lover with disastrous results at the time. Apparently, the two were friends now, judging by her greeting.

The question was appropriate because, in all honesty, Carol did not know why she was there despite her father's wishes. Rebecca has always said that she was a masochist, especially because she keeps trying to get her father to love her when the man will always love his precious Starfleet more than her. Ironically enough, it was their mutual daddy issues that brought her and Spock together in the first place. They were both constantly trying to get the affection of two men that would never give them anything but cold indifference as they both constantly micromanaged their existence. Spock was free, but she wasn't. She was going to take great pains to make sure the child she was carrying would never feel like that. She wasn't sure how good of a parent she would be considering the man who raised her, but Rebecca will be a good mom. Together they can do this.

"I am a member of Starfleet and this event is open to all Starfleet personnel," she replied in a clipped tone. What she wanted to say was her father forced her to come to show her that the guy she almost threw everything away for (in her father's mind) was perfectly happy with someone else. She herself wasn't sure why she didn't run away completely after her fight with her father. She should. Why was she putting herself through this? Rebecca was right, she is a masochist.

"I wonder how long it's going to last?" Carol said with put upon bitterness as she pointed her glass at her former lover and his love. A painful voice in the back of her mind told her it would last a lot longer than what she and Spock had together. Her heart was breaking at that moment, but she would not show it. She kept a steady mask of indifference upon her face. It would do no good for Spock's friend to see how much being here was affecting her.

She would like to blame the pregnancy hormones for her urge to cry, throw up, or throw something, when in reality it was the sight of Spock looking lovingly at her replacement that made her ill. She knew of him because her friend Christine was in love with him despite his 'fuck anything that moves' reputation. Christine was mentally already planning for their wedding before he left her to chase after Spock. Apparently, he was much more successful than Christine because it was obvious that the man had Spock's heart and Spock had his as well. During the entire course of the relationship, Spock never looked at her with such reverence. Maybe Spock's father was right and he never really did love her because not once did Spock ever look at her like that. That thought made her go cold.

"For a very long time, unlike your relationship with Spock, Jim actually loves him and isn't using him for a cheap fuck or to satisfy some sort of alien sex fetish." She could see that was the truth by the way the guy looked back at Spock as his friend through the lie she told Rebecca back in her face. She always regretted that. She should have confronted him in person after the encounter with their fathers but she was too much of a coward to do so.

The words gave her pause because if Spock was only using her as his father argued, then why would Spock's friend be so angry at her? She was confused and she regretted her decision not to talk to him even more than before. If she did things differently, would this have been their wedding? She doubted it. Things would have been messy with their child being bounced between multiple countries and planets. She grew up like that and did not want it for her child.

“Jim actually sees how great Spock is. That is something you could never do.”

She wanted to laugh at those words because she did see how great Spock was or at least she did
before. Now she was wondering if her own observations were more important than what Spock’s father told her. The Vulcan was never particularly close to Spock. Actually, during the time they were dating the two were not on speaking terms.

“You need to leave!”

Carol agreed with that statement completely. She shouldn’t have come in the first place, even if her father was forcing her to be at this ‘celebration’. This was a mistake.

“Your ex-boyfriend doesn't want you here. As his friend, I'm going to make sure you don't ruin this for him,” the woman whispered angrily.

"Spock was never my boyfriend," she spat, trying not to show how much it pained her to say that. As she watched him with Jim, she knew he never loved her. Maybe he did care, but she’s never going to know that now. What they had was supposed to stay casual, but it was never casual, even before he got her pregnant. She was such a fool at 15 trying to be a big girl. Her father called her a stupid genius and maybe he was right. At 23, she realized that all too well.

"Thank god for that. Finish your champagne and get the hell out of here. I have no trouble having security escort you out. I would do it myself but you're not worth my time," the woman said, as if she wanted to kick Carol’s ass. That worried her. Reimplantation pregnancies were very precarious in the first few weeks, and even a simple fall could cause her to miscarry. She could not handle a physical altercation.

"It's not champagne. It's sparkling cider. I'm pregnant.” She wasn’t sure why she said this, but maybe it was her maternal instincts kicking in. She needed to protect her child and she doubted Spock’s friend would physically attack a pregnant woman, even if she did not know that Carol was carrying her friend’s child. “I'm just a few weeks along but alcohol is bad for the fetus." She took another drink of the cider as she watched the fire go out of the woman’s eyes. Obviously, her assumption was correct and she would not have to worry about being attacked.

"I pity that child and the poor bastard who knocked you up. I hope he gets full custody.”

Those words made her angrier than anything else. How dare this woman that she is only met once before judge her like this? She doesn’t know Carol. She has no idea what she has been through and has no right to judge her.

“On the bright side, we know it's not Spock's because he hasn't touched your skinny ass in at least five years.”

She wanted to laugh at the highly ironic words.

"Leave now!” Spock’s angry friend demanded once more.

"You will be amazed what can be done these days with technology and a DNA sample," Carol said cryptically under her breath as she reluctantly placed her glass back on the table. Maybe a part of her wanted the woman to figure out that she was carrying Spock’s child. She wanted Spock to confront her or at least talk to her again. Of course, she decided to go with a plausible lie instead of the improbable truth. Years later, she still did not completely understand how Spock managed to get her pregnant. It should been nearly impossible. He was a hybrid. Of course, as a scientist, she should know there are no such things as absolutes. Also as a scientist she was interested in how her little miracle happened. Despite how dreadful everything turned out, a part of her still saw it as a
miracle. Rebecca definitely did.

"Is there a problem?"

Carol heard a voice that sounded familiar. For almost a moment, she swore she heard the familiar cadence of Spock but that couldn’t be right. It sounded older. She turned around to see a man or rather a Vulcarn standing in front of her. He looked a lot like Spock, but he was much older. He had to be a relative of some sort but he sounded so much like her Spock that it was unnerving.

"No trouble at all Elder. Dr. Marcus was just leaving." The lieutenant’s voice was clipped.

"Just in case, I will escort Carol out of the facilities personally," the Vulcarn said as he grabbed her arm forcefully. The touch was familiar, too familiar. He felt like her Spock.

"Wait, how do you know my name?" Carol asked as the Vulcarn dragged her away. Did Spock talk about her with his relatives? Of course, a part of her brain was coming up with an even more ludicrous possibility. The Vulcarn was too old to be her Spock but yet she couldn’t shake this odd feeling.

But was it really that ludicrous? Her father was a very high ranking Admiral and he told her everything, despite their strained relationship. She knew the real origins of the individual who nearly destroyed Earth. Could the existence of an older version of her ex, who came from another dimension, be that outside the realm of possibilities?

"At my age, I know a lot of things. I’m well aware of what you did to my nephew." His tone was clipped and he was giving her the same expression that Spock used when he was upset at her.

Really, she should never have lied. Rebecca was never going to let her hear the end of this. Why did she not have Rebecca come with her?

His words made her angry. This was another individual who only knew one side of the story and that side was a pure fabrication.

"Are you aware of what he did to me?" she asked bitterly as soon as they were out of the hall. "I was just some human girl that he wanted to fuck. I was merely some bloody experiment to satisfy his human curiosity."

The elder just gave her a puzzled look. She knows that she has seen that expression before.

"I know myse--- nephew very well. He is not one for meaningless physical encounters and he would never purposely play with someone’s emotions, as humans may say."

When he said that phrase, she knew that despite the improbability of it, this man was Spock. The fact that he almost said “myself” instead of “nephew” took away any of her remaining doubts. At that point, she pulled him into a nearby classroom that was often used for classified briefings and secured the room. There were some advantages of being the Admiral’s daughter and getting into the room was one of them. Spock’s “uncle” followed behind her.

“You’re Spock!” she accused as soon as the room was secure.

“I am merely a relative of your former lover.” He argued that without actually arguing. It was a very Spock thing to do.

“So, it’s true, Vulcans can lie when necessary.” She wanted to laugh bitterly at this revelation too many years too late. “You came through to this dimension just like Nero.”
He said nothing to her and she took that as his way of confirming her suspicions.

“Were we together in the other dimension? Is that how you knew my Spock would never do to me what his father told me he did?” she asked, wanting to know the answer.

“We were acquainted in the other timeline, but we did not meet until much later in life,” he responded, not looking at her, as if he was keeping something from her.

“You were already with him.” She didn’t even have to say who 'him' referred to because they both knew who she was talking about.

He didn’t look at her and therefore she took that as another unspoken yes.

“I’m not surprised. Even if I wasn’t just some experiment to my Spock, he never looked at me like that. I could never compete with their connection,” she told him with a sad smile. "Maybe he wasn’t lying when he said that I didn’t mean anything to Spock."

"Who is this 'he' to whom you are referring?” this Spock asked her with confusion.

“Spock’s father, or rather, your father. It’s a long story and I doubt that you will believe me, anyway.” Her words were tinged with anger. "Although, you should know the probability of you getting a woman pregnant via traditional sex is higher than you think,” she remarked sarcastically. That’s when he looked at her stomach.

"I was under the impression that my counterpart has not engaged in a physical relationship with you in some time. The child you are currently carrying cannot be his unless you resulted to unethical means such as those at which you hinted during your altercation with Nyota.” Apparently, this Spock heard that part of the conversation before intervening.

“Forget this conversation happened. You are never going to believe my side of the story, nobody ever has,” she said, trying to retreat as fast as possible, but he grabbed her wrist gently.

“I'm willing to listen, if you're willing to tell me," he told her, but she still was uncertain if she could trust him.

"That still does not guarantee that you will believe me," she told him, not making eye contact.

“There is a way you can tell me your side of the story without the ability to lie.” She knew what this Spock was referring to; she did have a relationship with a version of the Vulcan for over a year.

“Okay.” What did she have to lose at this point?

To be continued

Chapter End Notes

Please remember to tip your writer with reviews (comments, favorites, alerts, or kudos) on the way out. Thank you
Chapter 9: I Got You

Thank you to everybody who read or reviewed the last chapter. I know I gave you guys another cliffhanger. I hate that my characters are on different planets and probably in very different time zones right now and I have to keep switching back between everyone. It always makes balancing all the major plot lines very difficult. Don’t worry in a few chapters they will all be on the same planet, which will make things a little easier.

Special Note: In response to Lawlady562 and everyone else with similar worries, Christopher Pike will make it to the end of this story alive. I have done way too much creative writing to keep Chris and Amanda alive to kill either one off by anything other than old-age. Basically, Carol died so Chris may live. However, all other characters are fair game, except for David. The poor baby has technically been raised from the dead once in the story and even though genetically he’s a different person, I just have to make up for certain injustices in the other timeline.

Inspired by: In a World Like This
(Basically, I am now using whichever song I start humming while writing these chapters.)

Lyric Excerpt:
You got me wide open, wide open now I'm yours
You found me heartbroken, heartbroken on the floor...
Became my salvation, salvation through the war

Jim has a lot of time to think during the long walk to the research facility. They still can’t beam directly into the place where his stepson’s mother was murdered. Unfortunately, he has a lot of things to think about from what Jackson’s role was in this entire fiasco to the fact that he and Spock are now completely responsible for a very scared two-year-old (who may or may not be a pawn in this entire mess). He hopes it no longer looks like a crime scene, because he’s not sure he can handle that, not after the news he just heard.

Sam is dead. He’s been dead for years and was buried under the place where Jim got his first hand job from Marc somebody and he was none the wiser. If Jim hadn’t agreed to sell the property to Starfleet to build the new campus, he would have never found his brother. He is still deciding if it’s better to know the truth or still be able to hold onto the unrealistic hope that maybe someday Sam would come back to him. He’s still too much in shock to decide one way or another.

He knows it was Frank or maybe one of his ‘friends’. Unlike everyone else in their little town, Jim never believed Frank’s excuses. The guy was a sadistic bastard who pretty much owned Riverside because nobody would look beyond his clean-cut family Guy façade. His family was wealthy and the guy always made the right donations to the right charities. They made a small fortune on natural gas during the early 21st century and managed to invest their money wisely. Of course, Jim is convinced most of those "investments" during the last 20 years involved the reason why Gaila qualifies for refugee status under the Federation convention. Jim thinks the only reason why Frank lived at the old farmhouse after he married Jim’s mom was nobody would think a major criminal worked out of an old family dairy farm. It was the perfect cover for the man.
It wasn’t like he was really mad at Nyota for not telling him, it was more like he was mad at himself for holding onto the illogical hope that maybe Sam was still out there somewhere. Now, he really was alone in the world except for Spock and now their son. In an effort to not be anything like the sick dick who took his mother and brother away from him, he refused to only think of David as something that he had to put up with just to be with Spock. David was his. It was something that he felt in the deepest part of his heart. He was currently fighting his urge to call Doctor Margarita, who agreed to babysit/try another art counseling session while he and Spock attend to their day job, to see how David was doing.

Maybe he is a little worried that someone on his crew was afraid to deliver bad news to him. That can be extremely problematic in their business, where it feels like the Klingons or some other hostile force is attacking them at least once a week. It’s especially bad that it was Nyota. She was the woman who went toe to toe with Spock when Spock was in the middle of his emotional crackup. They were supposed to be friends and you don’t keep this sort of thing from your friends. Maybe that was an erroneous assumption on his part.

“I believe her hesitancy regarding telling you about the discovery of your brother’s body has nothing to do with her fear of you, but rather her reluctance to cause you emotional harm. Despite your misgivings, you are one of her trusted friends and the thought of causing you emotional distress is repugnant to her. Most likely, she was waiting to find the most opportune occasion to inform you of the distressing news,” Spock tells him in the most matter-of-fact way possible. This instantly causes Jim to roll his eyes and maybe laugh a little, because it’s such a Spock thing to do to listen in on his thoughts.

“I have a hard time believing the best friend thing. Maybe I’m not really mad at her anyway; I’m just irritated with myself for not realizing that my mother married a murdering bastard and that my brother’s body has been decaying under the family farm for years.”

Spock’s response is to squeeze his hand in support. Okay, it’s like three finger strokes from a Vulcan hand job, but whatever. They were married, and the rest of the crew are taking a different path to the facilities because Jim wanted to see if he could find any evidence of how the killers could’ve got away. If they want to have Vulcan hand sex in the middle of an alien forest as they look for clues to the identity of the bastard who killed David’s mom, or rather, mothers, they can. He needs this right now, and obviously Spock wasn’t objecting to the contact, probably because he needs it too.

“How could I be so oblivious to the fact that my missing brother was buried under my barn?” he told his husband on the verge of tears (or as close as he would allow himself). Of course Spock tries to make him feel better, which sort of leads to something that is closer to a Vulcan make out session than what they normally allow themselves during working hours. (Okay, it is really just one finger stroke away from that Vulcan hand job he mentioned earlier.)

“You have repeated that particular line of thinking several times during the last 15 minutes,” Spock says as they start walking again, with hands still entwined.

“Seriously do you have to listen to my thoughts all the time?” Jim asks his husband, flippantly giving him his ‘why am I still married to you’ look.

“It is difficult to not listen to your thoughts when you are projecting so loudly.”

Jim’s response is to let go of his husband’s hand.

“As stated earlier, Nyota sees you as a very close friend and companion. She cares about you and does not want to cause you emotional harm. The current situation with David is already causing
you great stress.” Jim can sense Spock’s guilt about that through their bond. “And I know she does not want to bother you further. The only person on the ship who Nyota is closer to is either I or Doctor McCoy.”

“That’s because we have bonded over our mutually crappy childhoods.” He doesn’t say that they both have bonded over the tragic deaths of their mother because that’s just something that’s not talked about. “Of course, her precious Leonard is always going to know everything because she’s kind of in love with him but too scared to acknowledge it. Trust me, I would love for the two to be making out or at least holding hands on the way to check out the frozen bodies uncovered by our favorite hacker but between me taking you away from her and the prick that screwed her over, that’s never going to happen. Let us not forget her daddy issues either. All of it has kind of made her a little relationship-o-phobic. Okay, she is absolutely terrified of relationships and avoids anything harder than an anonymous fuck on shore leave,” Jim says sadly.

He adores Nyota, when she isn’t doing stupid stuff like keeping secrets from him that leads to him finding out that his brother died from a total stranger who just let it slip out absentmindedly. That’s not how you want to find out that someone you love died. The only way that could’ve been worse was a mass email that he stumbled upon or maybe finding out from a new stream. Thankfully, they are currently in the middle of nowhere and the only news they are getting comes from official Starfleet sources and that is still sporadic. However, years later, Jim still kind of feels bad for stealing her crush.

“She did not take me from you because I was never hers in a romantic capacity.”

Jim wants to say something about how things did not work out between the two because Spock was way too jaded due to the Carol fiasco (not to mention the Cupcake fallout and the fact that the object of his inappropriate Captain crush is probably in love with his mother right now), but Jim isn’t sure he wants to talk about anything Carol related. That particular conversation is going to require chocolate laced alcohol, sanity-in-a-hypo, a licensed psychologist, and probably a babysitter if they resort to Jim’s favorite coping strategy of ‘sex therapy’.

However, because of the mission, they can’t afford avoidance for that long. They need to know the truth about David’s existence, but Spock’s father is dead, Carol is dead and a habitual liar, and Andrew Marcus is at best an ousted trigger-happy former admiral and at worst the guy that tried to kill him (or more likely Spock) as part of some great scheme to "antagonize" the Klingons. (This really did not make the guy that different from Jackson or most of the other admirals that got kicked out during the purging.) Jim really really hopes Mr. Marcus never wanted to see his grandchild because Jim is so not looking forward to those family dinners. Essentially, they are never going to know the truth.

“According to the files forwarded to me by Ms. Chapel, David was technically conceived the traditional way, if you do not count the fact that Admiral Jackson was secretly dosing us with fertility drugs in an effort for him to design his own ‘super soldier’ of sorts without resorting to the type of genetic engineering that is technically illegal.”

At that moment, Jim trips over a rock (he does not fall down in shock). Again, Jim is thankful that they are alone. Spock quickly helps him up from the ground. He may have snuck in a little Vulcan make out session (more like really heavy Vulcan petting) but he kind of needs Spock touching right now. He just needs Spock. When the world is an absolute fucking mess, like it is right now, he just needs Spock.

“Okay, that sounds like something Jackson would do,” Jim says as he dusts himself off one-handed because he really does not feel like letting go again. (Hey, they are alone, he can be as needy as he
needs to be with the almost hand sex.)

“In an encrypted letter to me, Carol stated that she discovered a file detailing Jackson’s plan including the fact that David was originally a twin.” Jim just rolls his eyes at the fact that Jackson is acting like such a stereotypical cinematic villain. Really, you would think by now that the evil guy would know not to put his or her plans in writing. The guy makes Jim look like a really humble person. “However, she did not include this file but merely suggested the possibility that she left other important information in David’s stuffed bear named after me.” Jim has the urge to groan and shake his head. Seriously, did his other self only think with his dick? Carol is dead and Jim still finds her annoying.

“Now, I got to read this,” Jim says, removing Spock’s PADD from his pocket. (Maybe Jim includes a little unnecessary "touching," but it’s been days since the last time they had sex.) He quickly scans the letter as they keep walking (and touching a little more than what they would normally do during working hours). He finds a scenario where someone like Jackson manipulated things so that Spock would get Carol pregnant more viable than the alternative. Of course, Jim doesn’t believe that Carol was completely innocent. He’s not sure that he believes the sincerity of her apology either. However, there’s no point in being this bitter, not when he needs to put David first. And if the cute little boy with his husband’s ears really is the result of Jackson’s megalomania (which is possible), then their main priority is keeping David safe. Figuring out what the hell is going on will have to come second, including finding out if Jackson has David’s biological little brother on ice somewhere.

The message at the end bothers him. Jim just knows Carol was referring to other Spock. He likes other Spock except when the man is being extremely cryptic or extremely hypocritical. Whatever Gaila found in the basement is obviously something that other Spock has come across before which basically means he’s not going to say anything.

“I think, depending on what we find, we are going to have to play along with Jackson’s little diplomatic ferrying thing because we’re going to need to talk to other you about this nightmare, and this is one deep space conversation I don’t want intercepted by Jackson,” he tells his husband stoically.

“He is also the only entirely trustworthy source that can tell us exactly how David was created,” Spock says in a very matter-of-fact way that pretty much tells Jim that he is angry as hell at his other self. That happens a lot.

“What are you talking about?” Jim asks, slightly confused.

Spock’s response is to quickly grab his PADD from Jim and pull up a file that looks like a diary entry before handing it back to him. Jim quickly looks over the file that Spock pulled up. This leads to him tripping again. From a quick scan, Jim learns two things; first, other Spock really has a mind meld kink. Second, other Spock already knew about the existence of his ‘nephew’ and did not say a fucking thing.

“The geriatric asshole knew! Is it wrong that I want to knock your other self unconscious?” Jim asks with rage in his voice. He is livid. Actually, he is feeling “the only thing that’s going to get me to calm down is getting fucked against the wall” anger. That is never a good thing, especially when they cannot have sex.

“I am experiencing similar emotions,” Spock says, and Jim can pick up the same type of rage from his husband. He is also picking up on the same type of lust.
“See, this is why I love you,” Jim says, deciding to completely forget their normal rules of behavior and start kissing Spock in a “will be receiving a human hand job up against a tree in two minutes” sort of way. Okay, so he and Spock may be engaging in that type of behavior, or they would be if they didn’t come across the device that was most likely used to get the assailants on and off the planet without a ship. The whole thing involves falling into some brush because he loses his balance due to his pants already being around his ankles. Fortunately, he has enough time to get “presentable” again before anybody else shows up to investigate.

X

Chris isn’t that surprised that Amanda shows up on his doorstep 30 minutes before he is to meet Winona and the toddler for breakfast with the kids. Amanda knows something was up last night before they even get to the car. She does not say anything because of the four-year-old in the vehicle; she just gives him the look. It is weird how the two can practically communicate without words. He never really had that before, not even with his number one.

After a dinner where the girls and Amanda insist he stay because she hates the idea of him eating another replicated dinner alone, Amanda begins her interrogation. If section 31 did exist (and thanks to Jackson’s paranoia regarding Jim finding out anything at all, Chris is almost positive it does), Amanda should be their lead interrogator. He is glad the kids are busy doing homework so they don’t hear Amanda cursing, screaming, and crying (sometimes simultaneously). She is just as pissed at Winona for her disappearing act as he is because it hurt Jim so profoundly. She probably knows more than anyone how much Jim craves a mother figure in his life. Despite Amanda’s wishes, Jim does not call her ‘mom’ because it hurts him too much to say that word.

However, despite her anger, she is also more sympathetic or perhaps empathetic than he is. In addition to her duties with the Council, Amanda is still an advocate for the victims of domestic violence, sexual abuse, and sexual slavery. She is probably more familiar with the type of situation that Winona went through then he ever was.

“Don’t get me wrong, I’m mad at her, but she did what she had to do to protect her child. I’m not saying that she made the best choice, because I think there were better options that would have done less damage. I mean, Jim cannot even talk about his mom without almost crying. For years he’s been blaming himself for not protecting her from Frank,” Amanda starts, almost on the brink of another rant.

“I thought you were trying to defend her. Yes, she protected Georgia, but she abandoned Jim,” Chris explains with annoyance as he grabs her hand. Sometimes physical touch is the only way to get Amanda to calm down.

“I’m not defending her, I’m just explaining the situation. Chris, I’ve seen her file and I’ve talked to Jim. It was bad. It’s a miracle that he didn’t actually kill her.” At that moment, a teary-eyed Amanda passes him a PADD containing graphic images of a battered, bruised, and bloodied Winona. He’s not sure how Amanda got her hands on this information, but the woman is related by blood or marriage to two of the three top hackers in Starfleet, and the third sees Amanda as her personal savior. Really, it wouldn’t be that hard for her to get any file that she wanted.

It is impossible for him not to cry at what he sees. He is quickly enveloped by the scent of Amanda’s perfume and her soothing touch as she wraps her arms around him.

“I get that it was bad,” Chris whispers into her shoulder. “But that did not give her a right to abandon one child to save the other. How can you love one child more than the other?”
“You don’t and I don’t think she does. It’s obvious she ended up in San Francisco for a reason. She was always asking me and T’Pay about Jim. She didn’t abandon Jim, she just had to prioritize,” Amanda tells him as she pulled away and Chris snorts. “Think of it this way, if the house was on fire and both Spock and T’Pay were inside, who would I help?” Amanda asks, but it seems like such a stupid question. The answer is obvious.

“You would help T’Pay, because Spock is an adult and he can take care of himself.” As he says the words, he gets it. Jim was an adult and Georgia wasn’t even born at the time. She had to protect Georgia and hope that Jim could protect himself. It had nothing to do with which child she cared about the most, but rather making a choice that would allow for the greatest chance of survival for the greatest amount of people.

“Exactly.”

“You spend way too much time around Vulcans” he jokes as she gives him the most beautiful smile in the world.

So, no. It does not surprise him that she shows up at his door even though he never asked her to come with him. Amanda knows what he needs without him even asking. In this instance, he needs her because he isn’t sure he can face Winona or rather Whitney alone, especially if she decides not to show up.

Xxx

Much to his surprise, Winona/Whitney does show up with Georgia and her pediatric psychologist wife, who doesn’t even look old enough to have gone to med school, let alone be practicing. The first part of the breakfast goes fine except when Winona starts crying when Amanda gives her a copy of Jim and Spock’s wedding pictures. Of course, Amanda’s empathy for Winona only takes her so far and it is obvious to Chris that she takes the gloves off as soon as the children are in the playroom being watched by T’Pen.

“Why did you leave?” Her words are clear and Vulcan direct.

“You’re definitely one for the direct approach, Dr. Grayson. I think I see what Chris likes about you,” Winona says with a smirk. Of course, the fact that she grabs her barely legal wife’s hand displays her true nervousness. It’s something that Jim does. Whenever he is nervous, he puts on his best cocky smirk, but secretly grabs Spock’s hand under the table for reassurance.

“Chris is just a friend,” Amanda replies, but there is a hint of pink to her cheeks that he never noticed before. “Also, call me Amanda, since my son is married to your son. Because of that, I think I have a right to know why you thought it was in everybody’s best interest including Jim’s, to assume that you were dead,” Amanda says directly.

“I didn’t have a choice. He already killed Sam. He told me he would do the same to Jim and Georgia. If he thought I was dead, he would not go after Jim. He was safer that way.”

Chris’s response is to scoff, and Amanda starts acting like the Vulcan councilmember that she is.

“But why didn’t you let Jim know the truth? Do you have any idea what a mess Jim was after your death? If I didn’t find him in that bar that night you may have two dead sons,” Chris practically yells at her, but Amanda places her hands on him to keep him calm.

“If you didn’t find my son in that bar that night, none of us would probably be alive right now. I told you to watch over him and you did. Because of you, he is a happily married, highly productive
member of Starfleet.” ‘Whitney’s’ flattery does little to dissolve his anger.

“Because of him, I have more gray hairs than I should at this age. Yes, he and his husband are the most productive team in Starfleet, but he almost lost his ship once because of their attachment,” he screams in annoyance without giving her the details that he feels she does not deserve.

About a month after Admiral Marcus was ‘asked’ to ‘retire’ for doing something so bad that the details are too classified for even Chris to know, Jim got in trouble for violating the Prime Directive. Basically, somebody (probably Jackson) believed it was a good idea to send a ship with a first officer who had a complete psychotic break involving conversations with personifications of his human side after the destruction of his planet to watch another planet die due to a volcano erupting. Spock did something to try to keep the planet's population from dying, things went badly, and, to save Spock, Jim violated the Prime Directive.

Spock and Jim reported the entire incident (at the strong suggestion of the ship psychologist), and Jackson tried to convene a secret tribunal to send Jim back to the Academy and have Spock reassigned to his special pet project that he took over from Marcus. Fortunately, with Marcus now gone, Admiral Lume was then the highest ranking member of the admiralty, and she informed Chris and Elder T’Pau of what he was planning to do. By the end of the entire incident, the Vulcan elder convinced the two sane members of the tribunal that it was perfectly logical to violate the Prime Directive if it saved an entire civilization, conveniently causing everybody to forget that the violation actually occurred because Jim refused to let Spock die. (Considering what was most likely going on with Jackson’s pet project, Chris can’t help but wonder if Jonathan was trying to use the incident to manipulate Jim and Spock for his own purposes. Anybody could tell it was a bad idea to send Enterprise on that type of mission.)

Jackson was furious for months after that and almost punched Chris out when Chris showed up to his surprise wedding/renewing of vows (that he had no choice but to attend) with Amanda two weeks after his evil scheme fell apart. The marriage was a surprise in the sense that nobody believed any woman would ever agree to marry Jackson, let alone the lovely yet mysterious Dr. Jane Harrison, especially a month after her brother became the one fatality during the ‘London incident’ i.e. the thing that led to Marcus's "retirement” if rumors were to be believed. Chris doesn’t even know how Marcus’ new favorite died because everything that happened in London fell under the category of too classified for Chris to know without a need to know. He just knew it was related to the current mess.

“He almost lost his ship because he’s terrified of losing the one piece of family that he has left and would do anything, including violating the Prime Directive, to save Spock. Maybe if he knew you were alive he wouldn’t be so reckless.” Amanda actually starts to snort in response to Chris’ words, along with Winona’s child bride.

“Love makes people do crazy things, from violating ridiculous regulations to faking your own death to keep both of your children safe. You don’t know what Whitney went through with the ass,” Kayah reprimands.

“I’ve seen her after he turned a woman who is an excellent shot into his own personal punching bag. You did not beg her to leave only to have her refuse. You’re still a kid. I was there, you weren’t; don't judge me,” Chris says dismissively.

“I’m almost 40. I just look like I’m 25. I come from a long line of people who look like they are in their 20s well into their 40s. In my line of work, I've seen everything,” Kayah says with annoyance. “Don’t tell me what I don’t know because I know more than you think I do. I’ve kissed every single scar that the prick left behind, including the initials that he carved on her inner thigh.
I’m the one who comforts her when she wakes up screaming, clutching her stomach from a Frank-induced nightmare. I’m the one who puts her to bed after she goes through half our liquor collection on Jim or Sam’s birthday.” The hot tears are pricking her eyes at that moment. “Don’t tell me I don’t know what he did, because I know better than you. Don’t blame her for making the only choice she could when nobody else was around.” Her words make him angry and guilty at the same time, a remarkable feat for someone who really does not know him.

“Kayah, not right now,” ‘Whitney’ reprimands her wife.

“Oh, I will say this right now. Neither one of you has any right to judge her. Maybe if you were a better friend, Chris, she wouldn’t have had to fake her own demise to get away from Mister Sociopath crime boss.”

“I wasn’t there because dear Whitney wouldn’t let me be there. I tried to convince you to leave but you were-- just too afraid to make a damn move,” he argues, looking directly at ‘Whitney’.

“I did what I had to do and I’m not going to apologize for not waiting for you to show up to rescue me once I realize that my ex was a key player in some interplanetary crime syndicate and was using the fact that he was the house husband of a war widow as his cover. You have no right to lecture me about letting fear control you since you missed out on your first love because you were too afraid to break the fucking rules. May I suggest you not make the same mistake this time?” Winona says, looking from Amanda to him. Her glare is accusing. He doesn’t love Amanda, he can’t. She is just a friend (and maybe if he keeps repeating that he might just believe it himself.)

“I don’t have time for this right now. I have Jackson emailing me every five minutes because your son came across his 'special project'. Because of what he stumbled across, Enterprise's current mission has been officially cut short and he will be returning to Earth in less than a week with a ship filled with diplomats. Maybe by that time, we can all be in a room together without screaming at each other. If you are not planning on skipping town, I think that's when we should tell Jim.” His tone is annoyed and bitter. He also doesn’t wait for her response; instead, he finds himself out in the play room.

T’Pay seems to come alive with little Georgia. It seems only appropriate that Jim and Spock’s little sisters found each other without any knowledge of their brothers' universe defying relationship. For a moment, he wonders if Georgia knows that she has a big brother somewhere in the universe. He also wonders how Jim would feel about having a half-sister that was only a couple years older than his brand-new stepson. He wonders if the real reason he’s not going to tell Jim this news until he gets back to earth is he’s afraid of his reaction.

Amongst the 99 messages that he receives, several are from an angry Jim asking if he knows anything about Jackson's wife without an explanation as to why he needs this information. The only things he can give him were her maiden name and a few things that he knew about her deceased brother, John. The rest of the message basically tells him in very vague terms that stolen technology was used to effect the escape of whoever killed everyone on the planet, and Jackson was probably as dirty as the little child off to his left that is currently covered in blueberry pancake syrup and whipped topping. There are also several lines about Jim not taking the death of his brother very well, mostly because the communications officer that intercepted Jim’s call yesterday had a very big mouth. After this disastrous breakfast, Chris just knows that he will be spending this Saturday in his office involved in a very long deep space conversation with Jim and Spock.

Chris is brought out of his less than pleasant thoughts as Amanda sits down next to him. She doesn’t try to discuss what happened. Instead, she just wordlessly grabs his hand. His mind instantly calms. There was only one other woman who could bring him peace with just a simple
touch. But she is gone now and Amanda is just--- everything. She is everything. She came with him to this thing without asking and didn’t push him to talk about everything. She silently gave him support when he needed it the most. Actually, she gave her support even when he pushed her away, like during those first few months when he was getting used to being in a wheelchair. She is beautiful when she is determined. She is beautiful.

At that moment, Chris looks up to see Winona/Whitney smirking at him from across the playground. Her fingers are firmly entwined with those of her wife in a gesture that mimics him and Amanda. It is at that moment that he realizes Winona is right. He is in love with Amanda, and she can never just be his friend.

Shit!

To be continued
Jonathan Jackson

Chapter Notes

Thank you to everybody who read or reviewed the last chapter. Waiting until the movie was available for home viewing was a good thing. The plan for this chapter change completely. I don’t think I used any direct quotes, but some of the lines do cover the exact same ground.
Special thank you to Mimi Jones for proofreading this chapter.
Inspired by Jimmy Loving by Macklemore & Ryan Lewis
Specific lyrics from the song did not inspire this chapter, but rather the overall theme of getting to look behind the curtain and realizing that things are not really what you think they should be, and the idiots in charge really are that corrupt.

“If you say I told you so, I'm going to hurt you,” Nyota tells Leonard as they made their way to the research center. Whoever came up with the brilliant idea to build the place were beaming in and out is impossible was an idiot. It was probably Jackson because the man is just that paranoid and crazy. Jim and Spock are taking a different path, allegedly to look for any evidence of how the assailants got off the planet. She personally thinks it’s either an excuse to not be around her or to have sex in the woods, probably both. She should have had both stay on the ship. The whole point of her being captain right now was to avoid the appearance of impropriety. But she has known both men long enough to know that was not going to happen.

“I wasn’t going to say anything about that,” he says in a way that tells her he was going to do just that. “It’s not your fault that Jim ended up speaking with a communications officer with a big mouth. He will forgive you eventually.”

“Probably as soon as he gets some quality Spock time,” she says without an ounce of sarcasm.

“I assume that’s why you let him and the hobgoblin go off exploring on their own. With a two-year-old in their bed, that’s going to be the only way they’re going to get to do anything, anytime soon,” Leonard quips.

“Maybe, I don’t want to talk about Jim,” she tells him with an annoyed sigh as they kept moving. The security teams are at least 100 m away, looking for any signs of how the assailants got off the planet.

“We could talk about why you banned one of my PAs from coming down here?” he says, giving her the look. She hates the look.

“Because Christine is too close to what’s going on. Did you know that Carol was her BFF? She knew all about baby David and didn’t say a damn thing to Spock about it.” Her hands balled up instinctively as she remembers Christine’s confession.

“Shit,” he says before she launches into a 20 minute rant on everything Christine said regarding the David’s situation. They were close enough that they can see the research center off in the distance by the time she was done screaming about her so-called friend.
“She should have told us what the hell we were getting into. She’s supposed to be my friend yet she lied to me,” she practically growls.

“I’m sure Jim is probably saying something very similar about you right now,” Leonard mumbles under breath.

“It’s not the same thing. I didn’t lie to Jim. I was just trying to… Keep him safe,” she tells Leonard, after taking a few seconds to choose the right words. “She lied to us. She kept Spock’s son from him. She lied to me.”

“So that’s what you are most upset about,” he says, giving her thoughtful look.

“It seems like everybody I trust screws me over eventually. So what’s the point of trying anymore?” she tells him, throwing her hands up in the air.

“I felt that same way after the divorce. I shut down inside. Then I ended up sitting next to this complete asshole on the shuttle ride to be inducted into my own personal hell and threw up on this pretty girl’s shoes. They gave me another reason to try.” They are closer to each other than they should be, only mere centimeters apart. His hand is on hers and honestly she can’t remember when he started touching her. She can feel his breath on her face, because he is looking down at her. He is looking at her with such reverence that she’s having trouble breathing. It feels like that moment at her birthday party and she wants to close those few centimeters. Except this time, she can’t blame it on the alcohol, or the influence of the horny couple next door. Although she is sure that Jim probably has his hand on Spock’s dick by this point. She’s okay with it because she has known Jim long enough to know that the only way to keep him calm right now is probably sex. He is less of a prick post orgasm.

“I hate to interrupt but you need to get in there, captain,” Gaila says, smirking. “You can make out after you look at what we found in the basement.” Leonard just gives her his glare of death as they walked into a room that still looks like a crime scene. The security team has yet to catch up, but she didn’t have time to wait. Honestly, the less that see this, the better.

All the bodies have been recovered, but it’s hard to miss a bullet hole in a console screen. That scene was repeated throughout the space. There wasn’t too much they could do because Jackson’s team wanted the scene as undisturbed as possible. It was a disaster area. What was not stolen was destroyed. Even personal electronics were missing, including David’s Little Geniuses PADD, which the two-year-old was not happy about. Seriously, who takes a children’s toy?

She’s personally shocked that Spock was able to access any of the security footage because the majority of it was gone. Actually, the camera near the kitchen/café was the only thing that survived, probably because nobody would think that there was a security camera there.

“Just explain what is going on,” Nyota says, not having the energy to be formal.

“I was trying to figure out exactly why Spock could still access the security footage for the kitchen area remotely. Everything else is gone, including the security feeds for the living quarters. It turns out it was on a different system that was not destroyed by the attackers, a really secure system, and the fact that Spock could actually get in is a small miracle. It’s just better if I show you.” She says as they follow her back to the room where they found David.

“Why are we in the kitchen?” She asks, just as Gaila orders a grilled cheese, fontina and white cheddar on honey wheat bread with apple slices inside, from one of the replicators. She remembers that was Spock’s favorite from her stupid schoolgirl with a crush phase. “This is not the time for a sandwich. You and Scotty are so alike it’s scary sometimes,” she quips as the wall in front of her
suddenly disappears, and there was an elevator in its place.

“How did you know to do that?” Nyota asks, in shock.

“Trying to recover data from completely wrecked equipment makes you hungry and I just happened to be lucky enough to crave Amanda’s signature grilled cheese. Fortunately for us the code was probably chosen by Spock’s crazy ex-girlfriend. Actually, her involvement may also be the reason why Spock could access the system remotely and his special program can unencrypt everything.” Gaila says as she signaled for the other two to step inside.

“It now makes sense why Carol was heading to the kitchen. She was going to make a break for the secret bunker down there.” Leonard mumbles.

“However, when she realized that they would just follow her down here, she went with plan B. Trust me; she would not want them to find this place.” Gaila says, getting off the elevator into a space that was several times larger than the lab upstairs with multiple rooms. It was obvious that they were doing very different research down here. “Let’s just say from what I’ve glanced at before calling you down here, I don’t think any of this is legal and I figured that out before Jorge discovered the room filled with frozen bodies.

“Weapons?” she asks, remembering the rumors about what was supposedly happening in London before the January 26, 2259 incident.

“In a sense, if you consider death an enemy,” she says as they walked into a room with 70 frozen bodies and Gaila explains everything they found. Her stomach begins to fill with dread as she realizes that her and Jim’s earlier speculation that baby David was brought back from the dead by something they were working on now seems highly likely.

XX

“Is he still alive?” Nyota asks as he scans the body. He needs to be in Doctor Mode right now, not thinking about what Gaila interrupted. He almost kissed her again and this time he was completely sober and in the middle of a mission. They need to stop doing this. She avoided him for days after the last time, and she was just starting to speak to him again (most likely because she pissed off Jim and Christine had pissed her off).

“Technically, yes, but if I use the wrong sequence to revive him, it will probably kill him. I’m not familiar with this at all,” he can be honest with her with the fact that he doesn’t know what he’s doing in regards to the popsicle people.

“Because it’s something new that they were developing here?” she asks, with worry in her voice. She’s right to worry.

He’d barely looked at the files pertaining to the “super serum” that they were developing and he was already concerned. Any file that mentions a drug’s ability to resurrect tribbles and Human-Vulcan children who probably died of SIDS is reason enough to be terrified, add in the fact that it alters their DNA afterwards, and you have a recipe for disaster. The fact that they were doing research that was technically illegal on earth makes him sick, or what would have been illegal if they were studying the human genome. Due to the destruction of Vulcan, there’s probably some exception for any type of research that can result in more Vulcan babies being born by whatever means necessary. He has a feeling he did not want to look at what’s behind door number three of this place.

“Darling, this is anything but new, this is how people traveled pre-warp,” he should really stop the
pet names, but he uses it anyway, probably to calm her down. He doesn’t really know. “Our friend here is a good 300 years old.”

“This is what they used in the late 20th century, I think. I’ve seen pictures before.” Nyota just looks at her strangely as she speaks.

“I am an engineer, even if you only see me as one of the best hackers on the ship. I know this stuff,” she says defensively.

“Okay, I had this “ex-boyfriend” that was kind of obsessed with the late 20th century space technology, the Eugenic Wars, the 22nd century Augment Crisis, genetic engineering, and Augments in general. He spent a lot of time researching this urban legend about 80 something Augments escaping Earth right after the Eugenics Wars in a ship with this type of technology that was supposedly floating in space somewhere. He said he wanted to find it on a mission someday. It was the whole reason why he joined Starfleet. That’s why he was trying to convince his mentor to do a deep space mission before everything fell apart with Vulcan being destroyed and everyone figuring out that some of the admiralty were assholes. He wanted his ship to have that mission but it sort of went to us instead.” This guy already sounded like a real nut job, and he wouldn’t be surprised if the guy had something to do with this special project.

“Do you remember who this ex-boyfriend was?” he asked Gaila.

“I can’t remember his name but he was a captain and he is a little younger than Chris.” Both he and Nyota looked at each other obviously coming to the same conclusion.

“Was his name Jonathan?” Nyota asked.

“Maybe, I really don’t remember. It started with a J, it may had been Jack or something like that. Honestly, I don’t want to remember the creepy guy’s name. He was a bit of a jerk and I’m pretty sure he only had sex with me because of my planet of origin. He kind of had a non-human fetish. He was obsessed with Commander Spock and not in an ‘I want to have a threesome with him’ sort of way, but an ‘I wish I could study him way’. He said he was the one example of how genetic engineering could be a good thing.” Gaila’s words made Nyota visibly shiver.

“Shit,” he mumbles under breath. Getting to study Spock’s kid would definitely be some sort of prize for the sociopath. From what he’s heard and read so far, Carol was coerced into coming here because David was ill and Jackson promised to save him. As a father, he would do the same thing. The woman died for her son. Working on illegal experiments would seem like a small price to pay. He has seen firsthand what people will do for the sake of their children.

“I think he already did,” Nyota says as she pulled up an image on her PADD. It was of their least favorite Admiral at his wedding. “Is this the guy?”

“I think so, kind of. I slept with a lot of people that year. I only remember this stuff about his special research project because he was really obsessed. It was like one of the only things he would talk about, that and hybrid children. I kind of think he wanted me to be the mother of his half human half Orion child.” The thought even made him shiver.

“It’s okay, we all make bad choices. I don’t think any less of you even if I think half the time that Leonard and I were the only people at the Academy you did not have sex with.” Nyota says, giving her a supportive hug and Leonard really hopes that Gaila won’t correct her wrong assumption.

“That’s only because you’re really straight and emotionally unavailable;” she says in a joking way, but there was something else behind her words. “I never slept with Jim and Spock because Spock
will not agree to a threesome. I did sleep with Leonard but that was before I knew you were kind of in love with him.” His first response is to glare at her. Why did she have to mention something that happened three years ago?

“I am not in love with --You slept with her?” she says turning around to look at him with the type of death glare that his ex-wife used on him regularly.

“You are kind of proving my point right now,” Gaila mumbles under breath.

“This isn’t the time for this conversation.” He says, trying to get back to examining the Human Popsicle in front of him.

“You slept with my friend?” She asks again. At this point he knew it was in his best interest not to answer that question.

“It was a couple of days after Jim and Spock’s wedding. Jim set us up but it didn’t really work out. It didn’t mean anything, it was just sex,” Gaila says, shrugging. “It’s no big deal, especially if you’re not in love with him, like you were claiming a minute ago. Although, if you actually are in love with him, then I can understand why you’re mad.”

“I’m not- I’m- it’s not- I” Nyota stammers. Any time you reduce a linguistics expert to singular syllable words you know the situation is bad. Fortunately, her communicator chirps at that moment, resulting in her leaving to find Jim and dragging the security officers that finally showed up with her.

“Did you have to tell her about that?” he grumbles at the woman in front of him as soon as Nyota was on her way out of the complex.

“Yes. This little game you two have going on is driving me crazy. I hope you two would’ve finally fucked at her birthday party but obviously it didn’t happen. You’re in love with her. She’s in love with you. I mean every time you get hurt on a mission she practically falls to pieces. Can you just both fuck now? All of this sexual tension between you two is bad for my health. I would like to have this resolved before I’m back to Earth dealing with Amanda dancing around Chris,” she says, giving him an exasperated look.

“It’s not that simple,” he says because this woman knew him too well and denial will not work on her.

“It’s never that simple with humans, because you make it so complicated,” she practically yells at him.

“Look, we don’t have time for this. I’m sending for my medical staff to deal with our frozen friends so I can focus on the files that you have recovered and decrypted. I only want myself or Spock to look at the research data, no one else.” He loves his team, but this is just too much. Nothing going on here seems remotely legal. The fewer people that know what’s really going on, the better.

“I already made a copy to a freestanding PADD that’s not on the network. Nobody else down here knows what I found.” Well, at least she picked up something from the Jim Kirk School of Paranoia.

“That works for me. In the meantime, try to remember as much as you can about your ex-boyfriend’s extracurricular activities and stay out of your best friend’s sex life. You have other things to worry about, like recovering the files from upstairs.” God, it’s like having to deal with another Jim Kirk sometimes, except this one doesn’t have a Vulcan husband to keep her from doing
“Nyota has a very active sex life, which is why I don’t get why she was so upset about something that happened more than three years ago, if she wasn’t in to you. It’s the love life that is her problem. Ever since the prick, she keeps falling in love with guys who are emotionally unavailable like Jim’s honey bear. Her freaking out proves there’s something there,” she argues.

“Back off Gaila,” he tells her again.

“She’s my best friend and we are in the middle of this grand conspiracy of the Federation. I need to do something to keep my mind off of everything. I play matchmaker when I’m nervous.”

He decided it was in his best interest to ignore her as he tells the rest of his team to get down here now. He had more important things to worry about like the 70 bodies down here that are currently in popsicle mode and the zombie tribbles in the next room.

XXX

“I can’t believe you,” Nyota says as soon as she arrives to his location. “You were supposed to meet me at the research facility, not suck off your husband in the middle of the woods. Don’t deny it. Your neck is practically one giant hickey right now and your lips are really swollen.” He would be offended by that if it wasn’t kind of true. But hey, thanks to their break to “unwind” a little before having to spend quality time at a crime scene they now know how the attackers got off the planet.

“Hey, I’m supposed to be mad at you,” he says, giving her a mock offended look.

“You set up Gaila with Leonard.” Okay, he wasn’t expecting her to mention that effort. It does explain why she’s extra snippy. She’s so clueless about her Bones related feelings. It’s funny and frustrating at the same time.

“Three years ago and it didn’t work out. How did you even find out about that?” he asks.

“You don’t really want to know the particulars of that conversation. Basically some time at the Academy, Jackson slept with Gaila, most likely because he wanted her to be the mother of his future hybrid children.” The scary thing was Nyota was being completely serious. Considering all the things that Jackson has done (that they know of) finding out he was sleeping with a cadet really doesn’t shock Jim at all. Sometimes he thinks that he and Pike were the only people in Starfleet who did not grossly violate several rules about Captain sleeping with their subordinates.

“She did not remember his name but she did remember that he was obsessed with Spock and some urban legend about 80 Augments that escaped Earth after the eugenics war. There are currently 70 300 year old individuals who probably match that description frozen in the compound. In addition, we have lots of research regarding how to resurrect the dead and how to make a better Vulcan.”

Jim is not surprise; it’s about what he expected from Carol’s cryptic message. The fact that it’s Federation sanction, or at least supposed to be Federation sanction, makes him nauseous. This isn’t the Starfleet that he joined. They were supposed to be discovering new worlds, not whatever the hell this was.

“That kind of makes sense considering the email that Carol sent to Spock via Christine in the event of her untimely death. The man was obsessed with that sort of thing. He arranged for Spock and Carol to meet, pushed Carol to start ‘dating’ Spock, despite the fact she was underage, and possibly
switched her birth control out for fertility drugs. I’m sure the sick fuck tossed in some aphrodisiacs, just for good measure. I’ll give you the rest of the unsavory details later.”

After the volcano incident, he has learned that if he doesn’t want to end up before a committee, it’s probably best for him to step back from any mission where anybody could argue that he is emotionally compromised. Nyota needs to be captain right now. He’s been a captain long enough to know that Jackson was going to use this against him despite the dirt they had on the man.

“Oh my God, she was not even 17 yet.” Nyota says, actually sounding sympathetic towards Carol for once.

"Also included in the cryptic message was a warning not to ‘defrost’ anything in the basement without talking to Spock’s ‘brother’ first,” he told her.

“Spock doesn’t have a brother.”

“Actually,” Jim was about to mention something about Spock’s deceased half-brother, but thought better of it. Everybody deserves to keep their own deep dark family secrets and he can totally understand why Spock wanted to pretend he was an only child until Amanda adopted the girls.

“From a genetic point of view, Spock is a twin.”

“Elder Selek,” she says, getting it without him saying too much.

“Exactly,” he confirms.

“That means we need to go along with Jackson’s little diplomatic ferrying mission.” She says with a sigh.

"I knew I chose the right person to take over,” he says with a smile. “That’s what I would do, especially considering what we found on the way to meet you.”

"So you were not taking a ‘break’ with Spock?” The way she said the word ‘break’ it sounded dirty.

“Hey technically, I’m on paternity leave,” he tells her defensively.

“I’m going to take that as a yes,” she says with a roll of her eyes.

"We uncovered a portable trans-warp beaming device and their destination pretty much confirms all of my suspicions about who was responsible for this massacre. It's not good," he tells her ominously.

"As long as it’s not the Klingon home world we are good. It’s not is it?” Everything would be so much easier if the enemy was the Klingons.

"No, that would be easier to deal with. The coordinates are for London and more specifically the former site of the Kelvin Memorial archives or at least someplace really close," Jim says gravely.

"Fuck, this was an inside job. We are on our own for this."

“I think we are," he tells her not making eye contact.

To be continued.
In hindsight, Chris had joined Starfleet because a certain arrogant and narcissistic recruiter convinced him that someday he could be the one calling the shots and making a real difference. Chris did not want this for the sake of power, but because he realized very early on that there was only one way you could really change anything and that was to be in charge. For the last three years, he thought that he was making a difference, but he was wrong. While he was making Starfleet a better place for persons with disabilities, individuals of a certain age, and families, some extremely crazy shit was happening on planet NCX17. Frozen bodies, genetically modified Vulcan embryos, and a half-Vulcan kid who should be a quarter-Vulcan who had been resurrected from the dead were all happening on said planet, and that’s just what Jim and company were willing to talk about via highly encrypted non-Starfleet email. If this was the relatively mild stuff, Chris didn’t want to know the big stuff.

Chris spent Saturday exchanging very cryptic emails with Jim and Acting Captain Uhura. In general, most of what they were talking about was disturbing. Seriously, why would somebody take a children’s toy and how exactly did they get the funding for what Jim is referring to as project ‘build a better Vulcan’? More importantly, how the hell had he and his fellow admirals miss whatever was happening on that planet? It was enough to make him wonder why he was doing this job. (At least this disaster distracted him from thinking about his breakfast revelation of an Amanda nature along with any other Amanda centered thoughts.)

After about 20 emails where he convinced Jim that he knew nothing about whatever the hell Jackson was doing, they formulated a plan to deal with this. Jim and Acting Captain Uhura agreed to follow Jackson’s bazaar orders to play diplomatic ferry to the Vulcan delegation for reasons that Jim will not mention explicitly. Chris knows that there must be a reason because Jim Kirk does not
blindly follow orders (the volcano incident being one of the most blatant examples of this). That can be a good thing and a bad thing. This meant that there had to be a reason that Jim was doing this and Chris was not sure if he actually wanted to know that reason. He wasn’t sure he wanted to know any of this or be involved at all, but he had a duty.

His job was to discover as much as possible about Jackson’s wife. Jim asked him to do this after making the troubling discovery that neither Jane nor John Harrison existed electronically before September of 2258. Chris refused to ask his stepson about the woman, but he was troubled because the things that he thought should be in her file were not. It was common knowledge that Jane was adopted, because she looked nothing like her brother. He knew that she grew up in London but was born in the country formally known as India and later adopted by the Harrison family. There were no adoption records on file, only a few things about Doctor Jackson’s Starfleet career and education.

The records were so skeletal that even details about John Harrison’s death during the London incident were omitted. Then again, if it wasn’t for the rumor mill, he wasn’t entirely sure how much he would know about that incident. Again, the file only contained very basic background information about his service to Starfleet, but there was nothing before that. To Chris this almost seemed like a carefully constructed cover story reminiscent of the kind of facts that Amanda gave him about “Mrs. River” before they realized she was really Winona. According to Jim, if you dug far enough, there was nothing there. Gaila said it looked like the background that was set up for her after she escaped slavery. Chris didn’t tell them that this is the type of background that certain people in Starfleet are given when they work for a part of Starfleet that technically does not exist.

On the surface, Jane did not seem to be the type of person who would be a secret agent for the supposedly nonexistent division of Starfleet known as Section 31. He really didn’t know her that well, but at least superficially she was sweet and nice to everybody. She was the exact opposite of her husband. She volunteered at cancer wards and a lot of her research centered on trying to find a cure for certain cancers like leukemia that were still not curable. It’s a shame it was one of the few forms of cancer that still exist right now. The survival rate is the highest that it has ever been but there is still no cure.

He only knew about this because Jackson enjoyed bragging about his wife’s philanthropy more than anything else. The dick really did see her as a trophy wife, especially because she looked to be at least 15 years younger than Jackson. He did not know this for sure because her date of birth was unavailable. Trophy wives were not secret agents.

But then there was the wedding incident. Admiral Barnett’s five-year-old daughter was playing too close to the gift table when the tower of presents started to fall down. Jane managed to successfully push the five-year-old out of the way before the wedding presents collapsed on top of the girl. Despite having several very heavy wedding gifts fall on her, the bride didn’t have a scratch, nor was she winded. At the very least, that type of physical performance pointed to enhanced conditioning, especially the type required if you were a member of Section 31.

Chris really did not have any more time to think about this because he was called into Admiral Lume’s office. It was never a good thing when he was called into the Admiral’s office, but it was worse when it happened on his supposed day off. (He and Amanda were supposed to take the girls to the zoo today and he wasn’t going to disappoint the girls, even if that meant being really awkward around Amanda).

The room still seemed intimidating despite the fact that Admiral Lume renovated the space after taking over for Admiral Marcus nearly 2½ years ago. There were pictures of her and her grandchildren everywhere. There was also a picture of her and her husband when they remarried
three months ago. According to the Starfleet rumor mill, it was Dr. Jackson who convinced her to give her husband a second chance. This was in great contrast to her predecessor; Marcus preferred models of starships to mementos of his only child. Maybe that explained why Carol Marcus had so many issues.

Chris felt sorry for her after reading some excerpts from the young woman’s personal journal that were forwarded to him. He was personally planning on punching Jonathan Jackson as soon as he saw the man. The guy was a bastard. What type of monster sets up a 16-year-old girl to get pregnant?

Of course, it was Jackson’s wife that he would see first and she was currently sitting on the couch as she cried into the Admiral’s lap. His eyes were instantly drawn to the bloodstains on her uniform. He had a feeling this was going to be one of those meetings. He knew it was bad because he was called in on a Sunday, but bloody clothing usually meant something much worse.

“What happened?” Chris asked.

“My husband is dead.” Her words were broken and harsh. You could hear the strain in her voice from her crying. It was enough to make him forget about his suspicions from earlier. She was not a possible super spy in that moment but a woman who lost her husband.

“I’m sorry,” Chris said automatically.

“Fake condolences are worse than no condolences,” she said, sitting up and grabbing a tissue from the Admiral’s coffee table. “You hated my husband because the guy was a complete dick to you.” Her accusation was true and full of self-awareness.

Chris had hated Admiral Jackson. But even though the guy was a complete bastard to everybody and was doing only god knew what on that planet, Chris didn’t want him to die. Of course, that was mostly because he wanted the man to stand trial for his crimes against the Federation, but seeing the broken woman in front of him gave Chris a whole new set of reasons.

“You’re right. There wasn’t very much love lost between me and your husband, but I’m sorry for your loss. You don’t deserve it,” Chris told her sincerely.

“Nobody deserves bad things,” Jane said in a whisper just as the Admiral’s assistant walked into the room carrying a black Starfleet uniform.

“This is what was available in the doctor’s size, Admiral,” the man said, handing the uniform to Dr. Jackson.

“That’s fine,” Dr. Jackson said, taking the uniform from the officer.

“Ensign Lee, please show Dr. Jackson where she can clean up and change,” the admiral said, as the assistant directed Dr. Jackson out of the room.

“What happened?” Chris asked, as they moved to a table in the center of the room. “Judging from the blood, I doubt that it was natural causes.”

“It wasn’t,” she said, pulling up a video file. “Admiral Jackson was killed while leaving his place of residence about an hour ago by two assailants dressed as maintenance staff using ancient projectile weapons.”

On-screen were two assailants waiting outside Jackson’s apartment to attack the husband and wife as they left. If it wasn’t for the recent incident, he would be shocked that ancient guns were being
used. They were able to shoot Admiral Jackson at close range before being rendered unconscious by the petite doctor without any weapons. It was obvious that this woman had had combat training and was much stronger than what she looked.

“I know that Jackson has a lot of enemies, but I did not think something like this would happen. Also, just so you know, I had nothing to do with this,” he added as an afterthought.

“You wouldn’t be here if I thought you did. As you can see in the video, Jane quickly incapacitated both assailants before security arrived on the scene. They’re currently at Starfleet medical having their injuries taken care of before they are relocated to protective custody. They were most likely just individuals who were paid for their services. Because this happened on Starfleet property, this is still our jurisdiction and trust me, despite my personal feelings toward Admiral Jackson, this incident will be investigated fully,” the woman said gruffly.

From the video, Chris was pretty sure surgery was going to be involved and he was actually surprised nobody ended up dead from the level of violence inflicted by the woman. This was more than just adrenaline taking over, this woman was well-trained.

“Are there any suspects at this time?” he asked, going into professional mode.

“Dozens, and that’s just the other people who work for Starfleet. As you stated earlier, Jackson was well hated,” she told him with a sad smile.

“Yes, but most people like his wife enough not to do that,” Chris quipped.

“My instincts are telling me this is connected to what happened on NCX17. According to very preliminary reports, it is very likely that the bullet that killed Jackson is of the same caliber as those used during the incident on NCX17. Considering how rare those weapons are now, we can’t just take that as a coincidence,” the admiral said in a way that made him wonder exactly who her source was.

“Enterprise is not supposed to be investigating and I’m not even sure Jackson’s team has arrived yet,” he said in a way that told her full well that he knew that they were. He already had the preliminary report in his inbox. The real preliminary report was enough to make any good soldier lose all faith in Starfleet and the Federation in general.

“Yes, but fortunately for us, Jim Kirk doesn’t follow rules blindly. It makes for a horrible soldier, but a good leader. I only allowed Jackson to send another team to avoid the appearance of impropriety. I’ve been around long enough to know this mess is going to trigger a hearing or five; we have to keep our noses clean. Even if I trust the crew of Enterprise to do a more thorough job of investigation than the group of people that the late Admiral Jackson originally wanted to send, this report is going to need to withstand the scrutiny of a lot of people who are still pissed off about their good friend Johnson spending the rest of his natural life on a prison planet because of Captain Kirk and his husband. My team will be arriving later today to corroborate their findings.”

Chris had known the Admiral long enough to read between the lines. She had let Jackson think that he was in charge, most likely to draw him into a false sense of security to get him to show his true self. Instead, the idiot got two shots to the chest.

“Jim did the same thing by turning command over to Commander Uhura,” he told her.

“Good, so we can both stop lying about the investigation not going on, because we both know it is.”
“You mean we both know that Jackson is – was an evil bastard who did only Lord knows what on that planet. By now you are probably aware of the frozen bodies, zombie Tribbles, and their mission to make a better baby Vulcan, starting with the commander’s surprise child. Did you know that Jackson manipulated two cadets into having sex, one of whom was under age, and doused them with enough fertility drugs to overcome two forms of birth control and Mister Spock’s low fertility status, just to produce a child who lost his mother along with everyone else at the facility when it was attacked?” The Admiral was rubbing her temple at that point in his angry tirade.

“We were not aware of everything he was doing on that planet until about six days ago, when Dr. Jackson came to my husband, who happens to be her distant cousin, after discovering irregularities in the funding and secret projects going on without her or Doctor Marcus’s knowledge, including the project that you are referring to as ‘build a better Vulcan baby’. We were planning on arresting Jackson today with his wife’s full cooperation,” she explained. Chris wanted to ask how the doctor ended up on planet when she was supposed to be at the research facility, but he didn't get a chance to.

“I personally didn’t know the paternity of Doctor Marcus’s child, until a DNA test was conducted on Enterprise, because our lawyers are really good at keeping their mouths shut. I never would have allowed the doctor special permission to have her son with her if I knew there was a suitable alternative. Her partner’s family was unwilling or unavailable, and would you leave a small child with Andrew Marcus, even before…?” Lume stopped herself in the middle of her sentence and changed directions completely. “Your girlfriend would have been a much more suitable guardian under the old rules, without me needing to make an exception to let young David live on Enterprise. Even that would've been preferable to the decision I had to make. He would have been safer here or even on that ship. I suggest you tell Dr. Grayson and her son to get a really good lawyer, because I’m sure the bastard will be working on a way to get David as we speak.” Chris wondered if she purposely referred to Amanda as his girlfriend to keep him from asking any more questions.

The distraction technique did not work this time, although he would be warning Spock and Amanda about the Andrew Marcus threat. He doubted the man would care anything at all about his grandson, except perhaps as a means to hurt other people. Andrew was a manipulative bastard. Once upon a time, Chris had thought that he was the greatest man in the universe. He knew better now.

“I will tell Amanda to speak with the lawyers when we’re at the zoo with the girls today, if I get out of here anytime soon. Although that conversation would probably go better if I knew why you think Andrew Marcus is such an unfit guardian that you were willing to allow a two-year-old to live on a top-secret research outpost,” he asked candidly. When you have known somebody for 20 years, it is easy to be a little more candid.

“It’s nothing that you can actually tell her. However, his year at Laurel rehab center was not just a vacation,” she said pointedly.

“It’s more than that. What the hell happened in London that was so bad that Andrew Marcus was kicked out of Starfleet and you won’t let him anywhere near David Marcus-soon-to-be-Kirk?” Chris questioned.

“It was more than London. I have known Carol for years and it is a miracle she came out as well-adjusted as she did with Andrew Marcus trying to micromanage every single aspect of her life. London was just where everything fell apart, the details of which are classified," she said, not looking at him.
"I have a level VII clearance and because this involves the stepson of a young man I consider family, I think I have a fucking right to know.” Normally Chris would not curse in front of his superior officer even if they had known each other for a very long time, but he felt it was warranted in this case. What was the point of following the rules of Starfleet decorum when nobody else was?

“Andrew Marcus has issues that go beyond those stemming from the attack that led to his wife’s death. He did things that I’m still trying to clean up, including the aspects of the research on NCX17 that were not sanctioned by me. My predecessor had very dirty hands. For years he has been pouring billions of credits into his efforts to militarize Starfleet with the help of his special accountants and friends in high places. Let's just say there was another reason why construction on certain ships ran over budget by millions of credits,” she said, picking up a children’s toy that looked a lot like Enterprise except it was black. “You don’t want to know what we found near Jupiter. We are still trying to figure out a peaceful use for it.

“I probably don’t,” Chris said out loud.

“Yes, but you may have to,” she said warily. "I originally wanted you to take over what we all know as Section 31, once I became the person in charge.”

“There really is a section 31?” he asked with fake innocence.

“You already know that there’s a section 31. You had breakfast with one of our operatives yesterday morning.” How did she know about that?

"Winona?" he asked tentatively.

"I can’t tell you yet, but you’re smart enough to read between the lines. Due to political pressure, I was forced to let Jackson take over Marcus’s pet project after we got rid of the really dangerous stuff. Other aspects of Section 31 stayed under my strict control.”

"So, genetically modified Vulcans are not dangerous?” he asked, trying not to sound flippant.

“Well, when you’re only supposed to be working on a way to increase fertility and genetic diversity, no. Especially in comparison to long-range missiles that can be fired from the edge of the neutral zone to Kronos,* or secretly building giant warships for a war that you hope to trigger with said missiles. Although now I know why he attempted to use Enterprise as the Klingon bate.” The scary thing was he was sure she wasn’t joking.

“Fuck,” he mumbled under breath.

“I pushed my personal misgivings aside because I assumed that we could trust Jackson to not misuse his position because he had no trouble exposing what Marcus was doing after the incident that caused Doctor Marcus to go into premature labor. He said he betrayed his former mentor because he considered her his daughter and did not want to watch her suffer because of her father.” Chris had a feeling that she was only telling him half the story of what happened in London.

"Yes, so much so that he conspired to get her pregnant at 16.” he mumbled under breath, but she still heard him.

"I didn’t know that," she said defensively.

"Did you want to know?” he asked out loud.

“With Jackson now dead, someone else has to take over section 31,” she said, ignoring his question entirely, "and I want that person to be you.”
"No," he answered instinctively. He wanted nothing to do with this mess.

"I mean, with all due respect, I do not want this job. I would consider tendering my resignation, but Amanda would kill me if I left her baby to deal with the wolves alone," he told her.

"And that right there is why I need you to do this. You’re the only person I trust. You already know a whole lot of what is going on and I prefer not to bring anyone else in. I was planning on asking you to take over regardless,“ she said, looking at an image of a dying Jackson on screen. "This just expedites things because we don't need a court-martial anymore."

"It’s really convenient to say that you were going to arrest Jackson and remove him from power now that he’s dead. I don’t know if I can trust you. I don’t know if I can trust Starfleet anymore after this. I mean, you really expect me to believe that the woman I saw in here crying hysterically over her dead husband was going to turn him over to you? Why was she even here? How was she even here? Ships haven’t passed by NCX17 in months." Chris was almost on the verge of yelling at this point.

“You don’t always need a ship, but you already knew that,” Jane said, walking back into the office, most likely referring to how Jim returned to Enterprise after being marooned by his ex-boyfriend on Delta Vega. But she did not give him a chance to ask any questions.

"You don’t trust us and I don’t blame you. After Admiral Marcus manipulated my brother, I can understand how you would be reluctant to trust anyone in Starfleet. You have a good reason not to, so let me give you a reason to trust me and Starfleet again. Admiral Lume changed my mind and convinced me that not everybody in this strange place is Andrew Marcus.”

“I’m not Admiral Marcus,” he told her defensively.

“That’s why I’m telling you this so you will reconsider. Admiral Lume will not tell you about the London incident, but I will. Jane Jackson nee Harrison is not a real person, and neither is John Harrison. My real name is Jaya Nitya Singh.” The last name seemed familiar, but he couldn’t quite place it.

“Jane and John were identities that Marcus created for both of us after he found us and brought us into Starfleet for his own purposes. No, I won’t tell you where he found us. I’m not ready for you to know that yet. I’m not sure if I can trust you to know that yet,” she mumbled under breath.

“Fair enough,” he told her with a sigh of frustration. “Is any of your history real? Are you even from London? I doubt that this John or whatever his real name is, is your brother."

"In a manner of speaking yes, but it was the other way around,“ she said, as her accent changed slightly. “We were raised in the same house in India in the state of -- in what was once the state of Punjab,” she corrected herself, letting him know that part of what she was saying was a lie. “My family raised him.”

“And his real name?” he asked.

“I will not give you that. He made some bad choices in his previous life and was forced to make even worse ones in his second life. I wouldn’t even be alive right now if I had not received a bone marrow transplant from him when I was a child. He made me stronger, more like him without even realizing it. He loves his family, if nothing else,” she explained, almost on the brink of tears again.

“My brother is a tactical and weapons expert. Marcus wanted him to create his weapons of great Klingon distraction, supposedly for the greater good. I’ve already learned that doing things for the
greater good is a very slippery slope that can have dire consequences. To convince John to do what he wanted, he threatened to kill me and the rest of our family. My brother got tired of it and was planning to get us out by whatever means necessary. At the same time, Admiral Jackson, as well as Doctor Marcus, were becoming my friends and I was trying to convince them that Admiral Marcus could not be trusted. In the end, John was impatient and decided to give Admiral Marcus a taste of his own medicine,” she explained.

“He attacked Carol?” Chris asked.

“Yes. He tried to choke her. I couldn’t stand by this time, and let him kill my friend. I couldn’t do it again.” That last part was whispered but he still heard her. “She and her girlfriend were very kind to me. Not many people have been in the past.”

“So you killed your brother to protect Carol and baby David?” he asked.

“No, the death of “John Harrison” was greatly exaggerated for security reasons. He’s being held at a maximum security facility,” the Admiral added.

“He’s in a coma, so to speak. It’s better if he’s sleeping. He’s not well enough for this world.” The way she said it, Chris wondered if this was a medically induced coma.

“Doing what I did was very hard on me and Jonathan helped me through that. And yes, I did fall in love with him. He said that he was the Phil Coulson to my Captain America. I don’t quite get his reference, but I’m sure it was supposed to be romantic. Jonathan was kind of a geek,” she said with a sad smile.

“It was before your time,” Chris said, absently.

“Or maybe it was after,” she mumbled under her breath, “It doesn’t matter. I learned that just because you love somebody doesn’t mean that you let them do bad things, even if they think they’re doing the right thing. I did that during my first life and the consequences were horrible. I need you to help me undo the things my brother and my husband have done.” For a moment, he was sure there was sincerity in her voice.

“I’ll think about it. Unless you need me for the investigation, I promised a certain four-year-old I would take her to the zoo in an hour and I would hate to break my promise, unless absolutely necessary.” He wanted to get out of there as fast as possible and hope that he would not be needed personally for the Jackson investigation.

"No, others will be taking care of that. You will have a different assignment, if you choose to accept it. You’re dismissed,” the Admiral said, and with that Chris was out of the room.

It wasn’t until hours later, when he was being led around the San Francisco zoo by an unbelievably energetic four-year-old Vulcan that things really started to click into place and he remembered exactly where he heard that last name before.

Chapter End Notes

Has anybody figured out why the attackers are using ancient guns? There is a reason.
Footnotes:
*I’m going with the English spelling.
Thank you to everybody who read or reviewed the last chapter. Your reviews keep me going. There is also a slight time jump in this chapter to keep things moving.

Jim normally hated diplomatic babysitting missions. There was nothing worse than the Federation flagship being reduced to a cruise ship for dignitaries, who for some odd reason can’t be bothered to fly commercial. Normally this involves dress uniforms and diplomatic dinners. There’s also lots of fake smiling and having to keep various diplomats who hate each other from killing each other. He really doesn’t want to ever talk about that one time they weren’t so lucky.

Also, Spock doesn’t like it when an ambassador or his or her aid tries to sleep with Jim (this happens a lot). Jim really hates it when it’s the other way around. Really, you would think that people would recognize the intergalactic symbol of “keep the fuck away from my husband” that both Jim and Spock wear on their ring fingers, even when on duty.

Jim is not even going to address diplomatic visits involving Spock’s grandmother, because those were in their own special category of dysfunctional. That really did end up body bag bad. Although, maybe now that they have David, she will back the hell off her 'make me a grandchild now' kick. If anything good can come out of this cluster fuck of a situation, Jim honestly hopes that it is that.

However, Jim is perfectly fine with this particular babysitting mission for a number of reasons. First, they are now officially away from NCX17, currently being referred to by half the crew as the planet of the dead. Honestly, he could not get away from that planet fast enough because every minute they found something else the creepy, and thankfully late, Jonathan Jackson had his team working on.

According to a very high level encrypted teleconference with Admiral Lume, Starfleet didn’t know about 70% of the research going on until Jackson’s wife allegedly decided to play whistle-blower. Jim is skeptical and feels like he’s still being lied to, especially in light of the fact that the 30% of the stuff Starfleet knew about included the 20 century popsicle people.

The fact that the Admiral purposely ordered Enterprise to bring the popsicle people back to Earth, and that she sent a competent team to backup their report, made him willing to give her the benefit of the doubt. Even so, other than Chris, Jim really does not completely trust anyone in the Starfleet hierarchy right now. Too many things were secret, including the fact that they were allegedly using Scotty’s equations to make a gateway of sorts between London and the research facility.

Reason two is Elder Selek a.k.a., Other Spock, is the head of delegation and stated that the normal accoutrements that Starfleet requires that they put on for diplomatic delegations are not necessary. If the head of delegation doesn’t want those things, then nobody else gets those things. Although Spock looks really hot in the dress uniform, Jim hates his.

Okay, there were other reasons Jim is happy that the Vulcan is going to be on board, even though he is really angry at his husband’s other self right now. They still have not managed to decrypt the files found in David’s teddy bear because it is close to something Spock designed, but not quite. However, the diary entries were quite illuminating and just the fact that Other Spock visited Carol
after what happened in London was enough for the Vulcan to incur Jim’s wrath. If you add in the fact that Other Spock melded with her at their wedding, the older Vulcan was in trouble.

The things mentioned in Carol’s diary should be super top secret classified, but at least they now know what really happened in London. Everything Carol told Christine was a carefully constructed story to cover up the fact that Marcus’ new number one tried to kill her because Marcus pissed off the wrong guy. This guy just happens to be the mysterious Jane Jackson’s brother, who has fallen off the radar after everything in London went down. There is not even an arrest record or confirmation of his death. In the diary Carol says that she was told he died, but she doesn’t believe Jackson. That was when her first seeds of doubt were starting to show. Her diary said, “People like Jane and John don’t die that easily. It is obvious that something is going on that Jonathan doesn’t want me to know about other than the fact that my father is an extremely evil person.”

Jim is glad that Other Spock is there so he can fill in the gaps with things he knows from either this time around or the last time he went through everything. Of course, Other Spock probably won’t give them anything useful from the last lifetime, but at least he can confirm that baby David was created the old fashion way (if you don’t count the fertility drugs and aphrodisiacs), and was not bio engineered by the late sadist Jonathan Jackson. (Jim is not even going to bother referring to the bastard by his rank anymore because he’s dead and never really deserved it in the first place.)

The final reason Jim is happy about diplomatic babysitting for the first time in his entire Starfleet career is that he is Captain again. He loves Nyota, when she’s not keeping the fact that Starfleet excavators found his brother’s dead body in the old family barn. Nyota is his best friend and she is one of the most competent and brave Starfleet officers he has ever had the privilege of serving with (except when it comes to dealing with personal things). He has no trouble being under her command, because she knows what she’s doing. Her being in charge these last few days was probably for the best because he really is not in a mental place to deal with all of this shit. If he ever decides to leave Starfleet, and that was starting to become more and more a possibility, he would be perfectly okay leaving Enterprise in her capable hands, but he’s not ready to put up the gold uniform just yet.

He was going stir crazy on his Margarita enforced paternity leave. Now that they were off that planet and the obvious conflict of interest was gone, he can be in charge again. He needs the distraction of the mission, because he can’t decide if he is feeling guiltier about his brother’s death (that he could not prevent) or the death of his stepson’s mother (that he also could not prevent).

Nyota is currently his acting first officer because Spock’s ‘paternity/you found the mutilated body of your ex-girlfriend’ mental health leave was still in effect until the good doctor felt that he was ready. Basically, Nyota was there to keep him from punching Other Spock out for not telling them about David. She didn’t have to physically hold him back, but it was a near thing.

“It is good to see you again, old friend.” Other Spock said as soon as he materialized on the transporter pad. Jim literally had to bite the inside of his cheek not to say something along the lines of ‘oh don’t you dare old friend me, you Vulcan bastard. Why the fuck did you not tell me or Spock about Spock Junior?’ Considering they were surrounded by several other members of the Vulcan delegation and several ensigns that were in charge of getting the delegation settled, this was probably not the best time to air such dirty laundry.

Most of the crew didn’t even know that David was Spock’s child. The official story was that Spock and Dr. Marcus were friends at the Academy and Spock felt it was his place to take care of her son personally, especially because the child was of Vulcan ancestry. It’s in Jim’s best interest to keep his mouth shut until they get Other Spock away from the rest of the delegation.
“You as well.” Jim finally settles on saying that after a few seconds too long. “Simmons and Fitz, please show the rest of the delegation to their quarters. I’m sure that they would want to rest up after several strenuous rounds of negotiations. The commander and I will see to the ambassador, personally.” At his words, the two ensigns quickly ushered the Vulcan delegation out of the room.

“That is not necessary. I am sure you need to see to the other delegations. I will just go along with the others,” Other Spock told him as he attempted to follow the delegation, but Jim stopped him.

“We just have you and the Earth delegation and they are already safely tucked away in their rooms. Besides, you’re not staying in the guest area.” Normally, they had several guest suites readily available for guests of Other Spock’s stature, but Jim is a little annoyed at him, and he’s pretty sure Other Spock would probably like being in one of the ‘officer rooms’ better anyway. Besides, he would feel better with the ambassador just across the hallway. Jim started walking and the others followed behind him as they navigated their way to Jim and Spock’s quarters.

“I am sure you have other duties you must attend to. We can catch up, as you say, later tonight.” Jim wasn’t entirely sure why Other Spock was trying so hard to get away from him.

The David stuff wasn’t public knowledge and Amanda agreed not to tell anyone, including Other Spock, about it. Jim was still trying to repress that particular angry call from his mother in law. They were both in so much trouble for not telling her that she was a grandma. His only consolation was that the elder would be getting the same treatment from Amanda when he arrived on earth. Even though Other Spock was at least three times Amanda’s age, nobody wants to get chewed out by their mother. Amanda was pissed.

“My acting first officer and I are all yours right now. Besides, the ship is in the capable hands of Mister Sulu.” As soon as he said the word ‘acting first officer’, Other Spock’s eyebrows went through the roof.

“Is my nephew okay?” Other Spock asked using the cover story created by Gaila’s hacking skills.

“Spock is fine,” Jim reassured quickly.

“Physically, anyway,” Nyota added under breath. The Vulcan heard her and his eyebrows were even higher now, if such a thing were possible.

“Your use of the term 'fine' has me worried,” the ambassador told the two.

“I don’t know why, I’m not as averse to the word as you and my Spock are,” Jim told the ambassador flippantly.

“The last mission was difficult for everyone,” Nyota interjected “A Starfleet research facility was brutally attacked by unknown assailants using ancient guns. They murdered practically everyone there except for one person who played dead. Two of the scientists killed were friends of Spock and he discovered their bodies. Our ship psychologist felt Spock needed a few days to process his emotions.” Okay, considering the look that Other Spock was giving her, he obviously did not buy that excuse, but it was mostly true (by the Vulcan definition of truth, anyway).

“Okay, that’s not exactly what actually happened. There’s more to it than that, but we can’t tell you right now,” Jim told him cryptically.

“I understand,” this Spock tells him, and it’s obvious he does understand because he remembers what it was like to serve on a ship. “If you need me to assist your Spock with processing his emotions, I would be willing to be of assistance.”
“That may be necessary later on,” Jim told him, not bringing up the fact that David was the one who really needed a mind healer. Oh hell, baby David is going to need human and Vulcan psychological help for probably the rest of his childhood, and his mother getting murdered is probably the least of the reasons why. He hopes the child never finds out how Jonathan Jackson manipulated him into existence.

“He will probably take you up on that offer, but you’ll have to talk to him. Your room will be just across the hall from ours. You can see him whenever you like.” That caused the older Vulcan to give Jim the Spock version of a smile.

“However, there is something that you can help us with now. There were some things that we came across on the last mission that we know you have encountered before, and we need to speak to you about that,” Nyota brings up, getting to the heart of the matter.

“As you are aware, I made a vow never to provide you with any information that would alter your destiny. You must walk your own path.” Inwardly Jim is rolling his eyes and he's halfway ready to call bull shit. Other Spock is a natural born meddler, but he is in deep denial about it. It’s kind of like he sees this as his second chance to fix everything he screwed up the first time around, but he doesn’t want to acknowledge that’s what he’s really doing. Jim would mention something about all the little tidbits that Other Spock gave Chris about how Starfleet became family friendly in the other timeline, but he was trying not to be unbelievably confrontational. Also, Nyota would probably kick him in the shin if he tried right now.

“It’s not like I’m asking you for lottery numbers or some super secret equation that will completely revolutionize the world. Although I’m sure your vow covers the popsicle people that are currently in one of the cargo bays.” That comment got Jim another raised eyebrow. “Besides, I’m not sure your vow covers anything Carol Marcus related.”

“I made a vow to her,” he said, closing both eyes.

“Yes, but she’s dead now, so I’d don’t know if it still counts.” That revelation resulted in Spock walking into a wall. Nyota quickly ran over to help Other Spock.

“I assume it was her body that my nephew discovered?” Spock asked once he recovered, and Jim nodded his head.

“The other person was her long-term girlfriend Rebecca,” Nyota added.

“The person that we found alive was Carol’s 2½-year-old son, David.” That particular revelation caused Other Spock to trip again. “Your nephew was also surprised when he found out that he had a child with his ex-girlfriend, but I bet you’re just a little less surprised about his existence than my Spock was,” Jim said, unable to keep bits of sarcasm from seeping into his words.

“Admiral Jackson informed me that the fetus Carol was carrying did not survive her encounter with Khan. I felt it was best to not burden Spock with such news,” Other Spock said as an excuse for not telling them about David. Because he could read Spock so well, he knew this Spock was telling him the truth. Jackson really was a bastard.

“Jackson was a habitual liar. Wait, who is Khan? The guy who tried to kill Carol was named John Harrison,” Jim asked, just as an exuberant two-year-old ran to him in the hallway. David was currently covered in lots of paint and being chased by Doctor Margarita and Spock. Jim quickly grabbed his kid just as Other Spock collapsed to the ground.

Xxxx
It’s been two days since Jonathan Jackson was murdered while leaving his Starfleet apartment. Honestly, Chris is surprised nobody decided to throw a ‘thank god the bastard is dead’ party. Although that may only be because most people really do like his wife Jane, or whatever the hell her name really is, and she was pretty much confined to Starfleet facilities for her own safety right now.

He’s not sure if he should call her Jane or Jaya right now. She’s more of a mystery now than she was before Chris was informed that Jane Jackson was a cover story created by Andrew Marcus for reasons only the bastard knew. What he knows is that she mysteriously popped into existence a few months after Vulcan was destroyed. She shares her real last name with a guy who massacred portions of the countries once known as India and Pakistan as he ruled the region with an iron fist. This incident also took place in the same era that the frozen bodies Jim discovered came from. He is starting to wonder if Jaya was once one of those frozen bodies. That would explain how she just suddenly showed up in the 23rd century and makes more 20th-century references then Jim in one of his good moods.

Admiral Lume refused to answer any more of his questions until he agreed to take over oversight of all Section 31 projects. He should be flattered that unlike the late Admiral Jackson, she trusted him to oversee everything, including whatever is hiding behind Jupiter that she doesn’t want to talk about. Yet, he’s still uncertain if he wants to be involved any more than he already was. If this was as bad as the Admiral was inferring, he wasn’t sure he could abstain. He wasn’t sure if he would trust anyone else with this type of responsibility. Right now he’s not exactly sure how much of Starfleet he can trust.

Chris couldn’t talk to Amanda about this. It was just too classified and she was better off not knowing. Besides, she was distracted with irregularities discovered in the colony budget when she and her fellow councilmember T’Panda were looking for a way to keep Amanda on the Council. He would not be shocked if those accounting irregularities are the main reason why Councilmember Sank was trying to take over her seat. Then again, maybe this whole mess with Starfleet and Section 31 was making him unbelievably paranoid.

He was also avoiding Amanda for more personal reasons. He wasn’t ready to talk to her about what he figured out last weekend. Okay, it was more like he wasn’t ready for her to laugh in his face. She was beautiful and vibrant. What would she want with a jaded Starfleet Admiral who was going to be stuck in a wheelchair for the rest of his existence?

Since he cannot talk to Amanda about this and his Admiral was keeping her mouth shut, that only left Jane or whatever her name is now. It was surprisingly easy to find her. She was in one of the research labs on the Starfleet campus. He could tell which one, because there were currently two security officers stationed outside the door.

“I see that you found me,” the woman said, looking up from her research.

“You know that you would be less conspicuous without the two security guards outside, Ja…” he started, but wasn’t sure which name he should use. “What name do you want me to call you?” he asked.

“I’m not entirely sure myself, but you are used to calling me Jane, so go with that,” she replied.

“Okay,” he told her with a shrug.

“I’m not the one who asked for the security guards. That would be at my cousin and, well, his wife listens to him in things like this,” she said with a hint of annoyance.
“Is he actually your cousin?” he asked skeptically. He doesn’t believe anything of the created history that was made for her.

“Several generations removed, but we are related distantly. His side of the family changed the surname several generations ago,” she told him cryptically, but his research told him why he stopped using that last name.

“I can understand. Not that many people want to be associated with one of the most deadly and violent dictators of the 20 century, even if he happened to be just a distant relative.” As Chris said the words, he saw her twitch. Obviously, he was closer to the truth then he initially thought.

“History is subjective, and many of the relevant facts are lost over time. They say, one person’s terrorist is another person’s freedom fighter.”

“I don’t think mass murder can be misinterpreted,” he remarked darkly.

“What so-called normal individuals did in Rwanda was 20 times worse than anything Ka —” she started, before she cut herself off. He was pretty sure she knew exactly how bad the Rwanda genocide was because she was there. “How much do you know?”

“At the very least I’m starting to wonder if your sudden appearance three years ago has anything to do with the frozen bodies Enterprise discovered in the basement,” he told her darkly.

“They’re still there? He didn’t take them?” she asked, with concern in her voice.

“All 71 are currently on board Enterprise, making their way towards Earth.” At his words, she exhaled in relief.

“That’s good. At least he didn’t get what he wanted. I knew having Carol change the password for downstairs was a good thing.” That last part was whispered.

“What are you talking about? Who is this ‘he’ that you keep referring to? Do you know who attacked NCX17?” he asked in rapid succession.

“I have my theories, but I’m not entirely sure who did this. But I know why and all those that died are just more blood on my hands,” she said, going back to her experiment.

“They wanted you?” he asked.

“Maybe. If the person I think is responsible for these attacks is actually doing this, I’m sure he would want me to build him more weapons of mass destruction for the private weapons company that he now works for. But I won’t do it. You can’t bring peace about with bombs and brutality. I know better now,” she said wearily, giving him more evidence that she came from a time when war was normal.

“Marcus?” he asked, because it just seemed like she was talking about him.

“Well, according to Admiral Lume, it was one of his long-term friends that betrayed everyone and allowed the attackers on the planet. Jonathan wouldn’t let me or Carol fire him, stupid ass.” He’s kind of shocked that she is currently cursing out her deceased husband.

“Two days ago you said that you loved him, and now you’re cursing the man you were married to for 2 ½ years. What changed?” he asked curiously.

“Two days ago I don’t even think I knew my husband,” she said with a hint of sorrow in her voice.
“You’d be amazed what you find out from a dead man’s files. The only good thing to come out of everything he did is a 2 ½-year-old that loves to finger paint and color.” She seemed on the verge of tears at that point.

“I’m sorry,” he said, because he didn’t know what else to say.

“Don’t apologize. Have you ever wished your life had a reset button? There are so many things I would have done differently if I had known what was really going on. But I guess ignorance really is no excuse, because maybe I wanted to be ignorant,” she said, and Chris wondered if she was talking about something other than her husband’s treachery.

“Most people were too polite to talk badly about the bastard that I was married to in front of me, even Carol. When she showed me the project information for ‘build a better Vulcan baby,’ she purposely redacted all information about David. I found all of that out yesterday when searching my husband’s computer files.” There was a surprising amount of bitterness in her words.

“I thought waking up in 2258 was my reset button. Nobody knew what I did before and I could just start over here. I could just be an anonymous wife and mother here. Marcus gave me a new name, a new life, and even a new face. I convinced myself that I could make up for all the bad things that I just let happen by continuing my research to make this world better.” Her words were more of a confession then she intended. She confirmed that she was once among the frozen bodies that Jim discovered.

“What were you researching?” he asked, because Chris knew that if he questioned her more about waking up, she would stop answering his questions, and he needed to keep her talking.

“I wanted to find a cure for leukemia, save premature babies, or maybe even find a way to make you walk again. Not create bombs or weapons of mass destruction. Not create super Vulcans either. The Eugenic wars should’ve taught all of us that sometimes being too perfect is a bad thing.” She shivered as she said this, as if she was talking about a real memory and not something that she learned about merely from the history books like everyone else of his generation. It dawned on him that was because these were her real memories. She did live through this time and probably had a better understanding of it than most.

“I like this world where people actually respect one another and war is some abstract concept. I like that people don’t hate you just because you come from a different country or planet. I don’t want to do anything to destroy this. Contrary to what Andrew Marcus believes, attacking the Klingons or any other enemy will destroy everything, not preserve it.”

“I don’t think we live in that perfect world anymore, not after Vulcan was destroyed,” he told her sadly.

“It’s still better than when I come from, as long as we don’t throw it all away. I’ve seen what fear can do. My parents were stupid idealists. For the sake of fear they created what they thought was the perfect human, the perfect leader. The results were complicated.”

“Are you saying your parents were responsible for creating the super soldiers of the 20th century? How old are you?” he finally asked bluntly.

“Yes. And before you ask, I wasn’t created in a test tube, however my donor was. There were some unintended consequences of my bone marrow transplant. I’m almost 300 years old and I barely look 30. I’m also 3 to 4 times stronger than you are. If you shoot me with a phaser set to kill, I
“You’re immortal?” he asked.

“We all die eventually, it just takes longer for some of us than others and, well, I had some additional help. There are also antibodies in Augment blood that allow the body to repair itself. They can even make a heart start again under the right conditions,” Jane told him.

“David?” Chris prompted.

“Yes, along with about half of the other people on NCX17. Most of my team were composed of volunteers who were sick or dying. Despite all the medical advancements made while I was sleeping, this was still their only chance.”

“You made them like you?” he asked.

“I saved their lives, for a little while anyway, until they were all murdered when I was trying to…” She stopped, unable to continue. “Do you wonder why they showed up at the lab and my house with guns?” she asked, abruptly changing the subject. Or at least it seemed that way at first.

“Yes, actually.”

“How do you kill somebody with antibodies in their body that can help repair most damage, if given enough time?” He pondered her question for a few seconds, but he couldn’t come up with the answer.

“I don’t know.”

“I’m sure you’ve taken some field first aid training, and the first thing they teach you is to stop the bleeding.” It takes him a few seconds, but he finally understands what she’s trying to tell him.

“Blood loss.” As soon as he says the words out loud, he wonders why he didn’t see the connection earlier. “The antibodies cannot repair the damage done to the body if you’re bleeding out.”

“Exactly, and until we can perfect the treatment, we are keeping things quiet. There are still too many side effects right now. Not that many people knew what I was working on. It would be too dangerous. That’s why I think Andrew Marcus had something to do with the attacks. He knew about my research. He knew I was different than my brother. Those people came prepared,” she said gravely.

“You may be right,” Chris said darkly. He knew that Andrew Marcus was a very bad person, but he didn’t want to believe that the man may have had something to do with the death of his daughter.

“You have to take over Section 31. This stuff cannot get out. It’s too dangerous.” He agreed with Jane. It was all too dangerous.

“Why do you trust me?”

“Rebecca trusted you. She put you on her list of people to take care of David in case…” She didn’t say another word Instead she went back to her experiment.

“Okay, I’ll do it,” he told her, mostly because he needed as much information as possible to keep Jim’s son and Amanda’s grandson safe. The only way he was going to know the truth about
Section 31, was to become part of it.

To be continued
Thank you to everyone who read or reviewed the last chapter. Remember reviews make the writer happy and a happy writer is more likely to wake up at 5 AM to work on stories before work.

I would like to apologize for the lack of updates recently. I was working on my stories for KS Advent 2013 and I got distracted. (If you’re looking for fluffy K/S check out my two stories I Think There Are Rules about This Sort of Thing and Operation Cheer Jim up). This is why I’m trying really hard to stick to my four stories or less rule. Unfortunately, I always have 99 story ideas bouncing around my mind at the same time. Expect more updates now.

Warnings: sexual content, because this story does contain a married Jim and Spock. Of course they’re going to have sex. They’ve just been busy. Also, allusions to past child abuse.

Song for this chapter:

Hurt the version by Johnny Cash. I think that song is the unofficial theme song of Spock Prime. I can’t hear it without automatically thinking about him.

“What have I become/My sweetest friend/Everyone I know goes away/In the end”

“You are someone else/I am still right here”

“If I could start again/A million miles away/I would keep myself/I would find a way”

There are so many things that remind Spock of what he lost in this new timeline or more accurately, wanted in the first place, but could never have. Most days it was difficult to exist in a world that was reminiscent of things left behind. He serves on the Vulcan Council with a woman, who in his mind, has been dead for decades and knows he has an affinity for double stuff Oreo cookies and Southern style sweet tea. Whenever he participates in one of these meetings, he can’t help but think that Sarek should be the one sitting across from him. This is a different Amanda and the events that made her different happened long before burying a husband, a stepson, and losing her whole way of life. Because so many people initially blamed the Kelvin attack on the Vulcan people, she needed to become the face of Vulcan in many respects to dissuade people of their erroneous assumptions. She could not just be the ambassador’s wife, but rather a diplomat in her own right. She spent years working on various humanitarian and antislavery projects before becoming a major part of the Vulcan Council.

He plays online chess with a man who looks like his bond mate, but was born in January and would never have to deal with being forced to choose between having a husband/family and his career. His James could tell him anything; this Jim has not even tried to speak to Spock since their
initial confrontation the day before. Spock is uncertain if it is because he was ordered to by Dr. McCoy for the sake of Spock’s health after losing consciousness the day before or if this Jim does not trust him enough to tell him the truth.

Jim has been avoiding him or maybe Spock has been avoiding Jim since returning to consciousness, 22.4 hours ago. The latter is most likely true because there is something painful about watching the casual touches and kisses between Jim and his counterpart. It is yet another reminder of something that is lost to him.

He woke up in a room that was simultaneously familiar and completely foreign. The room and equipment are different, Doctor McCoy hovering over him is still the same, but he did not look at Spock with the same affection and it was more than just the fact that he kept Carol’s confidence. Spock does not wake up with Jim waiting by his side, but rather his assistant, Janice. In this dimension due to the militarization of Starfleet, Janice Rand chose a life in public diplomacy and through a series of coincidences was assigned to work at the Vulcan embassy in the immediate aftermath of Vulcan’s destruction. He convinced her to become his personal assistant and she has served that position faithfully for the last three years, completely unaware that he knew a version of her in another lifetime.

Even Christine does not look at him with the same type of reverence as before nor does she see his counterpart this way for that matter. She is not a doctor yet, but she will be in this reality years before she was in his timeline. Physically, she is the same, but personality wise Christine Chapel is a very different person. She is darker and her eyes are filled with pain. He knows from Carol’s memories that the woman in front of him is mourning the loss of a very close friend.

Now that Dr. McCoy has released him, Spock walks around a ship that 90% of the time seems familiar, yet the walls are different colors and he gets lost far too often. He sees Nyota wearing command yellow, doing a job that was his and a part of him wonders why she never went down this path during the original timeline. She keeps the ship running as efficiently as ever. She is the only one who talks to him, the only one who explains why she is angry. (There is a good chance that she is defying doctor’s orders solely due to the fight that she is having with Dr. McCoy.) Nyota is furious that he never told her Spock that Carol was pregnant with his child. Nyota believed that he did not trust her enough to tell her this information.

However, the hardest thing to deal with in this reality was David Marcus because he represented so many lost things. He reminded Spock of his bond mate’s lost child. The name was the same, even if the child did not look exactly as he did in the few images that his James would look at twice a year while he drained an entire bottle of scotch. Of course, he would not look the same, because genetically this David Marcus is not the same child. He had Spock’s ears and Carol’s coloring.

To Spock, this David looks like what he always imagined his and James’ child would have look like if he and his T’hy’la had left Starfleet behind to start a family together. He represented the path not taken and the biggest regret Spock will ever have after not saving Romulus and the fight he had with James before—he lost his love. (Even then he is not entirely certain that this would
not be a deeper regret.) Seeing the Jim of this world wrap his arms around this David hurt him in a way that Spock is unable to articulate. Worse still is hearing the little boy call the Spock of this world his father. It was not until that moment that he realized what he really lost.

The David of this world was also a constant reminder of his mother, but not the Dr. Marcus of Spock’s original timeline. Spock did not know that woman beyond her relationship with his James. Spock hated her for reasons that he will never understand.

Spock is not entirely certain he would consider the Carol of this world of friend, but that word applies more to the situation in this lifetime than the last. She sent him letters during her pregnancy that he saved for his other self. She sent him pictures of her growing stomach, images of her unborn child, as well as dozens of paragraphs outlining her concerns regarding her father’s special project with “John Harrison”. If only Carol told him the man’s real name, Spock would have been able to protect her from him.

He has been inside her mind and is aware of secrets that no one else knew, not even Carol’s lover. He knew what Carol’s father and another version of his own father did to her where everybody else just knows little pieces of the truth. Carol’s relationship with her father made the relationship between he and Sarek almost seem healthy by comparison. Alexander Marcus was an abusive, exacting man. He expected too much and gave too little in return. He rarely touched his daughter other than to occasionally strike her but his mental games were worse. Spock could understand how his other self could bond with somebody who on the surface seemed to have a similar childhood. Compared to Alexander Marcus, Sarek was ‘warm and fuzzy’ to use the human vernacular. Also, the Carol of this dimension did not have the benefit of an Amanda to help negate some of Sarek’s gruffness.

As a person who has lived more than one life, Spock could see that the Sarek of this dimension was only looking out for the best interest of his son, even if he was misguided in his attempts. After viewing the scene where her father provides Carol with the ultimatum of terminating her pregnancy or having her lover incarcerated, Spock is still uncertain of Alexander Marcus’ true motivations. He knew that the man was motivated by his desire to control everything but beyond that Spock did not understand why. Now that Carol was gone, Spock is uncertain he ever will.

Spock understood that she was scared and 16 and felt she had no other options but to go with the plan of Jonathan Jackson. Spock wished that Alexander Marcus would have contacted Amanda, instead of Sarek. He knows that the Amanda of this dimension would have helped her. He knows that the Amanda of this dimension would have told Alexander Marcus to “go fuck himself” in the most diplomatic way possible and would have fought with every inch of her being to protect her family. Spock knew Amanda would have protected Carol from her father because she was carrying her grandchild.

No, it would have been more than that, because he knew that the Amanda of this world has helped thousands of complete strangers get out of abusive situations. She would have helped simply because Carol was a person who needed it.

Amanda would not have believed Alexander Marcus’s accusations that Carol was lying about the paternity of her child for the sole sake of extortion. Also unlike Sarek, Amanda would have questioned any DNA tests that he provided. Because of her humanity, Amanda would have
questioned everything, instead of easily accepting whatever Alexander Marcus told her. Humans understand raw data and absolute truth are two very different things. Amanda would have got her out without being indebted to Jonathan Jackson and therefore she would be alive today.

But Carol did not have Amanda, she only had Jonathan Jackson. He provided her with the only means to keep her child alive, but the cost was high. Only in hindsight is it possible to see how untrustworthy the man truly was. He had ulterior motives of which Spock is not entirely certain. He lied to Spock; he lied to Carol. In the end, Jackson made sure that he had been Carol’s only option.

Eventually, she had him as well, but he had been unable to save her. At the time, Spock blamed himself for not protecting her and her unborn child from Khan. Now, he blames himself for not questioning the story of Admiral Jonathan Jackson. He wonders if he made the right choice by not telling other Spock of David’s existence. If he had known, would Carol have been on NCX17 when the planet was attacked?

Discovering that Carol was dead and her child was alive in and of itself would have probably resulted in Spock losing consciousness. It was a shock to his system. However, it was the familiar bond snapping into place that caused him to lose consciousness. The fact that the bond young David formed with him is similar to the type formed between an uncle and nephew is something that he is afraid to examine too closely.

Dr. McCoy protected him from immediate interrogation after he regained consciousness. It does not surprise him at all that Nyota is the one that completely defies that order. (Although he wonders if this defiance was related to the argument the two were having regarding Lieutenant Gaila)

Since his release, no one has tried to speak to him about the Carol situation. All discussions so far have been extremely cordial and filtered through his counterpart’s therapist or Jim’s assistant. He knew it was only a temporary reprieve. As an acquaintance of Carol who at the very least knew of her position on the planet, he would have to be interviewed for the sake of the investigation, if nothing else. He would tell them everything he could because he wanted those responsible for Carol’s murder to face the consequences of their actions.

On their second day aboard Enterprise, he ate dinner with the rest of the delegation, even though he did not want to. They were worried about him or rather Janice was. He knew he needed to put in an appearance as some say, but he could not stay. Watching Jim cut up peanut butter sandwiches into farm animal shapes for his David was more than he could handle. He needed to meditate.

He was almost back to his temporary quarters when someone stopped him by grabbing his hand. He was expecting Janice because she was the only one that would have behave so brazenly by Vulcan social norms merely for the fact that she knows that this does not bother him. Yet he was
not expecting Gaila to be behind him. Considering their history together, he should not be surprised. They have done things far beyond hand-to-hand contact in the past.

“You cannot keep hiding away like this,” Galia said from behind.

She was another individual Spock could not place in a normal category. They were definitely friends, but it was more complicated than that. Spock first met her three years ago when she served as Amanda’s personal assistant during those first few months after Vulcan was destroyed. Gaila was one of the few people in this life that he did not consider a ghost of his old one, because he only knows her in this life.

She was unbelievably blunt, even by Vulcan standards, but a good person. She was a loyal friend to everyone and now that included him. She kept Amanda grounded during those first few weeks after Sarek’s death. She was also wonderful with the displaced children. She gave them hope that they could survive this.

He would also say that she was the first true friend that he made in this dimension that was not in some way a means to hold on to the past. At the same time, she has never seen him as just another version of this world’s Spock, but as a completely different person. He found that comforting.

“I am not hiding,” he tells her.

“How long have we known each other? Do you have any idea how fast you ran out of that cafeteria?” She asked him, but Spock chooses not to answer.

“I assume that is a rhetorical question.” Spock says simply.

“Thankfully, unlike your nephew, you get that.” She said as she stopped outside one of the many conference rooms.

“Trust me; I understand why you’re avoiding people. I’m avoiding people, so if you want you can hide in here with me.” She said as she placed her hand against the reader.

“Commander Uhura?” He asked. It felt strange to refer to her by that rank, even though he always knew that she deserved it.
“Yes, I kind of accidentally let it slip that I slept with Leonard after Jim and Spock’s wedding. She is not happy with me because she’s kind of in love with him, but too scared to actually admit it. Between daddy and a couple of asshole ex-boyfriend’s, she is relationship phobic.” This does not surprise him. The reasons may be different, but his Nyota was very cautious of those who she trusted with her heart.

“How does something like that ‘slip out’? What else ‘slipped out’?” He asked following her inside.

“It happens when I’m working on a highly stressful investigation with very little sleep and lots of files to recover from a system that is completely trashed. If I can get permission from Jim, there something I want you to look at.” She said pulling out of PADD.

“Of course, I will help in any way I can.” he offered easily.

“And don’t worry, they still don’t know about us,” she said referring to his earlier question.

“I prefer that they not.” He said as he sat next to her at one of the conference room tables.

“It was a medical thing, so it’s really like none of their business.” She said without looking up from her PADD. “You shouldn’t be avoiding people. I know they’re mad that you kept certain things from them, but I know you had your reasons.”

“That is not why I left.” Judging by her expression, she knows that he is not being entirely truthful with her.

“Okay, maybe that’s not the only reason why you’re hiding in a conference room with me.”

“I enjoy your company,”

“That’s because you’re sweet.” She said with a smile. “But I don’t believe you. I think your other reason for running away or maybe you’re only reason is you don’t want to watch somebody else live the life that you wish you had. I understand. I hated parents’ weekend at the Academy because it felt like I was the only one who didn’t have parents. I hated seeing everybody with their happy families.”
“I am sorry.” He told her sincerely.

“Don’t apologize. I have a good family now, but sometimes they can be complete assholes. I thought I would come out here and we could catch up.” She told him with a predatory grin.

“You want to know why I did not tell my other self about David.” He stated cautiously.

“You need to talk to somebody. We both know Jim, Spock and Nyota are backing off for the moment because they are equally terrified of Dr. Margarita. However, you have answers related to the current investigation and you’re going to have to speak to someone about this eventually. I think it will be easier if you talk to me.” She said, touching his hands again.

“Why do you think it will be easier for me to talk to you?”

“Because I’m not a ghost of your past and I got to know you before I got clued on who you really were. You don’t know another version of me. In the original dimension, I probably never escaped the sex trade.” Gaila said darkly.

“There are some advantages to this dimension.”

“Yes, like the cute little kid, forcing Jim to cut his peanut butter sandwich into dinosaur shapes.” She laughed.

“Yes he is. I’m sure you want to know why I kept my knowledge of Carol’s pregnancy a secret from my counterpart.” He told her with a sigh.

“Actually, I’m much more interested in how you kept this secret from Amanda. Now she is going to be really angry in the way only a mother can,” she told him and Spock knew that she was right. Jim and Spock would be angry, but they would understand the delicate nature of the situation, but Amanda will not be easily placated.

“She will be less than pleased. However, I did it for her protection.”

“I know. You’re such a martyr sometimes. I mean, if I didn’t know what symptoms to look for
from my time in the business, you probably would’ve died three years ago.” She said slightly annoyed. “You know too many secrets and you’re trying to protect everyone by keeping the truth to yourself because you think it is safer that way.” She gives him a sad look.

“But see, the thing is, there are people here who love you and not because you’re another version of our Spock, but because you’re you. We care about you. Jim would not have been so mad at you, otherwise. Because you have people that love you, Spock, you don’t need to keep everything inside.”

“Carol asked me not to tell Spock until after David was born.” He tells Gaila without making eye contact.

“Why did she ask that of you?” Spock was thankful that she did not ask “Why did you do what she requested?” Despite the years that have passed, Spock is still uncertain why he honored Carol’s wishes.

“She told me it was because she was worried about what her father would do to her if he discovered that she defied him as a teenager. He wanted her to terminate her pregnancy and she chose the best alternative available to keep David alive. I can understand her fear because he was not a very warm man.” Maybe if he was talking to his other self, he would be willing to give more details, even though Carol was dead. His other self was the only one who had a right to know what happened. He’s not even certain he would tell these things to Jim.

“Well, if half the things I heard were true, she had reason to be worried. Supposedly, he was really kicked out of Starfleet for misappropriating enough funds to build a warship around five times Enterprises size.” Actually, he was kicked out of Starfleet for nearly getting his daughter killed and using a mass murderer from the 20th century to create new weapons to perpetrate mass murder in the 23rd century under the flimsy pretense of self-defense. She did not need to know that, Spock only knew that because he was called in to testify.

“It is possible that is an exaggeration.”

“Probably, but not by much,” she scoffed. “I know you well enough to know you think that was just some easy excuse. What’s the real reason?”

There were two real reasons. The first was Carol did not want to disrupt this Spock’s life with Jim. She wasn’t mentally ready for joint custody arrangements, maybe a part of that was because despite younger Spock’s assertions otherwise, she still believed that young Spock was only with her to satisfy his curiosity regarding human sexuality. The second reason was connected to the first
and the fact that Carol did not want to speak with young Spock about anything, because she was afraid that she would find out that her Spock never cared about her at all.

“It is only a hypothesis. It is best that I do not share.” He told her, because it just did not feel right to share those reasons with her.

“Okay.” Gaila replied simply.

“You are not going to push for more?” He asked disbelievingly.

“I don’t need to know, but you do need to talk to him.” She said opening the door to allow his counterpart inside.

“I may have forgotten to mention that I was streaming our conversation to his PADD.” She said kissing him on the cheek.

“All of it?” he asked raising one eyebrow in concern.

“Well, not all of it. I didn’t press the button until after that part. We can finish our conversation tonight.” His counterpart looks at him strangely as she walks out the door.

“I do not wish to discuss that,” he said in response to his younger self’s unasked question.

“There are a large number of things that you prefer not to discuss.” Other Spock said slightly annoyed.

“There are many things I cannot discuss, there is a difference,” he retorted.

“I am not certain there is,” his younger self mumbled under breath. His words made Spock think of what Gaila said earlier.

“James said that you assumed David died during the London incident.” It was not a question in the traditional sense, but he knew that he needed to tell his other self everything.
He looked down at the ground as he explained the entire Carol situation from the beginning, starting with the wedding to the London incident and watching doctors do everything possible to stop Carol from delivering prematurely. He told younger Spock of arriving to the hospital the next day, only to be told that Carol was moved from the facility after delivering a stillborn child by Admiral Jackson.

He did not mention the strange letters that he received from Carol asking him to keep her son safe if anything were to happen to her. At the time, he thought that she was delusional and unable to accept the loss of her child. Now he knew she was anything but that. Perhaps his greatest regret was not reaching out to her. No child should be without his mother and he feels like his actions contributed to that reality. This is another thought he keeps to himself.

“Why did you not tell me?” His other self asked only after his confession is completed.

“She asked me not to.” He said repeating the excuse from earlier. He is now fully aware that it is truly an excuse. It is easier to see the flaws in your logic after the fact.

“Even if you believed that David had not survived, why did you not tell me at some point Carol and I created a child together?” Spock asked him in a tone that only he and Jim could identify as upset. He was not sure how to respond. However, if you cannot be completely honest with yourself, who can you be honest with?

“Because I did not want you to deal with the pain of losing a child, especially one with whom you would never have the chance to have a real relationship.” His voice was low and filled with pain as he spoke with his eyes closed. He did not wish to see the expression on young Spock's face. “I once watched someone I love very dearly deal with that type of loss. I felt it was better if you did not know.”

“You had no right to make that decision for me. Even if my child was gone, I had the right to mourn him.” His younger counterpart said without any inflection at all.

“You are correct, I had no right to keep this from you.” Spock said looking down at the ground.

“If you knew that David actually survived childbirth, would you have told me about his existence?” His other self asked simply.

“Yes,” he said as his other self left the room.

Xxxx

“David, please come out of the closet.” Jim said, wondering exactly how in the last week he went from post-argument grown-up fun time to disaster riddled bath time which ends up with an almost 3-year-old hiding in his closet. David did not like bath time. The soap was wrong, the towels were itchy, and the fact that no actual water was involved was causing all sorts of problems. Unfortunately, it was necessary because the toddler was currently covered in peanut butter and jelly due to the fact that nobody told him that baby Vulcans and anything with vast quantities of sugar such as jelly should not be mixed together. David had peanut butter in his hair. Actually, he managed to get peanut butter in Jim’s hair too. Bath time was a very necessary evil.
He was a highly trained Starfleet Captain who has gone toe to toe with psycho Romulans and angry Klingons. You would think he could go through one bath time without Spock there to supervise. Except he barely had time to get his child out of his peanut butter covered clothes before said child was hiding in the closet.

His husband and Gaila were currently in conference room 12 interrogating other Spock against Dr. Margarita’s orders. Okay, maybe interrogating was not exactly the right word. It was supposed to be a friendly conversation between whatever other Spock and Gaila were to each other. (Never play “I’ve never” with the woman, especially when the hard stuff is involved.)

This was their only option to get answers because Jim was banned from talking to other Spock, because Dr. Margarita pretty much blames him for causing the guy to pass out. (Yes, he is completely terrified of his ship’s psychologist.) Spock said it was most likely the familial bond snapping into place because David touched ‘Selek’ abruptly, but Doctor Cruz was not buying that. He wasn’t even that rough with the Vulcan.

As he pleaded with his child to get out of the closet, he began to wonder if Spock was getting the better deal. He wonders exactly how much teasing he would have to endure if he asked Nyota or someone on her team to patch him through to his mother-in-law because he cannot handle his kid.

Thankfully, before he gave up Spock walked into the room. Spock kisses make everything better.

“Why is there peanut butter in your hair?” Spock asked as he pulled away.

“David,” he shot back. “Why did you forget to mention that you shouldn’t give jelly to a three-year-old Vulcan? Other Spock's attaché was laughing at me.”

“You said you were just giving him a peanut butter sandwich. I also doubt that anybody from the Vulcan delegation actually laughed at you.” Spock actually raised an eyebrow at him.

“She’s human,” Jim said, shrugging. “Also, who makes a peanut butter sandwich without jelly?”

“My mother,” Spock answered nonplussed.

"Of course, she did because she's perfect and actually knows what the fuck she is doing," Jim said as he placed his head in his hands. "I told you I was going to completely fuck this up. You leave me for half an hour so you can figure out why other Spock did not tell you about our impending parenthood and I have peanut butter in my hair and a toddler locked in the closet."

"Why did he lock himself in the closet?" Spock asked as he wrapped an arm around him.

"He doesn’t like bath time and he prefers the baby wash that Doctor JJ got him." Jim explained. "Apparently, we forgot to bring his favorite bubble bath and bath time toys with us."

"We will just get more when we arrived to earth in two days." Spock said with a kiss to his temple.

“Great! Now we have to go shopping and possibly apartment hunting unless we decide to do Starfleet housing. Your mom definitely doesn’t have space for all of us at the townhouse. Of course, that doesn’t matter if we can’t get our son out of our closet.” Jim said just before walking back over there to plead with Dave it one more time. “Hey, your daddy Spock is back. Don’t you want to say hi to him?”

“Did you try your override code?” Spock asked as the epitome of calmness.

“No, because I’m horrible at this.” He replied and then uttered the magic words that actually got
the stupid closet door to open.

"Would it make you feel better to know that my sister locked herself in the bathroom for nearly 2 hours last week?" Spock said as he grabbed David out of the closet and brought him back to the bathroom.

"A little."

XXX

Bath time part two went much better because it was two against one. After three bedtime stories about talking pigs, cars, and a mouse that you should never give cookies to, David finally fell asleep in their bed. He was sleeping in their bed because the toddler wasn’t ready to sleep by himself yet. The only progress was the fact that David did fall asleep without Spock or Jim lying beside him.

Realizing that loud voices would wake David up, Jim decided that the bathroom would be the best place for a very grown-up conversation. Okay, Jim felt that the bathroom was the best place because they could have sex. The sink was twice as strong as before and Spock was always mellower after a blow job. Okay, Jim was mellower after a blow job (or hand job or anything else. He wasn’t picky).

After dealing with diplomats and toddlers (who seem to have more in common than they should), Jim really, really needed a release. Jim doesn’t understand how Spock can brief him on a situation with his hands around Jim’s dick, but he was really good at it. He would be upset that Spock could carry on a conversation during the middle of sex if it wasn’t for the fact that if they didn’t multitask sometimes they would never get to do anything. Now that they had a ship to run and a toddler to raise, bathroom sex conversations were going to become the norm.

Today, it was going to be fun shower time because he was still covered in peanut butter (and Spock is 91.4% certain that the sound of the shower will prevent David from noticing sex sounds if he wakes up). They were using real water because as they discovered with David that works best on peanut butter and jelly. The fact that Spock was washing his hair kind of made up for the peanut butter thing.

So far, Jim has learned that Spock really did get his girlfriend pregnant when she was 16 and Alexander Marcus really was that big of a dick. They also couldn’t be that mad at Spock’s dad, because the man was provided with fake psych reports and DNA tests. Also, London really was a complete cluster fuck in ways that were completely left out of Carol’s diary.

“Okay, during his big confession, did your other self ever explain why Carol did not want you to know about the baby?” Jim asked now that they were out of the shower.

“Carol was afraid of her father. Discovering that not only was her child biologically mine, but that she defied him as a teenager would have been problematic.” Jim was pretty sure “problematic“ was Spock speak for ‘he would have found another way to feed us to the Klingons’. “He was not a very forgiving man.” Spock said as he ran his fingers through Jim’s wet hair.

“What would he have done?” Spock does not answer him out loud. Instead, he sees a memory of Carol as a scared teenager with bruises that she doesn’t explain. This was the last time Spock saw her before the breakup. Jim understands without Spock elaborating although he can feel Spock’s guilt through their bond just the same. He’s mad at himself for not putting things together back then.
“She was afraid that he would do something to me if he found out. She was also afraid that he would try to take David away from her.” Spock tells him, with worry in his voice.

“Is he really that horrible?” He asked, worried.

“Yes,” Spock answered simply.

“Do you think that he will try to take David from us?” Jim asked worried because even though he had to deal with peanut butter in fun places tonight, he couldn’t lose David. It would just be too much.

“We will not allow him to do so.” Spock said in a way that told Jim that Spock would die before allowing Alexander Marcus to take his son.

Chapter End Notes

I originally planned for this chapter to end differently and have a special guest, but it just didn’t work in this section. Also, I needed some Jim and Spock fluffiness. I can’t go too many chapters without my favorite couple making out. That part will be in the next chapter, and I already have a lot of it in draft.

Because this is my final update of 2013 (from my time zone anyway) I just want to take a few moments to say thank you to everybody who has offered reviews and encouragement this year. Thank you to everyone who have volunteered to proofread these stories, I know me and the voice recognition software are horrible sometimes. Also with this post, I have officially written 2 million words of fan fiction goodness (according to fan fiction . net at least). For someone who is technically functionally illiterate, that's pretty good. I could not have done that without your support. I look forward to starting on the next million in the new year.

I never say "happy new year" but rather, congratulations we have survived 2013.
Thank you to everybody who read or reviewed the last chapter. Your encouragement keeps me going. Look an update in less than two months.

Also thank you to UrsulaR who has taken over beta duties for this story.

“Fucking bastard,” Chris mumbled into his personal communicator as he spoke with Amanda about the latest crisis made worse by certain idiots on the Council. He’s going to owe Jane Barnett, the PR goddess, two boxes of good chocolate for keeping anything from getting out about the future Vulcan representative to the Federation Council having an illegitimate grandchild created by an illicit union between her war hero son and the underage daughter of the now disgraced former Admiral Alexander Marcus. If anybody had any chance whatsoever to keep this mess from blowing-up into a public relations nightmare/potential security incident it was her.

Somehow, most likely through a security breach that will be fixed immediately, a certain dick on the Vulcan Council found out about Enterprise rescuing a half Vulcan kid on NCX17. That asshole was trying to assert that the child was a ward of the Vulcan state, should be placed in the custody of a Vulcan family, and was currently using Council lawyers to make that happen. Under normal circumstances, this would have brought about a very angry discussion between Amanda and her counterparts about the necessity of non-Vulcan foster parents and how the Council should not intervene directly especially when a child is not in danger.

However, in this case, it resulted in Amanda accidentally divulging classified information about the child in question’s parentage. Rather, she pointed out the fact that the child in question would not become the ward of any state, because he has two fathers who love him very much along with a grandmother, who will not let anything happen to him. Immediately after her faux pas, she called him. Actually, she called her lawyers and put her assistant in touch with Jane the PR goddess before calling him. Chris is perfectly okay with her doing that first. Actually, that quality is something that he loves about her.

“Of course, he is. I know he was just trying to elicit some emotional response. Part of me even thinks that he already knew David’s paternity but I just couldn’t…” She started to explain, but he stopped her.

“I’m not mad at you for telling the idiot that David is your grandson and therefore would be raised in a proper Vulcan home. He’s a close minded prick and I probably would have told him the same
damn thing, just with more cursing.” Chris tells her trying to make her feel better, even though he was worried that someone from the Council will contact Marcus and let him know that his grandchild is alive because of a "wonder drug" that he has apparently been trying to get his hands on for years.

Chris now knows more about his former mentor Alex then he ever wanted to. For years the man has been stockpiling weapons and building warships, long before Vulcan was ever destroyed. Misappropriations of funds was just the beginning of the illegal activities that he was involved in during his time as head of Starfleet and before that, as head of section 31. The one thing Chris knew for sure now is he doesn't want Alex anywhere near David.

The worst-case scenario would be if the story was all over the net in the next two hours because certain Vulcans just love feeding Amanda to the paparazzi. Not only would they have to deal with Marcus knowing about David, but the general public, along with whoever was responsible for NCX17 too, which would be problematic (especially if Marcus is one of the people responsible for the massacre that killed his daughter).

They were trying to keep the details of what happened on NCX17 out of the media for national security reasons, including the identity of the one survivor. The fact that most news outlets still respect the privacy of minors, especially those that were the victim of very violent crimes, was working in their favor.

David being publicly identified as the only survivor was problematic for the investigation at the very least. At worst, it could put David’s life in jeopardy. There are many theories about why the planet was attacked and somebody doing it to gain access to the technology that brought David back to life was a distinct possibility. Protecting David is the most important thing right now. He was already typing out an e-mail to his boss about this.

“Close minded is an understatement. I’m not going to repeat what he said regarding my proper Vulcan home or my xeno-sexual son.” Amanda said bringing him back to the conversation at hand.

“It’s probably best that you don’t. I already have enough reasons to deck the guy as it is.” Amanda laughs at that. “Even if David was not your family by blood, I know for a fact that he would be much safer with you and Spock, then anyone that Vulcan would find suitable.” Although at that moment he was wondering if Jim and Spock would be okay with him stationing armed guards outside their temporary quarters when they arrive planet-side.

He doubts that armed security guards surrounding David will make him worry less in the long run. He doesn’t even want to tell Amanda that there’s a pretty good chance that the particular Vulcan in question probably wants David for the sole purpose of turning him into his own lab rat.
They don’t know how the elder learned of David’s existence. It’s possible that Starfleet has a leak. It is also possible that he knows about this because the Vulcan was involved the secret and illegal ‘build a better Vulcan’ project. Starfleet suspected that someone on the Vulcan Council has been siphoning large amounts of money to pay for the non-Starfleet sanctioned research on NCX17 and Elder Sank seemed the most likely candidate in Chris’s mind. Actually the only two members of the Council that he didn’t suspect where Amanda and Elder Selek, everyone else, including Spock’s great-grandmother, was a possible suspect. The woman is a little obsessed with getting grandchildren and rebuilding the Vulcan population.

“I still worry and I’m sure he’s going to spend the rest of the day trying to talk the Council into seeing things his way.” She said nervously. He didn’t even think of the possibility that the Council would do something like that. He was too busy worrying about all the other possible scenarios.

“Over my dead body,” Chris mumbled so low that he doubted Amanda heard him.”

“It will be fine, Amanda. I’m glad you called me and I will take care of things on the Starfleet side of it. I will even suck up to Ms. Barnett so she will keep this out of the media. You said you already called the lawyers?” He asked.

“It was the first thing I did when I got out of the meeting with the idiot. I’m meeting with them after. In addition to keeping the Council away from my grandson, I want to make sure that Alexander Marcus cannot get anywhere near David.” Now this is why he adored this woman. He couldn’t even tell her most of the reasons why David should not go within 100 m of his grandfather, but she was preparing to protect him from the monster all the same.

“Considering that it was pretty much Carol’s wish that her father have nothing to do with David, it should be easy. Do you want me to go with you? Normally, I would love to but I…”

Actually, he wasn’t sure what he could tell her. He couldn’t exactly tell Amanda that he was leaving in 15 minutes to visit another one of the things Marcus left behind that he now has to deal with. His first trip was to the starship formally known as the Vengeance, yesterday. Jane suggested renaming the ship the USS Mahatma Gandhi for pure irony now that the ship was mostly going to be a research vessel and Chris’s pretty sure the Admiral may actually take the suggestion seriously.

It doesn’t surprise Chris at all that Jane arrived at his office earlier than expected at that moment. He knew that she didn’t like being by herself right now. When she is alone, she has too much time to think about what she has done. He motioned for her to sit down as he continued talking with Amanda. This conversation is important, anyway.
“Actually, I need you to pick up T’Pay. My assistant has threatened to quit if she has to deal with Cheerios all over her front seat again.” Chris couldn’t help but laugh at that.

“I can’t. My next meeting has already walked into my office and I’m currently ignoring Dr. Jackson for you.” He explains, and hopes that Amanda doesn’t ask any more questions. She doesn’t know that Jane had anything to do with the research on NCX17 or the fact that the woman has spent more time with her grandson then she has.

“I know you’re busy, but I don’t have any other options. How long will the meeting be?” Amanda pleaded.

“Several hours, unfortunately,” Jane said from beside him. Did he mention that the call was on speaker? “However, I’m here 12 minutes early because Admiral Pike’s assistant wandered off somewhere and I just came in.”

“That’s not good. I don’t think the lawyers’ office is child friendly.” Amanda sighed.

“You always have Miss Rivers…” He said before everything snapped in to place.

“You’re avoiding Winona?” He asked as he took the call off speaker. He knew that such a move would be suspicious, but Jane had too many of her own secrets to ask a lot of questions.

“I prefer to call her Whitney, it makes things easier.” She whispered.

“I thought you were the one who was trying to get me to be less angry at her and see things from her perspective,” he told her poignantly.

“Yes, but you don’t have to deal with a Jim Kirk, who was starved for a mother’s attention for the last three years. Jim is absolutely terrified of being a dad. According to Spock. David locked himself in the closet yesterday and he freaked out.” Chris couldn’t help but chuckle at that. A ship full of fresh out of the Academy recruits Jim can handle, but one 2-year-old scares the hell out of him. “Also, there’s…”

“You don’t trust her with your child right now?” Chris prompted.
“No, I’m pretty sure that if I see her right now, I may deck her and that would just be bad for everyone. If she stays after school with Ms. Rivers, I’m going to have to speak with her one-on-one and that just means more of a chance of me knocking her out.” Amanda confessed.

“With a possible custody fight on our hands, getting arrested would just be bad.” He doesn’t realize he says “our” until he notices the smirk on Dr. Jackson’s face.

“Not that there aren’t enough inappropriate things about me circulating the net already. Do you know that we attended an orgy last night?” She joked.

“Okay, you just mentioned that so I would avoid asking you more questions about “Whitney”. Trust me as much as I would love to pick up T’Pay and be there for macaroni night, I can’t.”

“I was so sure that an orgy would distract you.” That’s when he choked on his glass of water and Jane grabbed his personal communicator from him and was already talking to Amanda before he even recovered.

“I know I said things are going to take a while, but I’ll see what I can do the cut the meeting short. However, you’re probably going to need your backup babysitter to take care of your daughter for at least an hour. You guys don’t eat till seven, right?” Jane asked. Chris looked on in complete shock. “We can be done by then. I promise to have him back home in time for macaroni night. Also, thank you for not saying you’re sorry for my loss. If I hear that phrase one more time, I’m going to go as insane as certain people think I will.” Jane said with half a smile. Yes, somebody did mention that possibility at a meeting yesterday.

“Especially from people who actually threw a ‘thank god, he’s dead’ party.” Chris mumbled under his breath which resulted in him getting the look.

“No, it’s okay. It’s easier if I focus on work,” she told Amanda.

“No, I couldn’t possibly impose on your macaroni night. Maybe we could do something after the funeral? I promise that he will call you when we’re done.” She said, ending the call.

“She invited you to macaroni night?” He asked, slightly surprised. Chris did not think that the two women really knew each other that well.
“Yes. It’s about the 20th invitation for dinner I have received since getting my membership card for the Starfleet widow’s club.” Her voice was dripping with sarcasm, but that was only a mask for her pain.

“I always thought they had T-shirts,” he quipped.

“No, just the card and lots of people taking you to dinner to make themselves feel better for being happy that your husband was murdered in front of you. It’s not like it’s the first time I’ve seen someone murdered. I’m almost happy that it’s too much of a security risk for me to be out and about. Let’s be honest, the only reason why I’m being allowed to leave this afternoon is because you’re going to be with me. Half of the people in Starfleet who know what’s really going on believe I am the target. The other half, think I’m going to go crazy and turn everybody into my slave after I become the new queen of the Federation.” Yes, somebody actually said something like that to her.

“Even in the wheelchair, I am still a good shot.” He said, placing his hand on the phaser that he always keeps with him. “Also, I don’t think I would make a very good slave, so I doubt you’re interested in that.”

“I don’t know, Amanda would probably think otherwise. You don’t need working legs to go down on somebody.” She quipped for the sole purpose of making him twitch; however, Jim had him well-trained. He doesn’t even bother to blink anymore.

“Where are we going this time?” He asked, not even bothering to give his regular ‘Amanda is just a friend’ line. If he doesn’t even believe that, he doubts Jane will.

“This is one of those ‘it’s better to show then tell’ things. You only agreed to take over section 31 if I told you everything and you know most of the worst secrets we have. What you’re about to see is one of our worst secrets.”

“I don’t see how much worse it can get. So far we have covered frozen bodies, secret warships, and a drug that may actually stop death.” For the sake of keeping the peace he did not mention the fact that she tested this drug in a practically newborn infant. He can only forgive her, because if she had not done what she did, Amanda wouldn’t have spent the last few days buying toys for her grandson. She was hoping for at least one kid who did not find teddy bears illogical.

“More like slow it down.” Jane said sadly.
“If you don’t want to tell me what’s going on, you don’t have to. I’d rather spend time with Amanda and the girls. I can always bring you with me to macaroni night. She did invite you, and honestly, Amanda is a better interrogator than probably half of your Section 31 colleagues. I’m sure she would love to know exactly why a DNA test shows that her grandson is 50% Vulcan.”

Is it wrong that he hopes that some information pertaining to the exact particulars regarding David’s conceptions stay classified? No mom wants to find out that her son got an underage girl pregnant. The fact that fertility drugs, psychological manipulation, and aphrodisiacs were involved will not make the situation any easier for her to take. Actually, if that particular information ever becomes declassified, he’s letting Spock deal with that conversation. He doesn’t even want to be on planet at the time.

“I prefer not to have that conversation with anyone, least of all, a woman most of the admiralty is terrified of.”

“Not all of the admiralty is terrified of her.” Chris shot back.

“That’s because you’re actually in love with her. Everything regarding David is in your files. The person you’re about to meet is not. All things related to his true identity have been scrubbed. Even a lot of things related to his fake identity have been removed, except for the things tied to me. Jonathan did not even know what I’m about to tell you.”

“This is about your past?” He asked.

“Jonathan knew exactly who I was or rather what he thought I was. He was the one who woke me up from stasis to keep...” She pauses for a moment as she grabs her bag from the floor of his office.

“Even if I didn’t tell him anything, and this was all some marriage of convenience to keep up my cover in this century, he would’ve figured it out eventually. You can only be married so long before the fact that you were alive when the first Star Wars film came out and that’s why you like it better than episode XLIIX becomes painfully obvious to your spouse.” She joked halfheartedly as he followed her out of the office suite down to what is referred to as the admiralty transporter room (because, really, there should be some perks to being an Admiral).

“However, he didn’t know everything about me. I’m glad for that because I would have ended up under the microscope next.
“And who are you?” Chris asked cautiously.

“A human being who managed to get superhuman powers because of a blood transfusion, but I am just a human being, flaws and all.”

“But you still have blood on your hands. You confess to that. You allowed a dictator to slather…” He started, but Jane cut him off.

“I’m not saying that my brother’s hands are bloodless because they’re not.” Jane said, shutting her eyes. “He did some horrible things, but so-called ordinary men did much worse. Most of the information about the eugenics wars is inaccurate. History is written by the winners.” His response is to scoff at her.

“The books say that the Rwanda genocide was the tipping point in the Eugenic Wars. What they don’t say is that the individuals responsible were all ordinary people.”

“But the books say…”

“I was there. There is no absolute truth, only various versions of that. If this entire mess on NCX17 teaches you anything, it should be that.”

XXXXX

Since losing her husband 3 ½ years ago, Amanda has gotten used to dealing with 99 things at the exact same time. Her current list of duties include:

1. Tell the girls that they are going to be aunts.

She tried to cross this one off at the zoo. She figured junk food and baby animals should make it easier to break the surprising news. Besides, their grandmother has been using both girls in an attempt to convince Jim that he would be a good father. Except to explain David, she needed to explain Carol first and that meant talking about the incident on NCX17. However, this is not where you want to begin a conversation with two girls who lost both their parents because of an act of genocide. Instead of actually telling the girls about David, they received a toy elephant and a
digital copy of the history of the San Francisco zoo, respectively.

She’s going to try again tonight during macaroni night if Chris is there because she is really going to need Chris for this conversation. She’s halfway tempted to give them chocolate chip cookies just to make this easier on her. However the way things are going, she’s probably going to end up telling the girls five minutes before Enterprise is in Earth’s orbit.

2 a. Finding a four bedroom apartment/condo in her current neighborhood that is wheelchair accessible.

It’s stupid for her to keep staying in Jim and Spock’s townhouse when she’s probably going to be settling in San Francisco permanently regardless of whether she’s going to be able to take the position as Vulcan representative to the Federation Council. Staying in Spock’s house gives the impression that they’re just there temporarily until they actually move to the colony.

Besides Spock’s house is not wheelchair friendly and she wants her new place to be easier for Chris. Contrary to what her friend Gaila believes, that’s not for the sole purpose of making it easier for Chris to get to her bedroom. (She refuses to acknowledge that a part of her mind does see that this is an actual advantage).

This is Jim and Spock’s home and they should live here with David. Even if they are going to be spending most of their time in space, David deserves a place that’s home.

2B. Telling the girls that they’re moving.

Because she has been thinking about this for a while, even before she found out about David, she asked both girls how they felt about finding a different place to live. T’Pen asked her if they are moving so that “Admiral Daddy” no longer has to sleep in the downstairs study when he spends the night, but in her bed.

That question makes her realize that Chris sleeps over at her house a lot, although in her defense, a few of those times she was out of town and he was filling in for the most recent babysitter to quit. She is almost certain when she tells the girls that they are actually moving they’re going to ask if Chris is moving in with them. She is also almost certain that Jim or Gaila are feeding these types of questions to the girls, but she can’t prove it.

She wanted this to be all about buying toys and baking her famous sugar cookies. Instead, it was her assistant making temporary housing arrangements for her son and long conversations with the lawyers. The fact that Carol put it in her will that she wanted Spock to have custody of David worked in their favor. The fact that Carol conceived David before reaching the age of consent was not very good, even though she lied about her age. Chris was trying to keep that fact from her, but she was very good at reading between the lines. She and Spock will be having a very long conversation about that.

This also meant that she would be having a very long conversation with her almost teenage daughter about safe sex and interspecies reproduction. She never wanted to give the "Pon farr and you" talk and now she would several years before she ever wanted to. She is not dealing with a teen pregnancy. No way.

The final thing on the list was finding a new nanny, preferably somebody who could also watch David. She knew that once her son and son-in-law arrived, their days would be filled with Starfleet meetings and lawyer-visits. Childcare was going to be crucial. Unfortunately, this thing fell to the bottom of the list and she was seriously regretting that now as she called around trying to find somebody to watch her daughter when she and the lawyers tried to strategize against a certain Vulcan who she wished that Spock had never rescued.

Of course, she called Chris. He’s the person she trusts the most with her children, all of them. Unfortunately, Dr. Jackson just had to take over the call. Chris, she could easily talk into ditching his meeting to spend time with T’Pay. (Amanda doesn’t want to examine too closely what that says about their relationship.)

But she couldn’t do that to a woman who lost her husband just mere days ago. Especially one who was kind enough to send her pictures and videos of David, despite dealing with her own grief (as well as providing her with a special video file that Carol’s girlfriend made after Andrew Marcus beat the hell out of her for getting pregnant. It’s a miracle she didn’t miscarry.)

She’s played the file of David’s first birthday at least three times. The vision of a happy and smiling Carol Marcus doesn’t exactly fit her image of the woman that she used to have, but she is now very aware that Carol only did what she had to do to survive. Amanda cannot fault her decision because in the end, it saved her grandson’s life. Dr. Jackson's only condition was that Amanda does not tell Chris that she has the video files.

Because Chris was not an option, she had no choice but to contact Ms. River, which was something Amanda did not want to do. She has been successfully avoiding the preschool teacher all week by having her assistant or her other daughter pickup or drop off T’Pay from school. What she told Chris was true; she did not think it was possible for her to be around the woman formally known as
Winona Kirk without punching her out. It wasn’t because of anger at her abandoning Jim or for lying. She was mad at Winona Kirk for being a good mom to Georgia and a horrible one to Jim.

Amanda has seen her first-hand with her daughter and with young Georgia. She’s great around children and it was obvious that Georgia wanted for nothing. She always had the most beautiful dresses and the latest toys. Also, according to her own daughter, Georgia has two moms that love her and she had a real home.

Jim did not have that. During the first part of his childhood, his mom was off planet and she left him with a guy who bludgeoned a 14-year-old to death. Yes, she did leave eventually, but the second half of Jim’s childhood involved jumping from planet to planet. Although he spoke fondly of the months he lived on Vulcan and spending time with his mom, that was not the childhood Jim deserved. He deserved Georgia’s life and he didn’t get it.

Intellectually she understands why Winona did what she did. If she was in the same situation, she probably would have made the same decision. Of course Amanda prides herself on being smart enough to have never got in such a situation in the first place.

However, that doesn’t mean that she doesn’t feel anger on Jim’s behalf because he’s her son too and she wants to protect him. If she sees Winona right now she is going to let her know all about the panicked conversations she’s had with Jim about his own fears of being a father because he had such a screwed up childhood. It just doesn’t seem right that Georgia gets the good childhood.

However, she couldn’t be indignant with Winona at the sake of her other children. That meant asking the woman to watch the girls while she deals with the lawyers. In the end she was too cowardly to call. She was less likely to say the wrong thing in a text message.

I have an emergency meeting with the lawyers. Can you keep the girls? I still don’t have a new babysitter and Chris is working.

Just as she sent the message, her assistant walked into the room looking slightly worried. Considering the fact that her assistant was Vulcan, this was particularly disturbing.

“Please don’t tell me that our favorite Xenophobic council member has talked the other Xenophobic council members into filing a motion to take my grandchild away from his fathers?” Amanda asked immediately because this seems like the most logical cause for distress.
“After you left, the elder was chastened by the majority of his fellow council members. Your son saved many lives and has many allies among the Council. Most would never consider taking his child away from him.” What was left unsaid was that some would.

“That’s good.” Amanda said as she started breathing again.

“However, while you were on the phone with Admiral Pike, your lawyer called. 18.3 minutes ago, Alexander Marcus, formerly of Starfleet, filed a motion in San Francisco Family Court to gain custody of the minor child known as David Spock Marcus-Murakami and to terminate all of Spock Kirk’s parental rights on the grounds that the child’s conception was the result of nonconsensual sexual acts between an adult and a minor.”

“Fucking bastard,” Amanda mumbled under her breath before she picked up her communicator already dialing the number for the lawyers. Alexander Marcus just declared war on her family. He would find out firsthand that people who declared war on her family usually lost.

XX

“Are we even still on earth?” Chris asked, as soon as they arrived at the stark white facility. The only signs of life were the heavily armed guards walking the hallways.

“I can’t tell you that.” She said with half a smile.

“You’re supposed to tell me everything.” Chris shot back without menace.

“This is for your protection. You have been tortured for information before. They can’t torture you for information that you don’t have.” Jane remarked, as they kept moving.

“You may have a point.” He mumbled under his breath.

“I’m not 100% sure if the people who killed my husband and my friends just wanted me, or were hoping I could lead them to what they really wanted or rather who they really wanted.” She said, placing her hand on a biometric reader.

“Who do they want?” He asked as the door opened and they walked into what at first seemed like a normal hospital room. Of course, usually patients aren’t strapped to the bed.
“They originally wanted a warrior to aid in their personal war against all the gray shadows of their irrational fears. Now that they realize that he is not some docile puppet, they want the man who gave me life and turned me into a superhuman without all the nasty megalomaniac side effects, or rather his blood.”

“You’re definitely not a megalomaniac,” Chris said as she walked over to the bed and ran her hands lovingly through the man’s hair.

“I’m also no super soldier, but I think Marcus and my husband thought that I was. Jonathan did call me his little Captain America.” She remarked, as she rubbed the man’s cheek gently.

“This is what you brought me to see? Who is this?” Chris asked already 90% sure of what she will say.

“My brother. Admiral Pike, meet Khan Noonien Singh, but you know him best as John Harrison.” She kisses him on the forehead, which seems odd because Jane or rather Jaya is responsible for his current state of unconsciousness and incarceration.

"He looks nothing like you." Chris joked, not sure what to say.

"I blame plastic surgery, highlights, colonial imperialism, a little British DNA, and Alexander Marcus's preference for all things that are not the other."
Amanda was on her fifth cup of coffee during her all-nighter with the best family law lawyer (with a Starfleet background) that she could find, Alexis Abulaban. Chris and Dr. Jackson were also there with her to fill Alexis in on the more classified aspects of this potential child custody nightmare (i.e. the real reason Alexander Marcus was kicked out of Starfleet). Amanda absolutely hated Alexander Marcus, and he and his legal team, keep giving her more reasons to hate him by the second. This was all the bastard’s fault for a multitude of reasons from pushing his daughter to be a child prodigy and start classes at the academy at 14, when she was obviously not emotionally ready, to physically abusing her.

Chris looked ready to break something, when she showed him the video that Rebecca took of Carol when Marcus physically assaulted her for getting pregnant at 15. (Amanda wasn’t that happy about it either, but she never would’ve laid a hand on her child.) This latest stunt in Family Court was just one more thing, but thanks to the video, Alexis was looking forward to ripping the man to shreds in court.

Now they were sitting in a secure Starfleet facility going over evidence that their lawyer was only seeing because Alexis still had her top-secret clearance. She had only left Starfleet legal a year ago for personal reasons, for a private practice that specialized in tricky custody cases. According to rumor, she was taking care of her daughter’s sick father (throat cancer most likely caused by OPV*) because the rest of his family wanted nothing to do with him. Even though Amanda has known Alexis for years because they work together in securing the legal rights of refugees who have a story similar to Gaila, Alexis has yet to confirm these rumors.

Since they needed to strategize on how to keep David out of the hands of his abusive grandfather,
macaroni night was canceled and she had to ask "Whitney" to keep the kids overnight. Because of that they had to tell Whitney why Amanda needed an overnight babysitter, which meant telling the woman about David. She couldn’t stop smiling when she found out about her first grandchild and offered to help in any way she could, even if it meant babysitting duty.

A good thing that came out of that situation was Whitney, when she was sneaking out of Jim’s commendation ceremony, actually heard Alexander Marcus and Carol arguing about her undergoing in vitro and her decision to use a Vulcan sperm donor. (The fact that Whitney risked going there made Amanda a little less angry.) This new evidence is the main thing they are discussing right now.

“If she could testify, it would, at the very least, cast a reasonable doubt on the matter in which David was conceived.” Amanda suggested.

“Except she can’t testify because she’s in witness protection and we’re not even supposed to know that she is alive.” Chris reminded the room as he held onto Amanda’s hand for support. If he wasn’t here right now, she would probably fall apart. “Yes, I know she said she would break cover for Jim, but that is an unacceptable risk right now.”

“It is also not necessary. Just the mere fact that David was born several years after the "alleged" incident took place can create reasonable doubt,” Alexis explained. “Marcus is going to have to produce a truckload of evidence to prove that Carol underwent the embryo removal procedure and had it frozen and then had the embryo replanted instead of just asking Spock for more sperm to create a new embryo.”

“The records don’t exist outside of Jonathan’s hard drive. Everything was done under fake names and the records were wiped clean.” Dr. Jackson said almost on the verge of tears.

“But records do exist and because your deceased husband and Marcus were friends, the man could have a copy. I’m going to need to see that.” Alexis sighed.

“Friendship is not the term I would use to describe that relationship considering I am halfway convinced that Marcus was responsible for his death, even if he didn’t do it himself.” The doctor’s voice was bitter and angry.

“I can let you look at what we found, but you won’t be able to use it in court. It’s too classified.” Chris sighed.
“You mean it’s too damning to Starfleet.” Alexis mumbled under breath and Chris just stayed silent at the accusation. “Alexander Marcus is a brilliant military strategist. He probably knows that he’s not going to be able to prove David’s conception was not the result of in vitro as Carol told everybody. That’s not the point of what he’s doing.”

“Then why is he doing this?” Amanda asked in exasperation.

“Obviously, he wants David.” Alexis quipped.

“Yes, as a science experiment.” Dr. Jackson spat out.

“Alexander Marcus cannot find out that David now has super antibodies. He cannot get his hands on that child. I won’t let that fucking bastard get anywhere near him.” Chris said as he squeezed her hand harder. (Even the very edited-for-content explanation of why Starfleet does not want Alexander Marcus anywhere near David was enough to make both her and Alexis very upset. If it hadn’t saved David’s life, she would have been furious that he was used as part of a secret drug trial. As a mom, she understands though.)

“I’m right there with you. The fact that I have evidence that he beat the hell out of a 15-year-old girl and tried to force her to have an abortion pretty much proves that this guy should not be in the same room as any child.” Alexis added gravely.

“So we work on disproving the statutory allegation?” Amanda asked.

“You can’t disprove something that’s actually true and your son did have sex with somebody under the age of consent. Again, it doesn’t matter. This whole exercise is about Alexander Marcus getting custody of David. The most important thing he is trying to prove is that Spock is an unfit father. Even if he can’t prove that the conception occurred before the age of consent, he can prove that Spock engaged in a sexual relationship with an underage person because he did.” Alexis said in the most matter-of-fact tone possible.

“But the Vulcan age of consent is 14, it could easily be argued that it was merely a cultural misunderstanding.” Amanda said in her son’s defense.

“Which would be really valuable for the criminal trial, but this is Family Court and the rules are different.” Alexis shot back.
“If everybody used stupid things you did when you were 19 against you, we would all be fucked.” Chris added. “Keep in mind that she also lied about her age. Spock was under the impression she was the same age as all her other classmates.”

“Is there anyone alive that can attest to that other than Spock? I thought the majority of her classmates were killed during the battle of Vulcan?” Alexis asked him in pure lawyer mode.

“No, she graduated a few years before that because Alexander pushed her like crazy to be his perfect little genius, which explains why she went buck wild at the Academy. It was the first time in her life she had any freedom whatsoever.” Chris explained. “There are lots of people who know that she did this. Even my boss can testify to that. She saw it happen a few times. Her husband busted Carol for using a fake ID at a local club and she literally begged him not to tell her dad because she was afraid of what he would do to her.”

“She had a good reason. Also, I’d don’t think it counts as statutory when you were hopped up on aphrodisiacs and fertility drugs, against your will.” Dr. Jackson said, in all seriousness, which made Amanda very confused.

“What?” Amanda asked for clarification because this was the first time anyone’s mentioned the possibility that Spock’s actions were something beyond normal teenage hormones and stupidity.

“You didn’t tell her!” Dr. Jackson gave Chris a very sharp look.

“It was classified.” Chris explained, and now Amanda really wanted to know what they were talking about.

“She’s your girlfriend.” Amanda was expecting Chris to refute the accusation, but he just stayed silent. There was a treacherous voice inside of Amanda’s mind that hoped he was doing so because maybe he did see her that way. Amanda really did despise that voice.

“Regardless of what our personal relationship may be, I don’t expect Chris to tell me something classified even if it involves my son being essentially raped. I mean, that’s what you’re telling me happened?” She directed her question to Chris because he would never lie to her directly.

“I wanted to show the file to Spock before I told you. He has a right to know he was unknowingly pumped full of aphrodisiacs and experimental fertility drugs at the hands of Jonathan Jackson before I started telling other people about it.” Chris was right; Spock was the first one who should
know about this.

“If that’s what happened then this was at best dubious consent, from a legal standpoint. However, I will need to know the particulars of what was done to know for sure.” Alexis said thoughtfully.

“Yes, Chris, I know that it’s not something I can bring up in court because it’s so classified but I would feel a lot better defending a guy who was coerced into sleeping with the underage, as some hopefully non-sanctioned Starfleet experiment, instead of just being too horny to check to see that the girl he was sleeping with was old enough to give consent.”

“I want to see that file.” Amanda demanded. Someone turned her son into an experiment, and she was absolutely furious about it. Nobody hurts her child like that. If Jonathan Jackson wasn’t dead, Amanda would kill him herself.

“Spock hasn’t even seen that file yet.” Chris sighed.

“Then you better email it to him quick. If she gets to see it, I get to see it.” Amanda said forcefully.

“I’m going to have to check with my boss,” Chris said with a sigh.

“Do that.” Alexis said just as she grabbed her PADD again. “Look, it’s highly probable that I can get the statutory stuff thrown out without violating national security, but there are other damaging things that the guy is going to bring up, particularly Mr. Spock-Kirk’s mental health history. There are reports that he actually tried to kill his former boyfriend.” As soon as she said it, Amanda knew exactly what incident she was talking about. Out of context, the entire thing could look like a domestic violence incident and not something that happened during the heat of battle.

“Shit!” Chris exclaimed.

“I thought that stuff was taken care of?” Amanda asked looking directly at Chris.

“Lieutenant Uhura is my daughter’s sister. She lived with me for a while after her mom died and stayed with me during the summers when she wasn’t doing an internship. I never believed her version of events about how she became a Lieutenant Commander straight out of the Academy. There are too many holes in her story and I think I know what she never told me.” Because of the different last names, it never dawned on Amanda that Alexis’s daughter Ivy was also Nyota’s
“My son-in-law became a Captain straight out of the Academy.” Amanda said trying to deflect, but it didn’t work.

“Your son-in-law is the reason why we’re not all dead. That leads me to believe that Ny did something very heroic. I heard rumors that she incapacitated her friend after he went off the deep end and tried to choke his ex-boyfriend to death because his father just died. When I asked her about it, she suddenly had an appointment that she forgot about. How close am I to the truth?” Alexis asked, staring Chris down.

“Does anybody keep classified material to themselves anymore?” Chris mumbled under breath.

“I’m going to take that as a ‘yes, this actually happened’. You need to worry about this because Marcus was the head of Starfleet at the time the incident took place. I’m sure that he knows about this and may try to use it. I’m going to need Spock to consent to me looking at his full psych history, so I can prepare for any curveballs they bring our way.” She tried to make it sound like a request, but Amanda knew better.

“I will talk to him about it as soon as possible, but that may not be until Enterprise reaches Earth. I can’t tell you everything, but I can tell you that’s not exactly what happened. The person who Spock attacked marooned Spock’s bond mate on Delta Vega. Being separated from his bond mate during the first 72 hours caused severe psychological problems.” This was a nice way of saying that between the psychic backlash of losing his father and being away from the stabilizing force of his bond mate, Spock had a complete psychotic break.

“Second, due to cultural sensitivity and the exact nature of what happened on board; the incident was classified under a C46 medical hold at the TS NNF level. Even Alexander Marcus could not access the information.” Chris explained.

“Do you really think a guy who siphoned money to build secret warships is going to care about a medical hold being on the file of the guy who got his teenage daughter pregnant? I told you about operation Klingon bait.” The doctor argued back. Amanda really wanted to know what the hell they were talking about. She has a feeling it would give her one more reason to be mad at Alexander Marcus.

“Do I want to know?” Alexis asked, with her head in her hands.
“No,” both answered emphatically.

“Are they really going to hold something against Spock that happened under extreme duress when he’s responding well to medication now and Dr. Cruz will give him a glowing report regarding these last few days with David?” Amanda questioned.

“Yes, because this is Alexander Marcus and he’s going to use all weapons available. I’m sure he’s also going to use Spock’s husband against him too.” Alexis warned.

“James is a highly decorated Starfleet Captain; I like to see him try.” Amanda scoffed.

“However, before he joined Starfleet he had a reputation for being the best genius level repeat offender in the Midwest. How many times was he arrested?” Alexis asked not even bothering to look up from the file she was reading on her PADD.

“That was a reaction to his mom being beaten to death by his stepfather or at least that’s what he believed at the time.” Amanda told her defensively.

This conversation reminded Amanda that in addition to the custody situation they were still going to have to tell Jim that his sister-in-law’s preschool teacher was his dead mother who never died, but just went into witness protection. That was going to be a fun conversation.

“I’m not even touching that. Let’s say they ignore all of Jim’s misspent youth and just focus on the current stuff. The jobs of first officer and Starfleet captain are very high stress positions. They don’t exactly leave a lot of time to take care of kids. Also less than three months ago, children were not even allowed on starships. Which means that David would have been put in the custody of a third-party every time they went on a mission. That, and the fact that their current mission is long-term deep space, will not do us any favors with the judge.” Alexis argued and Amanda could see that her points were valid.

“That was three months ago. Children are allowed on starships now, so that old argument will not work. Then there is also the fact that Jim and Spock are going to be earthbound for the next year as Enterprise is renovated to become the most family-friendly ship in the entire fleet.” Chris shot right back.

“It is still a high stress job with lots of responsibilities. Any good judge is going to be asking if Jim and Spock can adequately take care of a minor child under those circumstances.” Alexis explained
most likely playing devil’s advocate.

“Like Alexander Marcus is going to be any better.” Dr. Jackson mumbled under breath.

“On paper, it may look that way. He has a high paying job, lots of friends in high places, and a 30-year-old trophy wife. Spock, on the other hand, has a history of violence and mental issues. His husband has been arrested at least a dozen times and at least one of those incidents was a violent offense. Jim also grew up in a home where beatings were normal. Some may think that because of that, he may believe the same way.”

“Do you remember the video file that I showed you earlier of Carol Marcus’s bruised body?” Amanda asked pulling out her ‘I’m dealing with Stupid Vulcan diplomats’ voice.

“If Carol was still alive, it might be a little bit easier to use that as evidence against him, but the judge may not even allow us to introduce this evidence, especially without any additional collaboration.”

If Carol was alive, this would be an entirely different type of custody case, but nobody dared mention that possibility. It would probably be a lot more amicable, if nothing else which was saying something considering Carol had concealed David’s existence from everyone.

“Look, I’m going to try everything I can to prove that Alexander Marcus is a bastard and Jim and Spock would be the best dads ever to David Marcus, but we need to go in there with a third option.” Alexis told him in all seriousness.

“Like a woman who adopted two beautiful Vulcan children and happens to be a certified foster parent.” Chris suggested with a smile on his face.

“You want me to sue for custody?” Amanda asked, and Alexis just nodded her head. “Won’t that undermine Jim and Spock’s bid?”

“Not necessarily. We’re just giving the judge another viable option. Although, unfortunately we got Judge Ryan, who prefers ‘traditional’ families over less traditional ones.” Amanda did not like hearing that from Alexis.

“So the fact that Spock is married to a man is going to be a problem?” Chris asked before Amanda
had a chance to.

“I don’t think so, considering he’s married to a man himself. The guy is more biased towards single-parent households. As long as a kid has two parents, he really doesn’t care about the gender of said parents. Chris, if you’re thinking about putting a ring on it, I suggest proposing now.” Alexis said in all seriousness. Now Amanda was expecting Chris to just laugh it off, but instead he got that look of pure determination on his face. She knows that look. He was actually taking Alexis’s suggestion seriously.

“You’re not actually considering getting married?” She asked, turning to Chris.

“Why not?” He asked her in all seriousness.

“I can come up with a dozen reasons, including the fact that you are not in love with me.” She didn’t shout, but it was a near thing.

“Who says I’m not in love with you?” Chris told her, looking directly at her, still with his hand in hers. He never let go.

“Wait, you’re in love with me?” She asked still stunned because how could anybody fall in love with an overstressed mother of three who is still half in love with her deceased husband.

“I didn’t mean to say that out loud.” He mumbled under his breath.

“We’re going to go get more coffee.” The doctor mumbled, dragging the lawyer out of the room.

“You’re in love with me?” She asks Chris one more time completely sure that the answer is yes.

Fuck! Shit! Fuck!

He was never planning to tell Amanda that he was in love with her, but it just slipped out. He blames sleep deprivation and having probably the most high stress job in Starfleet now. Discovering that Jane was feeding information about Marcus’ treatment of Carol to Amanda just
added to his stress level. Not to mention that he spent his afternoon with a guy who may or may not be one of the biggest mass murderers of the 20th century (but he tried to kill a pregnant Carol, so he really didn’t give a fuck), when he was notified that Andrew Marcus was making his life miserable.

They couldn’t even get a gag order issued fast enough before all of this stuff was all over the net. They could only do spin control right now, which means repeating the story Carol told all her friends about undergoing in vitro with donated Vulcan sperm from a friend and her specific wishes that, that friend raise her child in the event that she and her partner died at the same time.

If he finds out who notified Alexander Marcus that David Marcus-Kirk survived the massacre and was in the loving care of his biological father, Chris was going to strangle her or him. A phaser would be too good.

Half of section 31 was working on trying to connect Alex to the massacre so they could arrest him before more people ended up dead. It wouldn’t be soon enough.

Chris decided that he would be the only one from Starfleet meeting with the lawyers. Too much personal stuff was going to come out during this meeting and he didn’t want anyone else from Starfleet to know about it. Jane was there as a witness because of her friendship with Carol and her first-hand knowledge of Alex’s treachery. She was also there to explain that due to a medical experiment that kept the child alive, Alexander Marcus should not be allowed within 1000 m of David (while giving out as little classified information as possible). The two women think that it was a drug trial that stimulates antibody production, not exposure to the genetically modified blood of a psychopath. It was better if Amanda did not know.

When Alexis suggested that he marry Amanda to make it more likely that she would get custody, there was this little voice inside his mind that said ‘do it because this may be the only way that you would ever get to be with her’. Of course, he wasn’t expecting to actually tell her that he was in love with her. Really, it just slipped out. He could lie, but he couldn’t. Not to her. He had done that once before and he wasn’t doing it again.

“Yes.” He answered simply. Deep down she had to know. Everyone else did.

“As a friend? Because that’s what we tell everybody? He hasn’t even been gone for four years yet, I can’t...” Amanda babbled until he brought her hand to his lips and kissed her fingertips.

“I know that’s how you see me. It’s not like I meant for this to happen. I have a pretty good track record of falling in love with people I shouldn’t fall in love with.” She just laughed at him.
“You’re the strongest woman I’ve ever met. There is this fire to you that I’ve never seen before. You make me laugh when I want to cry. You are the first person I go to when bad things are happening. I don’t know how I fell in love with you. I don’t even know when I fell in love with you. It just happened.”

“Oh,” was the only words that fell passed her lips. That response made him terrified that he was going to lose her.

“We can pretend this conversation never happened and I will still be your friend. I will be that guy you call over for macaroni night and babysitting. We can just leave it at that. I need you in my life and I will take that in any form available.” He said, trying to let go of her hand, but she wouldn’t let him.

“What if I don’t want to?” He heard Amanda whisper.

“What?” He asked, completely surprised. There is no way she could mean that the way he wants her to mean that.

“My daughters already think we are dating. Actually, when I told them that I was thinking about moving into a new house that was more wheelchair friendly, they thought it was because you were finally moving in with us.” Okay, thinking about it now, maybe he should’ve read something into the fact that Amanda asked him to go with her to the realtor. That’s not a just a friend thing.

“I blame Jim.” He joked.

“Probably,” she sighed. “I was never supposed to be the one doing this. I was supposed to die first.”

“I’m glad you’re here because I can’t imagine your husband handling the situation with baby David very well.” He said, not wanting to address her real concern.

“Even I wish that Marcus had called me instead of Sarak. Things would be so different now. The first thing I would have done was asked for another DNA test. The second thing would have been to get her out of that abusive home. Even if she wasn’t carrying my grandchild, I could not leave her with a man like that in good conscience.” Amanda said, leaning into his shoulder.
“Maybe things would have been better if you had,” he said, wrapping an arm around her. “Or maybe everyone would have died during the battle of Vulcan. You don’t know how things could have been different if you had made other choices. It really doesn’t matter now because these choices are already made and you can’t go back.”

Because as much as Chris wished that his Number One was there with him, he would not trade these last few years with Amanda, not even for her.

“It’s been 3 years and I have to stop wishing to have my old life on Vulcan back. I have to…” Instead of more words, he feels Amanda’s lips on his. It’s tentative at first, but it intensifies as he realizes that this is real and something he should have done months ago. Everything goes blank as Amanda continues kissing him. At some point she’s straddling him and he’s panting. Making out in this chair definitely requires creativity.

“So is this the yes on marriage?” They hear Alexis asked, which causes both he and Amanda to break apart temporarily.

“It’s going to be a long engagement, but we may end up there.” Amanda said quickly before her mouth returns to his, not caring about lawyers or impending child custody battles for the moment.

“As your lawyer, I recommend a quick wedding. It would give us more leverage in the hearing.” He heard Alexis said over his shoulders, but honestly, he’s not paying attention. He realizes he’s acting like a 15-year-old, but he really doesn’t care.

“They just—you know, never mind, it’s better if you don’t know. You need plausible deniability.” The last part was mumbled under Jane’s breath. “Let’s go talk about all the non-classified things I can tell you about Alexander Marcus before those two discover the advantages of wheelchair sex.”

“I want dinner first.” Amanda said, finally catching up to the conversation going around them after the two women left again.

“I assume you want a kid-free dinner.” He said, pressing a kiss to her neck.

“We can make Jim and Spock babysit,” She joked just before kissing him again.
To be continued

Chapter End Notes

Jim and Spock were supposed to have a moment in this chapter but I did not want to ruin Chris and Amanda's. Also, I wanted to get this chapter out sooner. Those scenes will be in the next chapter.

Review if you’re happy that Chris and Amanda finally got it together.

* Orion Papillomavirus (OPV). If you’ve read my story Starfleet Family Values, you may be familiar with this particular made-up disease. However, it acts very similar to contemporary Human Papillomavirus (HPV). Also bonus points to anybody who can tell me what else I borrowed from that particular story.
Even, I Think I’m Crazy Right Now

Chapter Notes

Thank you to everybody who read or reviewed the last chapter. I know that you’re all ecstatic that Chris and Amanda finally got it together. I do want to clarify that the couple, despite their lawyer’s wishes, are not planning a quickie wedding. Like Amanda said, she wanted a date first. Exactly how engaged they are, will come out later in the story.

Okay, this is going to be another one of those crazy trippy chapters but at least this time, Spock is not having a really weird conversation with his human side, although that may make more sense than what actually does happen in this chapter. Inspired by: Beam Me Up by Pink

Okay, this choice obviously breaks the fourth wall for the obvious Star Trek reference in the title, but I kept humming it the entire time.

“There’s a whole other conversation going on/In a parallel universe/Where nothin’ breaks and nothin’ hurts”

“Saw a blackbird soarin’ in the sky/Barely a breath I caught one last sight/Tell me that was you sayin’ goodbye/There are times I feel the shiver and cold/ It only happens when I'm on my own/That’s how you tell me I'm not alone.”

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Spock rarely dreamed. On the few occasions that he does, he was positive it was James’ influence because the dreams mostly involve elaborate fantasies of a sexual nature, complete with leather restraints, silk scarves, or their collection of sex toys. On less pleasant occasions, these dreams consist of broken memories of the Tarsus massacre, James’ strange visit to a parallel universe where his counterpart was assassinated, or any number of missions where one or both almost died. The ‘volcano incident’ where James actually violated the prime directive to save Spock’s life features quite commonly in James’ dreams. Because of the message they received from Starfleet regarding Alexander Marcus’ challenge to their custody of David, Spock expected Jim to dream of losing David.

This is a different type of dream because his subconscious self is sleeping next to Nyota not James. It was not that unusual for her to fall asleep in their bedroom due to movie nights and late-night planning sessions. However the fact that she was completely nude under the blanket was (James never succeeded in talking her into a ‘threesome’, but gave up trying once he realized that she was in love with Doctor McCoy. He said that doing that would be against the ‘best friend code’.)

Spock leaves her for the bathroom. Considering that the three of them shared a bathroom up until last week, it was not unusual to find feminine hygiene products under the sink. Actually, it felt strange for those items to no longer be there, but here they were once again. Of course, David’s rubber ducky was in there too. However, James’ aftershave and body wash were missing. Also, the only razor to be found was purple.
He continued on with his morning routine as if he actually was waking up and finds himself staring at the closet, which is filled with command yellow tops that were mostly in his size, except for one in the back that he knows belongs to Jim. Nyota’s uniforms are also mixed in. The vast amount of children size clothes inside is overwhelming. Also it contains some civilian clothes in Nyota’s size, but all of James’ vintage band T-shirts are missing.

Jim’s antique collectibles are gone, even the kid friendly ones that they felt they could leave with David around and were not ready to pack yet. However, the coloring books and finger paint were right where he left them last night. In addition, there are twice as many toys covering the room.

There are pictures of Nyota with her sister Ivy scattered throughout the quarters. It’s obvious to Spock that some of these are hand-drawn by his son. Considering that David has never met Ivy, this seems odd. The label underneath it referring to the woman as Aunt Ivy is also disconcerting.

In addition to David’s drawing, there is a digital picture frame that flickers through various images. The first is of Spock and Jim on their wedding day. The next is a 3-D scan of David, while still in utero. The next unusual picture was of Jim with his hands on Carol’s pregnant stomach. Spock has never seen his husband smile so much before. Next there is a picture of Spock holding David as a baby, but his eyes are dead. The image reminds him of his mother immediately following his father’s death.

The next images are of a funeral and his mother standing beside him in black. She is crying. However, more bizarrely was the fact that Spock himself was crying. He does not cry. The only thing that would make him cry would be if he lost Jim or David. The fact that he nearly stepped on a toy car told him that David was very much alive in this bizarre dream. But he wondered about James, considering that the next image was of him and Nyota being bonded. Spock finds this the most disturbing, because the only explanation for something like that would be that James was gone.

“Of everything you’ve seen in this world, that is what you find most disturbing?” Spock hears a voice that he never expected to hear again, except in video files. “You know, one of those images was of you and your mom saying goodbye to your husband and the second guy that she’s ever fallen in love with.” Carol confirmed his suspicions as she materialized in front of him.

The person in front of him was not the young girl pretending to be a woman who he went to the Academy with. Neither did she look like the lifeless body that he found on NCX17.

“You are dead.” He wondered if due to the stress of recent events, he was having another episode. However, instead of conversing with a human version of himself, Spock is dealing with his guilt personified as a vision of Carol. He did not save her when he should have. Why did he just let her walk away from him at the Academy? Why did he never question her story? He saw the bruises and he did nothing?
“Death is a relative state. In our dimension, I died protecting our son. In this dimension, our son is sleeping next to me on the other side of the bathroom door.”

Because of her words, he walked over to the restroom and opened door to the other suite only to see another version of Carol with David wrapped around her.

“Really, you should be used to this.” Carol says closing the door. “There’s another version of you running around our dimension and several others. Although I wish he would have told me that in his home dimension, I got pregnant by your husband instead of you and kept it from him for reasons I don’t even understand. I don’t like that version of myself.” She said, sitting on the sink. Spock realizes that this is the sink that was in the room before he and James destroyed it on Nyota’s birthday.

“You did the same thing in our dimension.” Spock shot back angrily.

“But I had a reason. I wasn’t planning to keep him away from you forever, just until the rules were changed and David could live with you and Jim on Enterprise. I was already planning to send him to you.” He did not entirely believe her.

“But that did not happen.” He said simply.

“No, it did not and I’m sorry. I’m sorry that I kept David from you. I’m sorry that I lied to you. I’m sorry that I never told you I was pregnant in the first place. I realize that I made everything worse and you probably wish you never met me at the Academy.” Sometimes he wished that, but that was before David and becoming truly aware of what was happening back then. Now, he wouldn’t want to live in a world without his son, even if that meant going through the pain of his relationship with Carol.

“I’ve been to several dimensions like that.” She says after he has been silent for too long. “I can honestly say that Jonathan Jackson completely fucked up my life, even if we got David out of it. Basically, if Jonathan Jackson never joined Starfleet and tried to make us his personal attempt at super soldiers, our paths would not have crossed for years.” This was not new information for him after reading her diary entries previously. Also, when he and James were notified about the motions filed in court by Alexander Marcus, Spock received a copy of the information pulled from Jonathan Jackson’s computer regarding the ‘Super Vulcan soldier’ project. He broke his PADD.

“In that dimension we did not meet until I snuck aboard Enterprise because I knew my father was
doing something horrible.” She said closing her eyes.

"Your father has done a lot of horrible things.” Spock says without adding ‘a part of me thinks that he is responsible for your death.’

“In both dimensions during his time as the head of Starfleet, my father slowly started moving the organization away from a peacekeeping and scientific entity to a more militarized organization. He turns section 31 into his own secret army. In addition he funneled billions of credits into weapons design. He even defrosted one of the most violent tactile minds of the 20th century to make weapons for him so he could start his war with the Klingons. According to Jaya, a majority of the atrocities contributed to him in the history books were exaggerated. I don’t really care because the genetically engineered bastard sent me into premature labor in our dimension.”

“I am aware of who triggered your premature labor.” Spock said, shutting his eyes again as he remembered his conversation with his counterpart from two days previous.

“As bad as that was, it beats the alternative of him blowing up a secret Starfleet installation and crashing Alexander's great warship into San Francisco. Apparently you found some of the files I left behind for you in case this did happen. Although, I don’t think you found the stuff related to Alexander’s treason yet, otherwise you would not be that surprised about the USS Vengeance thing.” Her voice was angry.

“We are unable to decrypt the files in the teddy bear.” He answered, slightly afraid to ask her more questions related to this warship.

“You’re going to need that information. My father being a war mongering bastard seems to be a universal constant. According to my pretentious guide, who goes by a letter of the alphabet, I’m deciding what version of myself I want to fold into. I pretty much found it impossible to find a dimension where my father was not completely evil. I’m probably going to have to settle for spending eternity in a version of myself from a dimension where Jonathan Jackson did not join Starfleet. At least in those dimensions, Alexander is dead and can’t hurt me anymore.” The tone of her voice and her facial expression made Spock wonder exactly how much her father had hurt her in her lifetime.

“Where we lovers in that dimension?” He asked instead of asking her about her father’s abuse directly. Considering that question was the alternative, Spock was well aware that he would rather remain ignorant to the true depravity of Alexander Marcus. Otherwise he may be tempted to rip the man in half when they finally meet in court.
“No. Actually, you hated me, or rather were jealous of me because you thought I was going to take your James away from you.” She said with a laugh. “This was especially absurd considering you were dating Lieutenant Uhura at the time, even if it was obvious that you were in love with your Captain.”

This revelation does not surprise him because, if he was not so jaded from his experiences with her, Spock would’ve been more receptive to Nyota’s advances at the Academy. At the same time being in love with James Kirk seemed to be another universal constant.

“Of course you don’t realize that you’re in love with him until he dies in front of you. But don’t worry, in these dimensions, Dr. McCoy is alive to bring him back using the same technique that Jaya used to revive David.” Spock’s mine instantly remembered the research they found regarding rejuvenating antibodies in augment blood.

“Dimensions?” Spock questioned, picking up on her use of the plural. It seemed like she would be more willing to clarify this point then anything related to the procedure done to revive David.

“My guide allowed me to see three different versions of this dimension, one where you completely deny your feelings for your Captain and carry on with the Lieutenant as if nothing happened. That was not a very happy place for those of us who were serving on board. Then there was the version where you ended up cheating on the Lieutenant with your James, again not a great place for any of us working under you to be. Then there is the happy dimension or at least happy for you and your future husband considering Rebecca died before we even met during the battle of Vulcan. The lieutenant convinced you and Jim that you are in love with each other and to try a threesome and I ended up with Dr. McCoy.” Spock just gives her a strange look.

“I don’t know how it happened, but it seems like a nice place and he seems like a nice guy. He did bring your James back from the dead. If I can’t find a place where Rebecca is alive and well, I might end up there.”

“Is that this dimension?” As soon as he asked the question, Spock remembered that James was dead in this dimension and that David was sleeping in the next room.

“No. I told you earlier that Jim died here. You’re bonded to Lieutenant Commander Uhura because you refused to be with anyone your grandmother tried to set you up with and Uhura promised a dying Jim that she would take care of you.” James would do something like that.

“How did he die?”
“Do you really want to know that?” Carol asked cautiously.

“Yes.”

“See in this dimension, I told you that I was pregnant with David at the wedding because your other self talked me into it. Instead of hanging around London where I could monitor Alexander’s warmongering, I was assigned to Enterprise as a science officer with Rebecca in engineering. Alexander wasn’t happy and set things up to make you and Jim lose your commission. Actually, he did that in a lot of dimensions. The difference was that things went to hell in London a month later without me there. For some reason, Jaya was not around to help control John and he decided to blow up the place. Okay, I think that happened in some of the other dimensions too.”

“You keep referring to this Jaya. Who is she? There was no one at the research facility by that name.” Spock questioned.

“That is Dr. Jane Jackson’s real name. She is the woman who saved David’s life. Her husband is an absolute Dick who screwed with us, but she is a sweetheart. It’s not her fault. She has absolutely horrible taste in men.”

“He was murdered recently.” He told her without inflection.

“That’s nice.” Carol actually said with a smile. Spock just gave her a strange look.

“I’m sorry that she lost her husband, but he was a bastard. He set us up. He was like a father to me, and he turned you and me into some sick lab experiment. I love David. I died for David. But that does not mean that Jonathan Jackson had a right to do what he did. It was rape. He raped both of us. We had no control over what we did and he wanted to use David. He wanted super soldiers, ones that he could control.” Her statement just confirmed the information he received from Christopher Pike earlier.

“I am only dissatisfied at his death for the mere fact that I did not get to directly participate.” His inner pre-reform Vulcan craved Jonathan Jackson’s blood for hurting all those close to him, including Carol.

“That doesn’t surprise me. In this dystrophic dimension we are currently standing in, you killed John Harrison with your bare hands because he killed Christopher Pike, and then his actions resulted in the death of Dr. McCoy, my Rebecca, and your James. The only good thing he did was
kill my father. See, like in those other dimensions, I told you about Jim sacrificing his life to save everyone on board the ship, but here, there was no Dr. McCoy to bring him back because he was already dead. The only reason why you and I are still alive is David.” He understands her words. If Spock were to lose James, he would not want to go on, but he would for David and only David.

“Why am I here?” As he spoke, he wondered why he did not ask that question earlier. He doubts that this is really a dream.

“So we could talk and I can make peace with everything. Also I need to convince you to stop second-guessing yourself. I don’t regret dying because David is safe and in your arms with James by your side. Despite all the drugs and manipulation, I really did love you and all I wanted was for you to be happy.” She said, giving him a sad smile. Spock never heard her say those words before, but it felt almost painful to hear them now after he was unable to save her.

“I am.” He answered simply.

“No, you’re not.” She shot back. “If one more bad thing happens, David will be visiting you in the psych ward.” Considering Spock wonders if he is having another psychotic break, she may have a very valid point. “Spock, stop blaming yourself for not seeing what was going on. You have to let go of the road untraveled, thinking that it was some beautiful place where everything is wonderful. If you don’t let go, you’re going to end up like that guy down the hall in your dimension.”

“I believe he is currently engaging in carnal relations with Gaila,” Spock quipped.

“That’s one of the few things he is letting himself indulge in. He’s buried under a ton of guilt. I don’t want that to happen to you. Promise me that it won’t.” She literally begged him. She seemed on the verge of tears, but she has been for the majority of this bizarre conversation.

“Also, you may want to show him the teddy bear, because I used his encryption key. In addition to the files containing lots of information about the dirtiest little secret in Starfleet, I left a message for David.” That would explain why the encryption used resembles his system.

“Of course,” He answered simply.

“Don’t be too hard on your other self for sleeping with her. You have the Jim of your world wrapped around your little finger. The rest of us just have to find the next best thing.”
“Was Rebecca your next best thing?” He asked curiously.

"She is—was the love of my life. She’s the reason why I keep looking for another dimension where we end up together. I’m not as lucky as you; it seems like almost every dimension, you end up with Jim in some capacity."

“Not in this one.” He said looking back into the bedroom where a naked Nyota was pretending to sleep. He was aware they were being watched.

"Even here, you had his heart. He died for you. You’re easy to love.” She said grabbing his hand pressing their fingers together. “Take care of our son. Keep him safe.”

“Where are you going?” Spock asked as she pulled away from him.

“I can only stay here for a little while once I realize I can’t be at peace here. I’m trying to find a world where I can find both Rebecca and David. I’m going to a dimension where you and Jim did not meet until the Kobayashi Maru incident, but ended up getting ‘married’ before my dad decided to kill you.” She told him giving him a watery smile.

“Your father tried to kill me even in a dimension where we did not have sex?” Spock asked perplexed.

“My father is a bloody moron in any dimension. You and your husband better keep him away from David. Yes, Jim, I’m trusting you with my son,” she said, turning to Nyota or at least the person Spock thought was her, but now he is uncertain. “I know you will be a good dad. Plus, I owe you for what that cow version of me did to you. I don’t care if you drop my last name, but let him keep Rebecca’s name.” For a moment he felt Carol’s lips on his cheek, but then she disappeared.

Moments later, his eyes blinked open to see David resting in his arms, James wrapped around their son’s other side wearing one of his barely appropriate and not at all regulation vintage concert T-shirts. He was back home with Jim.

Xxxxxxx

Okay, Nyota is obviously still dreaming because another version of her was staring at her in bunny slippers and a really big T-shirt. The last time she ran into another version of herself, the woman was captain of the ISS Enterprise and a bearded version of Spock was her ‘concubine’. That was a really strange place. That incident also involved an ion storm and having to be beamed up at the
worst possible time due to a mission going to hell.

Then again, maybe this was her own personal nervous breakdown. She has been trying to do Spock’s job and her normal job for the last week. Jim Kirk sitting can make anybody go slightly crazy.

“You’re not having a nervous breakdown. I’m also not some figment of your subconscious.” She heard this other version of her say.

"Do you have Spock as your concubine?" She asked, even though she doubted it because it seems unlikely that evil Nyota would own bunny slippers even if they made them in that twisted dimension.

"Okay you ended up in that dimension too. No, he’s not my sex slave, we’re just bonded.” This other version of her doesn’t seem happy about it. Maybe she realizes that her husband is completely in love with Jim Kirk; but unlike human marriage, Vulcan bonding is permanent. In hindsight, Nyota is glad that Spock fell in love with Jim first. It would have been a disaster if it happened the other way around.

"So you’re from a world where I managed to get with Spock before Jim came along?" She asked and her other self just frowned.

"No, I’m not. I’m you." Okay, she wasn’t expecting to hear that. It can’t be true because this woman looked almost the same age as her except more wary.

"No, you’re not." She retorted.

"Yes I am, almost. Our lives were exactly identical until the day of Jim’s wedding. That’s when our timeline diverged, because older Spock forced Carol to tell our Spock about being pregnant with David.” Other Nyota told her this in a way that seemed 100% believable.

"Not again.” She groaned. “I really hate alternate timelines. But wait, how can I be…” She stopped speaking abruptly once she realized that the only reason why she would end up with Spock now would be if Jim…

"Jim is dead in your world?” The other version of herself just gave her a sad look at the question.
“Are you here to give me some dire warning?” Because she could see herself crossing the dimensional divide to make sure that didn’t happen. Spock would be miserable without Jim. She would do anything in her power to keep that from happening, even violating the time travel Prime Directive.

"Yes, but not about Jim. The event that took his life has already passed in this dimension.” Her voice was sad as she spoke.

"Considering how many near-death experiences Jim Kirk has had, I am not even sure I can narrow it down.” She mumbled to herself, literally.

“Because of certain choices made in your timeline, that event did not happen in this reality at all.” Other Nyota explains with half a smile.

"And you ended up with Spock?” She asked again.

"He is my best friend and he would’ve ended up in an arranged bonding otherwise.” Considering some of the choices that Spock’s grandmother brought by in hopes of one of the Vulcans becoming Jim and Spock’s gestational carrier, she could understand why Spock would consider this option.

“What about…” That’s when she realized she was about to ask her other self why she wasn’t with Leonard. She stopped speaking, instantly. She refused to acknowledge what that really meant.

"Leonard is dead.” As other Nyota said the words, her eyes went dead. There was no life there whatsoever, she seemed broken. She wanted to ask if Leonard died when James did, but she couldn’t bring herself to ask that question. It was just too painful.

“Is that what you’re here to warn me about?” She asked instead.

"Yes and no," Other Nyota answered cryptically.

"That was helpful." She responded as sarcastically as possible.

“Do you know that it’s the worst feeling in the world to realize that you’re in love with somebody
as they take their last breath?” Now she understands that haunted look from earlier.

“Shit!” Because really, what else can you say to something like that.

“That’s why I am married to someone who can only see me as a friend; we are both in love with dead people.”

"I’m not…” She tried to argue, but other Nyota stopped her.

"You can't lie to me because I'm you. It's impossible to lie to yourself, even if you do try. The whole purpose of me being here is to get you to stop lying to yourself."

"I'm not lying." She said in her defense. But other Nyota just rolled her eyes.

“Only to yourself and again it’s not very effective. Once upon a time we were the same person, but we were too afraid to move on. I lost my happy ending and I'm stuck with just getting by. You're not. You still have a chance.” Her other self pleaded with her.

“A chance for what?” She asked curiously.

“To be with the real love of your life in this dimension, Leonard. You need to let go of what ‘stupid boyfriend’ did to us. You need to stop letting the stupidity of our father ruin our happiness. Not everyone’s like Dad. He’s not even like that anymore.” Nyota did not think that was possible at all.

“Any other words of wisdom you wish to impart?”

"Forgive our father because he may not have that much time left.” At her other self’s words, she heard the adjoining doors swish open.

“Sorry, you forgot to activate the privacy lock.” She was about to make some snide comment about the fact she would have done that if she wasn’t in the middle of the weirdest conversation ever with her other self, but the man in front of her had the power to put her on an involuntary hold. The fact that he isn’t asking her about the other version of herself in the room means that she is losing her mind. Then she saw that other her was no longer there.
“It’s okay. I used to share a bathroom with two men who never activated the privacy lock. Also, you got me before I had time to do anything.” She responded, trying not to think of the words of whoever she was just speaking to.

"Well, at least you’re talking to me again. I’ll just let you be. Let me know when you’re done.” He said, walking back into his room.

"Okay. Also I never stopped talking to you." She told him.

"No, but you sure hold a grudge.” For some reason her other self’s words came back to her even if she was talking about her father at the time. She doesn’t forgive very easily. Jim has already forgiven her for not telling him about finding his brother’s body. Yet it’s been decades and she still hasn’t forgiven her father for what happened with her mom. Why is she holding onto that?

"I’ve been told that before." She gives him a slight smile.

"Yes, usually in relationship to your father." He sighed.

“Very true. It’s your personal life, I just-- really need to pee.” She finished not exactly knowing what to say but that got him out of the bathroom fairly quickly. Okay, she was upset at finding out that her female best friend had sex with her—oh fuck!

That’s when she realized that her other self (or possibly some very strange figment of her subconscious) was completely right. Somehow she had fallen in love with Leonard McCoy. She really is losing her mind.

XxXXXX

Okay, he and Spock have had a lot of weird joint sex dreams during the course of their 3 ½ years together. Usually they involved fishnets, leather restraints, and a toy called the Pleasure Seeker 9000, but this was the first time that he has been in someone else’s body. (He really doesn’t want to think about the meld-like data dump where he saw a vision of Bones and himself dying that happened the moment he woke up in said body.)
Also, it doesn’t really count as a sex dream if the majority of the time you’re watching your husband have a really weird conversation about parallel universes with his dead baby’s Mama (which is a shame because he always wanted to know what it would be like to have sex as a woman). It is definitely not a sex dream where said baby’s Mama tells you that despite all your personal insecurities, she completely trusted you to take care of her child and not turn into the monster that buried your brother under the barn.

The child custody case really was getting to him. If this was his mind’s way of reassuring him that he’s not going to completely screw up, the situation was dire. They’re not even going to arrive back on Earth until late tomorrow and Marcus was already dragging their asses into court. Even worse, most of his greatest screw ups were public record where they could not reveal most of the worst things about Alexander Marcus due to Federation security reasons.

“Okay, I just had the weirdest dream where I was stuck in Nyota’s naked body. That had some really good sex potential, but instead I watched you have the weirdest conversation ever with your ex-girlfriend.” He groggily tells Spock, who is not giving him a ‘you are absolutely crazy’ look. That probably means that this was one of their shared dreams. That makes sense because Spock knows Carol so much better than him.

“She also told me that she thought I would be a good father and apologized for another version of herself. Did that just happen?” James asked in bewilderment. Spock’s response was to place a quick kiss on his temple.

“Yes, that did happen and I am uncertain it was a dream.”

This is not the first time he has been exposed to an alternate dimension (not counting Other Spock). Last time, due to an ion storm, they ended up in a dimension where he was dead, an evil version of Nyota was Captain, and Spock was her sex slave and she was trying to convince him to join her. Carol running around trying to find a dimension where her girlfriend was alive and David existed wasn’t that strange in comparison. At least this time, Spock was there.

“I guess that means we should share the teddy bear with your other self.” James said, pulling Spock’s hand to his lips to kiss gently.

“That would be most prudent.” Spock responded simply.

“Also, just to make sure we don’t end up in a psychiatric ward, we don’t tell Dr. Margarita anything that happened.” He said after a moment, because he wonders if they both need an extra dose of sanity in a hypo.
“Agreed.”

There are some days, like right now when he has to represent a man as vile as Alexander Marcus that Shawn Caraway really wonders why he went into private practice instead of joining Starfleet like his mom wanted him to. His current client is a monster. Shawn would not even let the guy take care of a baby kitten, let alone a two-year-old. Yet, here he was, working with his associates at three in the morning, trying to find dirt on Commander Spock Kirk and his husband, Captain James Tiberius Kirk for the sole purpose of ripping a child away from his biological father. Shawn wanted to be a child advocate, not this.

Shawn knew why Marcus chose this firm other than the fact that they were good at what they did. If his lawyer was the head of the San Francisco chapter of the Society of LGBPT lawyers, people will question his deceased daughter’s characterization of the man as a homophobic bigot who despised her partner and was angry that they decided to start a family via in vitro and therefore she did not want her child raised in that environment. That’s why she subsequently chose her Academy ‘friend’ and son’s biological father in the event of her and Rebecca’s simultaneous death.

Shawn didn’t want to have anything to do with this case, but he couldn’t argue with the partners. He hated being used, which was why he was looking for dirt on his client instead of the biological father like he was supposed to. He justifies it by telling himself that it was easier to prepare for the defense, if you knew what they might possibly bring out (like the fact his client was trying to pass off a year in a psychiatric hospital as a ‘spiritual retreat’). Shawn knew that there was a more complex story going on than what either side was saying.

What he discovered was that the man was good at making anything bad about him disappear. Back when he was in charge at Starfleet, anybody who questioned his decisions would end up on Delta Vega or someplace much worse. The man also had a history with the San Francisco Department of Child welfare and several equivalent departments throughout the Federation. There were at least six separate complaints registered, but none were given more than a cursory investigation if that. The guy had enough influence to make anything go away.

He probably thought that he could do the same this time except Alexander Marcus was not dealing with a scared little girl. This time around, he was dealing with a war hero and the son of a high ranking Vulcan diplomat and victims’ rights advocate who has a history of ripping her enemies to shreds. Considering what she had to work with, his client really did not stand a chance.

Shawn was halfway ready to tender his resignation and anonymously notify the other side of Alexander Marcus’ history with child welfare when his assistant walked into the room and handed him a PADD.

“What’s this?” Shawn asked.

“Another reason why no matter how much money people are paying we should never take clients that are obviously guilty as sin.”

“Tell that to the senior partners.” Shawn quipped.
“A new organization, referring to themselves as 'The Rising Tide' just released a ton of very classified Starfleet documents.” His assistant said smirking.

“And let me guess, they were all about our client?”

“I’m not entirely sure yet. However, one document alleges that Alexander Marcus misappropriated billions of credits to build a warship and weapons without authorization. Also, there’s evidence that he also paid the now disgraced Admiral Jackson a hundred thousand credits to get his daughter’s former boyfriend kicked out of Starfleet.”

“The Kobayashi Maru trial?” Shawn asked, remembering the incident that triggered the ‘Starfleet purges’ three and half years ago.

“Yes.”

After 15 minutes of reading, Shawn was already tendering his resignation. If a fraction of this stuff turns out to be true, then it proved his suspicions that Alexander Marcus had no business anywhere near that child. He was a good lawyer, but contrary to very popular belief, lawyers have consciences too. There’s no way Shawn could defend this guy. Maybe the DA’s office was looking for new people. Anything would be better than this.

To be continued

Chapter End Notes

Are Spock, Jim and Nyota losing their minds or is something else going on?
Who leaked the Starfleet files?
Also, bonus points to anybody who can point out the Easter eggs that I put in this chapter from some of my other stories. There are several.
Thank you to everybody who read or reviewed the last chapter. Thank you to everybody played the guess the Easter egg game the last chapter. Yes, the last chapter really was an experiment/insane, but I will tell you now that our favorite characters are not crazy or at least no more insane then they usually are. Spock is still responding to medication. However, the jury is still out on the mental stability of Alexander Marcus.

The following people found at least one of the Easter eggs I left for the last chapter: SlytherinQueen020, rose, laustic, xXFrostKittenXx, Rose Midnight Moonlight Black, seacat03, and honest critic.

Easter eggs for chapter 16:

Alexis is from my story Starfleet Family Values. The reference to Carol's pretentious guide who goes by the letter of an alphabet is also a reference to this story and TNG.

Shawn is from the series Warning: Assumptions Are Bad, which includes my classic story But I Thought You Were Straight. In that universe, he was Jim's ex-boyfriend and Pike's lawyer fiancé. Jane Barnett, the PR goddess, is also borrowed from this universe. They’re essentially the same characters, but their lives are a little bit different in this world due to different circumstances.

The universe where Nyota has the good sense to see that Spock is completely in love with Jim and suggests a threesome instead of breaking up with Spock is a reference to my story Take a Third Option.

There's also a subtle reference to the Dear Spock universe when Carol says that she's going to visit a universe where Jim and Spock don't get together until after the Kobayashi Maru incident, but are still married before the Vengeance Incident.

The pleasure seeker 9000 is from my stories Operation Cheer Jim Up and its counterpart.

Also, bonus points to SlytherinQueen020 for seeing a connection to my story Consequences of the Down Low. I did not even see that as possibly being the dimension where Spock doesn’t break up with Nyota, but cheats on her with Jim.
Amanda sat in one of the many Starfleet conference rooms with Jim and Spock’s anxious lawyer Alexis and Dr. Jackson for Jim, Spock, and David. The room happened to have a beautiful view of the city. She never understood why Starfleet decided it was a good idea to have one of their main conference rooms extremely exposed and surrounded by a wall of glass. Her boyfriend agreed with her. According to him, this room is now usually reserved for unclassified briefings and meetings with dignitaries that they want to impress.

However, during Marcus’ regime, this is where they would meet whenever there was a crisis. His successor believes doing something like that is the equivalent of putting a ‘please bomb us here’ sign outside the building. Of course they’re all aware that Alexander Marcus is crazy, has very little common sense, and that was before yesterday’s leak of highly classified documents that supported his history of wrongdoing.

She was anxiously waiting here to see her son in person for the first time in nearly 2 years and to kiss her new grandson. Alexis was there to ambush Jim and Spock about the custody arrangement. Doctor Jackson was officially there to speak to Jim because the Enterprise captain wanted to speak with her in person. Amanda believes she’s really there because she misses David. For security reasons, Chris felt it would be best if their reunion took place here instead of at the shuttle yard or regular family greeting area.

Amanda is convinced that Chris believes that Marcus is going take a more ‘direct approach’ now that his lawyer has decided to take a position with the DAs office and his reputation has been besieged by the classified document leak. The judge in charge of the case has already said there was no longer a need for an emergency hearing and wanted to wait until family services has time to ‘assess’ the situation.

It was obvious that Chris was very wary of Alexander Marcus. Amanda is not stupid. She knows that there were things left out of the extremely classified briefing with their lawyer. Obviously, Chris had a reason to believe that his former mentor would resort to physical violence to get David. Therefore, she acquiesced to his request.

However, what was supposed to be a five or ten minute wait in the conference room has already become a 90 minute and counting wait, thanks to Admiral Kimball. The new Admiral in charge of
Enterprise (or rather will be in charge of Enterprise after it resumes its deep space exploration after renovations) wanted to ‘debrief’. According to the message she received from Chris 70 minutes ago, he refused to wait until after she had a chance to meet her first grandchild for the very first time and Admiral Lume decided to humor the man for reasons unknown. She already disliked Admiral Kimball.

Now that Chris was in charge of Section 31, Enterprise was put under the auspices of another Admiral and unfortunately the committee chose Admiral Kimball. Actually, because of her romantic relationship with Chris and supposed pending marriage, Enterprise would be receiving a new Admiral regardless.

After the Johnson debacle, stronger regulations to prevent nepotism among the ranks were put in place. First, that meant that an anonymous committee approved all major promotions and assignments. This also meant that an Admiral could not oversee their child’s ship, even if that child was their stepson. Admiral Jorge Kimball would now be in charge of Enterprise and he was already trying to show that he was the big boss, according to Chris.

It annoyed her that the man couldn’t wait a few hours to let her speak with her son and grandson before the interrogation began. Chris believes that Kimball is already convinced that Jim is behind the ‘rising tide’ and wants to get his confession before Jim has time to hide the evidence. (She personally would love to be in that room when Kimball is forced to explain why the obviously dirty Marcus survived round one of the great Starfleet purge.)

After 90 minutes of waiting, she was restless. There were only so many conversations she could have with Doctor Jackson and Alexis, with her daughters in the room. The girls were equally restless at this point and educational PADD programs can only keep preteen and preschoolers occupied for so long. She brought the girls with her because Amanda wanted the two to meet their nephew in person as soon as possible. Although now that T’Pay is playing imaginary computer repair person under the table and T’Pan is asking Doctor Jackson questions about her research that most likely have classified answers, Amanda is starting to question that decision.

She finally told the girls about David last night. Chris was with her when she gave the girls a ‘cliff notes’ version of why they were meeting their 2 ½-year-old nephew for the very first time the next morning. It was quite difficult to explain what happened without mentioning that Marcus is a homophobic, xenophobic, or abusive prick, but she did her best.

“When your brother Spock was at the Academy, he dated a girl named Carol, who he liked very much, and she cared about him to a great extent.” She added the part about Carol’s feelings for Spock after her conversations with Jane and being forced to read a file containing excerpts from Carol’s diary from her time at the Academy. She now knew that Carol did genuinely care for her son even if she was probably under the influence of Admiral Jackson. The diary pages were hard to read because no mother wants to read about her son’s college sexual exploits, but she needed to
discover who Carol Marcus was in her own words. She was a scared 15-year-old pulled in many directions and maybe she was too young to understand what she was feeling for Spock, but it was real. It also made her feel horrible for most of the things that Amanda has said about the woman over the years.

“At some point during their relationship, Carol became pregnant. Her father was not happy about this for various reasons. Due to pressure from him, she had the embryo frozen and moved to London without telling Spock what happened.”

She debated for hours how to phrase this in a way that a four-year-old Vulcan can understand. Finally, she decided it was best to keep things simple with as little detail as possible. Of course, she forgot her too inquisitive daughters loved asking questions.

At this point, she was forced to explain the embryo freezing procedure because her oldest daughter was curious. She was also forced to answer the age-old question of where babies come from for T’Pay. The good thing with Vulcan children is you usually only have to bring out science textbooks and diagrams. She knew this would happen; therefore, she came prepared with the right research and age-appropriate e-books.

Except this conversation was nowhere near as easy as the one she had with Spock when he was three years old. Amanda blames the biggest bully in T’Pay’s preschool class for convincing the little girl that Vulcan children come from the replicator because Vulcans are so cold nobody would touch them to make babies the normal way. Chris couldn’t help but laugh in the background. It took 30 minutes to successfully provide the three-year-old with proof that her classmate was illogical before Amanda could continue on with the story.

“About three years ago she and her girlfriend Becky decided to have a child together and they used the embryo she created with Spock. They put the embryo back in her uterus and about seven months later, he was born. His name is David and he was born on January 26, 2259.”

“Why didn’t we meet him before? Shouldn’t he go to preschool with me?” T’Pay asked.

“That’s because his two moms lived really far away on another planet and he has at least another year before he starts preschool. They were both Starfleet scientists, just like your brother and that’s why they live so far away. That’s why you haven’t met David before.” Chris explained for her.

It was only the truth by the Vulcan definition of the term, but she wasn’t sure exactly how to explain what Carol did, even if Amanda now understood why she did it. It was the same thing Winona did. Both women ran away to protect their child. Winona faked her death to get away from
an abusive lover* and Carol Marcus made a deal with the devil to protect her son from her abusive father. In her 50s she understands this, but this is too hard for a 12-year-old to understand, even one who watched her planet be destroyed.

“Unfortunately, there was an accident where she worked and both she and Rebecca died.” Her words were met with classic Vulcan stoicism, even from her four-year-old. That is something that both girls understand all too well. She felt horrible for saying what happened was an accident. She knows that as soon as the media knows about the details of what happened on NCX17, T’Pen will know they lied to her.

“Is he going to be placed in the foster care system?” Her oldest daughter asked and the question worried her. She is well aware that T’Pen does not see the foster care system favorably. A lot of unpleasant things happened to her in the few weeks the two were in the system before Amanda was able to get the girls out of the group home and begin the adoption proceedings. She could tell that T’Pen was afraid something like that would happen to her nephew or maybe she thought that’s what happened to all kids who lose their parents. T’Pen was very hard to read sometimes.

“Not if we can help it. He’s going to be living with Spock and James.” She said to reassure both girls. However, she felt it was not her place to mention the possibility that David could end up living with them. She didn’t want to scare either child.

The one good thing that came from the ‘Rising Tide’ leaks was Alexis was now almost positive no judge in their right mind would give Alexander Marcus custody. The problem was they may not give Spock custody either. Starfleet was going to deny that the Marshall incident ever took place, but it would still raise questions in the judge’s mind. Therefore, she and Chris were planning to be that third option to keep her grandson out of the system.

After that conversation, T’Pen was excited about getting to meet David and picked out a stuffed bear to give her nephew. She forced them all to leave an hour early, just so they could visit a toy store this morning before arriving at Starfleet (or at least that was the plan). She was looking forward to being an aunt.

Her sister was nowhere near as excited. T’Pay locked herself in the bathroom this morning and wouldn’t leave until Chris promised her ice cream and her own teddy bear. She also held onto Chris the entire way here. Amanda considers it a small miracle that he did not have to take the 4-year-old with him to the world’s longest debriefing.

Now T’Pay was much more accepting of the fact that she is dating Chris. There was actual cheering involved. Both girls were okay with the fact that she and Chris were together. Unlike the David situation, they didn’t actually tell the girls. They were planning to after they explained the situation to Spock and Jim, but that plan fell out the window last night. Her daughters walked in on
the two kissing after the great David conversation.

Actually, the fact that not only did Chris spend the night, but Amanda also spent the night in the guest room with him was probably an obvious sign that the two were no longer in denial. (She doesn’t even want to talk about what happened when Dr. Jackson and Alexis noticed a certain new piece of jewelry she was wearing.) It really wasn’t that unusual for Chris to spend the night. The only difference is now she sleeps down in the guest room/study with him. (Actually, that’s happened a few times before, but she doesn’t want to acknowledge what that really means).

Because sometimes a certain four-year-old has nightmares about being swallowed by a planet, she has a tendency to find Amanda in the middle of the night. In other words, no matter what happened, the girls would have found out about the change in their relationship before she had a chance to tell Spock about the truth behind the engagement. (She doesn’t have the heart to tell the girls that she and Chris are just dating and they’re telling everyone that they’re engaged just in case Marcus’s effort to get Spock declared an unfit parent actually works.)

Now Amanda understands why everybody already thought that they were dating before they were actually dating (and easily accept the fact that they’re engaged) because the only thing that seems different about their relationship was the sexual component. Not that they’ve actually had sex yet, because they are in the middle of a messy custody fight with Alexander Marcus. However, there has been lots of kissing and other things. The night before they came close, but they were interrupted because of the ‘Rising Tide’ document leak.

It was for the best, because around 3 AM, T’Pay found her sleeping next to Chris after she woke up from a nightmare that she wouldn’t tell Amanda about. She also would not go back to her own bed, which told Amanda it was one of the really bad nightmares. Chris didn’t say a thing about it. It was at that moment that Amanda realized how lucky she was too find somebody that could deal with her emotional baggage and children. Chris loved her children.

She knew when she started telling people that she was with Chris their usual response would be finally (that’s what Chris’s boss said this morning when she saw Amanda’s new ring). However, she is worried about how Spock will react, which is why she wanted to tell him first before anyone else found out. Children rarely handle their mom dating someone new very well. The pretend engagement would make things worse. Then there’s the fact that her son had a crush on her boyfriend for a good portion of his early 20s. That was just going to make things even more awkward.

Okay, who was she kidding? This meeting was going to be extremely awkward, no matter what. She was coming in with a new boyfriend/sort of fiancé and her son was arriving with his new son that he created when having sex with his then-underage Academy girlfriend. A child that was hidden from Spock since he was conceived and that possible conception was kept from her and Spock by her deceased husband. Then there was the fact that she knows that her son-in-law’s
mother is not that dead and she’s going to have to break the news tomorrow during what will probably be the most dysfunctional family dinner of all time. Awkward was the understatement of the millennium for this meeting. Okay, maybe the real reason why the girls, along with Doctor Jackson, and Alexis were there was to keep things from descending into complete chaos. She is sure Jim and Spock are less likely to make a scene in front of other people, including the girls.

Her nervousness was probably why she has already consumed four of the cookies that she made for James. After the last few weeks of bad things, including finding out your brother is dead and your husband had a child from a previous relationship, Jim deserved cookies. She doesn’t know what she’s going to give him when he finds out about the Winona and Georgia thing. Maybe Bailey’s brownies? Let’s be honest, she should probably consider pot brownies.

“Oh god, you actually brought cookies.” She was expecting to hear her son-in-law say that as he dove headfirst into a container of double chocolate chip caramel cookies that she made just for him, not the woman that she considered one of her closest friends, Gaila. She was already enveloped in a hug before she realized what was happening.

“They are for James, but you can have one. I have a feeling he’s going to need all of them after the briefing he’s going through.” She said pulling out of the embrace.

“Please, that briefing is going to go so long that you’re going to have time to make a brand-new batch.” Gaila joked.

“I’m not surprised. I’m sure Kimball already hates Jim, and that’s before they met each other.” She said pulling her friend to the back of the room. “Let me introduce you to Dr. Jackson. She worked with Carol on NCX17.” Alexis was too busy out in the hallway, most likely talking to her associates to be introduced to anyone.

“I got that impression from a text message I received from Jim. When Kimball began his hunt for someone to blame for the ‘Rising Tide’ leak, he decided it was best to get me off the ship. Jim sent me down with David and my bo—friend because the toddler was getting restless and needed lunch.” Gaila said as she extended her hand to Dr. Jackson. The doctor seemed a bit hesitant, but Amanda was more concerned that Gaila almost said the word boyfriend. She did not even think that word was in Gaila’s vocabulary.

“It’s nice to meet you, Dr. Jackson. I have a feeling that Jim would much rather be speaking with you right now.” The woman said with a smirk.

“I think he would rather be speaking to Klingons right now. There’s plenty of time for work things later.” The doctor said, pulling her hand back with a slight smile before grabbing her bag from the floor. “I just realized I left David’s gift in my office, but I’ll meet you guys at whatever restaurant you go to. I suggest something with a ball room because David gets restless very easily.” Considering she saw a glittery box in the bag that the doctor just picked up, Amanda knew that was a lie. However, the head of Section 31’s science department had a lot of secrets that Amanda was
“I’m sure David would want to see you again. And you’re probably right about the ballroom. Spock was unbelievably restless at that age.” Amanda said as the doctor started to make her way to the door.

“I think your daughter is the same way.” She said pointing to the four-year-old who was currently removing the panel off of the conference room hologram unit before quickly leaving the room.

“T’Pay, that is really expensive equipment you’re playing with. Please come out from under the table.” She chastised the four-year-old before turning her attentions to her friend. “I swore I almost heard you say the word boyfriend?”

“It’s complicated. He’s an older guy who has a history of very complicated past relationships and I’m pretty sure he’s still in love with at least one of those people. I’m not sure if he’s ready for something serious. But David adores him and so do I. He offered to take him to the little Vulcans room for me.”

“You left him alone with my grandson?” Amanda asked worriedly because everybody is paranoid due to the Marcus situation (and the fact that Carol and Dr. Jackson’s husband were gunned down in cold blood).

“I know you’re worried with good reason. But you know that neither Jim nor Spock will allow their son to be alone with anybody that they did not consider family and they would kill me if I did that. Trust me they consider my friend family, even if they may not be on speaking terms with him at the moment.” Gaila said cryptically.

“You’re not dating Leonard again?” She knew about that particular ill-advised relationship. He also has a history of complicated past relationships and even Amanda is convinced he’s in love with someone else or rather someone else is in love with him. That particular relationship is her son-in-law’s favorite thing to rant about in emails.

“No. I think Ny is finally ready to make a move. It’s someone else. He is a diplomat. We’ve known each other for a while, but with our work life and his past relationship issues, it’s been an on and off again thing. Now that we’re going to be on the same planet for a while, it’s on again. I said it was complicated.” Amanda listened to the young woman explain as she crawled under the table because T’Pay was still on the verge of trying to figure out how the conference table computer worked.
“T’Pen, out from under the table right now.” Using her mommy voice resulted in her child actually coming out from under the table. She quickly grabbed her by the wrist so that she would not get away.

“Is that an engagement ring?” Gaila asked noticing the new piece of jewelry adorning her ring finger. Really she should’ve worn the ring on a chain until she had time to explain what was really going on (especially after a very embarrassing conversation with Chris’s boss).

Yesterday, Chris gave her his grandmother’s vintage engagement ring. Alexis said that if they were going to do a long engagement, despite her legal recommendation, she needed to, at the very least, be wearing a good engagement ring. Chris agreed with her completely and presented her with his great grandmother’s engagement ring the night before. Even though it would probably avoid scenes like this, Amanda couldn’t bring herself to take the ring off after Chris put it on her finger.

“Mommy Amanda is marrying Admiral Daddy.” The child trying to get out of her grip answered for her.

“Do quickie marriages run in your family?” Her friend asked just as her grandson ran into the room. Surprisingly enough, he walked over and hugged her. Maybe because she was so preoccupied with hugging her grandson for the first time she did not realize exactly who brought David into the room until he spoke.

“You’re engaged to Admiral Pike?” Older Spock asked slightly shocked. That’s when she connected everything to their earlier conversation.

“You’re dating my son--I mean my son’s great uncle?” She asked turning around to Gaila with David now in her arms and a four-year-old wrapped around her legs. This seems strange because said four-year-old was trying to get away from her just moments earlier.


“There’s not enough pizza in the world to fix this.” T’Pen mumbled under her breath and Amanda agreed with her completely.

Xxxxxxxxxx

Jim was back in Earth’s orbit for the first time in so many months that he couldn’t even remember the last time he was near the planet, although it probably involved the ‘Volcano Incident’ hearings.
The first thing Jim wanted to do was eat a cheeseburger. A real cheeseburger, the type that would require him to use a ton of mouthwash before his husband would consider kissing him again. (Giving Spock a hand job in the bathroom of said hamburger place was also on his list of things to do now that he was back on earth.)

Okay, the first thing he wanted was to have a non-replicated cookie, or rather Amanda’s cookies. Actually, eating one of Amanda’s home-cooked meals was high on his list as well, but she rarely cooked anything that contained animal products other than dairy. Okay, her vegetarian lasagna may be the food he dreams about when they’re stuck on a strange planet for days at a time with nothing but ration bars and a nice warm Spock.

He wanted to watch David be fawned over by his grandmother and be plied with sweet things. He wants to see the girls be extremely excited, for Vulcans, for their presence and ask Spock all sorts of crazy questions about their missions. Okay, he was expecting to watch Spock be cussed out for the getting Carol pregnant thing and not telling Amanda about David directly, but Jim is sure the cuteness of all three children should prevent anything truly horrible from happening, in public anyway.

Instead, he was stuck in Enterprise’s main conference room with the big boss, their new Admiral Kimball and Chris because their new Admiral was trying to show that he had the biggest dick. He wanted to be debriefed on the NCX17 situation immediately. Jim would rather deal with Amanda yelling at him and Spock for the David’s situation. Actually, Jim would rather tell Doctor Margarita that he and Spock are pretty sure they were visited by David’s dead mother the night before; especially now that they know that the USS Vengeance really does exist. This debriefing was just that painful.

Also forced to participate in the debriefing from hell was Spock, Nyota, Bones and Dr. Margarita. He tried to keep Spock out of the meeting by reminding Kimball that Spock was on paternity leave and Nyota was acting Captain, but the guy didn’t care. When the guy started asking lots of questions about David and Spock’s relationship with Carol, Jim understood the real reason why Spock was there. Thankfully, the Vulcan and his two doctors were very skilled at telling the guy to go fuck himself without actually saying the words.

The only thing this briefing accomplished was that it made Jim very glad that he was assigned to the Academy for the next year. Jim could already tell this guy was just as slimy and condescending as Johnson and Jackson and Jim really hoped that by the time he was back in space, Enterprise had a new Admiral. Actually, for all they knew this guy could be another crony of Andrew Marcus and he was asking all these questions for the sake of his master (because Jim was sure people like Andrew Marcus did not have actual friends).

He blames Chris for taking the Section 31 job, which Jim is not supposed to know about. It was obvious that Chris is going to be Jackson’s successor. The only other logical reason for Enterprise losing Chris was if he and Amanda finally got it together. Now if that were the case, Jim would be perfectly okay with getting a new Admiral. But he doubted it because good things like that rarely happened in his life.

Currently, he was being yelled at for the biggest leak of sensitive Starfleet material in decades, now that he was no longer allowed to ask deeply personal questions about Carol and David under the guise of talking about the research facility incident. Apparently Kimball overestimates Starfleet security and believes Jim may be one of the few hackers skilled enough to break in. Jim would almost find that flattering if it wasn’t so ridiculous. Admiral Kimball also conveniently forgets that Jim actually has the security clearance to access most of the files that were leaked to the press, if not need to know. Although Jim believes that both he and Spock have need to know that after the
London incident Starfleet uncovered evidence that Marcus was working with Johnson to find a way to get Spock kicked out of Starfleet. Thinking about it now, Jim is sure that the volcano hearings were another attempt. In retrospect, it seems like the volcano mission was purposely engineered to make Jim do something that could get them both in a lot of trouble.

In an effort to get out of this conference room sometime today, Jim decided not to point that out or provide the guy with a list of others in Starfleet that could easily break in, starting with his husband. He also doesn’t ask any questions about why Starfleet never bothered to tell Spock that a member of the admiralty was out to get him. Maybe if they had known about this, he and Spock would have started to put the pieces together and tried to contact Carol.

The bastard doesn’t even have the decency to wait until they’re planet-side for the debriefing on the ‘NCX17 incident’, not that their actually talking about what happened, but rather focusing on Spock’s Academy’s sex life (until the big boss put a stop to those questions after Dr. Margarita refused to answer any questions regarding her patient’s health). If the bastard was going to force Jim to sit through ridiculous questions, they can at least do it planet-side in a room filled with fresh air and sunshine. Jim hasn’t seen daylight since they left the planet of the damned days ago.

Also non-replicated coffee would be good. A latte would be nice, a real latte with a caramel swirl. Any food would be good right now. Jim can hear growling stomachs all around the table.

When Kimball switched his tactics to talking about the Rising Tide break in and document leak, he sent a text message to David’s designated babysitters suggesting that they bring the toddler to Amanda and go to lunch/dinner without them. He also suggested lunch at the Mouse’s House of Games because David was probably really restless at this point.

Okay, maybe the real reason why he made the suggestion was to get Gaila off the ship before Kimball realizes that Gaila also had the skill set required to access all of Starfleet’s dirty little secrets. One of the real reasons anyway, other than getting David away from this guy, who is setting off his ‘must protect my child’ sensor. Jim is a little happy that he’s developed that so quickly.

He honestly does not believe Gaila is responsible for the leak. First, because, they were out of communications range when the documents were released. If Kimball was not a complete idiot, he would have realized that already. Honestly, Jim is starting to wonder if you lose all common sense once you get so many stripes on the uniform. Chris, Barnett and maybe Lume seem to be the exception.

The other reason why Jim knows she’s not responsible is if Gaila came across evidence of Andrew Marcus doing evil things such as arranging for the Kobayashi Maru farce of a trial or funneling money to build a secret warship, she would come to Jim first. They were best friends and she would always come to Jim first with this sort of thing. Also, if she was the one hacking into the system; she would have come to Jim for help because that’s just how they roll.

Finally, Gaila loves the Federation. She may have been born a slave light-years away, but Earth and the Federation gave her freedom. The Federation gave her autonomy and personhood. She was
no longer a piece of property and just a means to get off. She would never do anything that would hurt the Federation. Even though most of the documents released made Marcus look bad, they made Starfleet and the Federation in general look worse. The guy secretly built a warship and nobody figured it out until Carol went state’s evidence after Marcus’s pet tried to kill her and David because he was nobody’s pet.

“Why does everybody automatically blame me when your computer network is compromised?” Jim asked, slightly annoyed as he avoided saying anything that will make this interrogation longer than necessary. Actually, he aimed the question at Chris because he already can’t stand Kimball and his condescension. At this point he is sure the guy is another crony of Marcus, Johnson, or Jackson, despite the fact that the guy has had his position for less than six months.

“Well, you are Starfleet’s resident hacker and you did break into the Kobayashi Maru.” Admiral Kimball mumbled under breath. The guy was making it a little too obvious that the guy did not like Jim or Spock.

“Technically, I never broke into the system. Okay, I did break into the system because your firewalls are shit, but I’ve reported all the holes in the network to Starfleet IT.” Jim just gave the guy his ‘I can’t stand you’ smile. “Not my fault that they were too arrogant to take what I said seriously. If you guys were not trying to cover-up Marcus’s dirty deeds, you wouldn’t be freaking out about a little itty bitty leak.”

There goes all his efforts not to antagonize this guy. Spock was giving him ‘the glare’ and Nyota was rolling her eyes at him. Oh well, at least David was probably off the ship at this point, being spoiled by Amanda.

“That’s not what I’m talking about. You were planning on inserting a subroutine into the Kobayashi Maru that would allow you to win. That’s not to mention the 13 times you were arrested for suspicion of hacking before you were somehow allowed into Starfleet.” Jim had to choke back laughter. God, this guy was stupid, but thankfully, he stayed focus on Jim.

“Technically, I was the one who changed the test.” Spock added.

“Also, since Spock designed the test, that’s not hacking. That's making a better test.” Jim told him, smirking. “If you want to be an effective Admiral, maybe you should not get your intel from the Academy rumor mill. Also, I was arrested, but never actually charged with any crimes.” Okay, Jim was pretty sure he was bordering on insubordination, but he likes to blame that on sleep deprivation and lack of food. You try going back to sleep after whatever the hell happened last night happened. Besides, because of their procrastination Jim had a lot of packing to do.
His big boss seemed to be amused and let it go. Besides, she was actually at the Kobayashi Maru trial and therefore she was already aware of how ridiculous this line of questioning was.

“Even if I actually did break in to reprogram the exam like you’re arguing which your colleagues proved was not the case, I was merely planning to protest a ridiculous test that Starfleet is not even using anymore because finally someone in charge realized asking cadets to sit through a exam where there is no hope whatsoever tests nothing except for maybe mental stability of the cadets.”

“I will take that as the complement it was meant to be.” The Admiral said smiling at him. “Captain Kirk has never broken into the Starfleet system with malicious intent. I doubt he is going to start now. Is there a point to these questions or are you trying to assert yourself over your new charge, because you’re not doing a very good job?”

“Yes, well, the documents leaked mostly make his stepson’s grandfather look bad. I’m sure that will make it difficult for David’s grandfather to receive custody of his grandson.”

Jim is pretty sure the guy mumbled something under his breath about children needing to be raised in a ‘traditional’ family. However, he refused to repeat it when Lume asked him to clarify. Jim is also almost certain his acting first officer asked what the hell a traditional family was in Romulan, but he always got that confused with his Vulcan, so he’s not certain.

“You were barely a Captain by the time Johnson was removed from power and Marcus was sent off to mental health rehab. You have no idea what the man did, so I suggest you keep silent on these matters.” The big boss said not at all amused. “Although your support makes me wonder if I need to have the forensic accountants look through your bank account?”

“No Admiral.” Kimball said not looking at her.

“My predecessors let a lot of things go that I will not.” She said harshly. “For example, they would never think of investigating why the committee gave someone like you Enterprise when it’s obvious that you’re not that qualified. You did make it to the admiralty quite quickly which raises some interesting questions. Marcus would never have personally looked into something like that, but I won’t make that mistake.” She said glaring directly at Kimball.

“Look, I really don’t care what you think because you already don’t like me for a reason only you know.” Jim said, turning to Kimball. “Alexander Marcus is not one of the good guys, he never was. Those files leaked were all real, even if we can’t confirm that to the press. However, contrary to what you assume I’m not some loose cannon slacker that is going to fuck everybody over for my own needs. I would not pull some stunt like this, just to show the world who he really is.”

“I don’t believe that. Everyone is aware that you only stayed in your position, which was merely to be a publicity stunt to begin with, because you were under the auspices of your mother-in-law’s boyfriend.” Okay, this guy was obviously trying to get fired because Chris actually looked ready to
Jim first realized that Chris was kind of in love with his mother-in-law the first time T’Pen sent him a file of Chris cursing out a certain Vulcan that they all hate for calling Amanda several synonyms for prostitute on camera.

“Admiral Pike is not dating my mother. They are merely good friends.” Unfortunately, Spock is still slightly in denial about it. Lume actually choked on her water at Spock’s comment.

“You’re right. He’s not her boyfriend. He’s her fiancé.” Chris just looked at his PADD, which told Jim that there may be some truth to what the idiot just said. Although, Jim would hope that the girls would have given him a heads up first so he could break the news to Spock gently (with a blow job). Spock just raised an eyebrow at Chris. That was never a good sign. This was going to be a disaster.

“I guess they were going to break the news in person.” Kimball said smugly.

“You and my mother are engaged?” Spock asked Chris directly.

“Time and place, Spock.” Jim mumbled just loud enough for Vulcan hearing to pick up before turning back to Kimball.

“I know you think very little of me, but even if I would love to run Alexander Marcus’ reputation through the mud for his crimes against his family and Starfleet, I’m not going to do anything that would hurt the Federation. If nothing else, I’m definitely not going to attribute it to an organization that gets its name from an obscure 21st-century comic book television reference.” Jim threw that last joke in to break up the tension. It wasn’t working. Spock looked ready to kill and he means that literally.

“The ‘rising tide’ is a comic book reference?” Chris asked, even though he was trying to avoid eye contact was Spock.

“Sort of. It’s originally from a TV show based on the Disney-Marvel comic books, you know, Captain America and that sort of stuff. But this was more like a B-side to the main cinematic universe, but eventually the Rising Tide found itself in the 616 universe.” Everyone in the room was giving him a really strange look at this moment. “Yes, I am that big of a nerd for 21st-century culture, let it go. There was a rerelease of everything when I was a kid for Captain America/Disney-Marvel 300th anniversary.”

Chris and the big boss just looked at each other for a moment before Chris put his head on the table and the Admiral’s sighed. She did not look happy at all, but that has been pretty much a constant for this conversation.

“I understand that Captain Kirk and Commander Spock need to meet with their lawyer regarding the custody situation with young David. I suggest we end this meeting now so they have time for lunch. I believe Dr. Jackson is with Amanda at the moment. Please remind her to call me.” She said looking directly at Chris.

“I will, Admiral.” Chris replied quickly, which meant there was an entirely different conversation going on in the background that Jim was unaware of.

“Kimball, I suggest you schedule an appointment with my assistant.” She said in a low voice that
Jim could barely pick up as she walked by the Admiral in question. “You and I have a lot to talk about off-line.” Kimball followed behind her.

“I think we all have a lot to talk about off-line.” Jim said to Chris once the other two admirals were out of the room.

To be continued

Chapter End Notes

*After a note from my beta ureeber, I thought should remind everybody that Winona never remarried Frank, even though she did go back to him. Therefore, ‘lover’ would be the accurate term.
This Is Not the Time for Car Sex

Chapter Notes

Thank you to everyone who read or reviewed the last chapter. I’m really sorry for the long lag between updates. For those of you were keeping up with my other stories you are already aware that I had some family things that I had to deal with i.e. my mom had surgery and was in the hospital for 8 days, which was about 5 days more than she was supposed to be. She is now better and at home. Suffice it to say my free time is limited right now and writing has taken a backseat for the last few weeks. Of course, in the time that I haven’t updated all my MCU allusions are now more ominous and now foreshadow more events in the story then I originally intended. Anyway, if my Muse cooperates I hope to get to a more normal schedule. She has been very contrary lately. I had writer’s block on this story, and several others so I tried something different and ended up writing a Tony/Steve Post Winter Soldier story that I hope to post eventually, maybe. Working in another fandom has freed up my mind and allowed me to finish this chapter after two weeks of despising everything I wrote and rewriting it twice.

“What restaurant where we supposed to meet Christine at?” Leonard asked as soon as they were out of the massive Starfleet complex. Part of her is positive that Leonard is just happy to be back on solid ground.

“Lafayette Square.” She answered simply still not entirely sure why she agreed to Christine’s request to have lunch together their first day back on Earth. It’s not like Nyota is no longer angry with Christine because she still is absolutely furious with the woman. If they had known about David earlier, then maybe… David would still actually have a mom and an auntie Becky.

“You know you don’t have to come with me. I promise not to kill your doctor in training, especially when she is 6 months from actually becoming a doctor. Don’t you have a preteen to call?” It’s not that she doesn’t want him there because she does. Ever since the dream (or whatever it was), she has been very clingy. Maybe she has been a bitch lately, and she needs to get over it. Maybe she needs to get over a lot of things, starting with her rational anger regarding Christine and her irrational anger involving Leonard. Maybe she doesn’t want to end up like the broken version of herself from her dream (vision). Even though her other self did not mention her totally fucked up relationship with Christine maybe that was another thing she needed to fix.

“That’s not a risk that I’m willing to take. You know how hard it is to find good med students who can put up with the insanity that is Enterprise? Most have too much sense to get anywhere near our ship.” He grumbled.

“Don’t worry; I can call Jo Jo when you’re with Jim, Spock, and the lawyers. I have enough nightmares about my own custody situation. I don’t need to live vicariously through Jim on this one.” She really wasn’t looking forward to being part of that meeting. However, Alexis was not going to let her out of it. Nyota respected her sister’s mother greatly even if she wondered why a woman that smart was so easily fooled by her father.

Also, at this point she realized that the David custody situation as causing him to remember the
nightmare that was the Jo Jo custody hearings. A part of Nyota still felt like he needed to be there though because unlike everyone else, he’s been down this road before and knew a bad strategy when he saw one. Also, from what she gathered, the ex-wife was probably on the same level of evil and manipulative as David’s miserable grandfather.

“Okay, I was lying because I don’t want you to be with me unless you want to. I mean - I’m glad you’re here because I may have been lying earlier about not strangling Christine, even if she is paying.”

As she said earlier, she was still upset with Christine and even with seeing a miserable broken version of herself, she would not have agreed to this meeting without the promise of good food. Nyota still wonders if it’s possible for her and Christine to sit together for 5 minutes without yelling, but it beats the alternative of a very dysfunctional Grayson-Kirk family lunch.

She doesn’t know what’s going to cause a bigger explosion the unexpected, but expected engagement or the fact that Gaila is in a relationship with another version of Spock. By comparison, her lunch with Christine should be peaceful.

“Also, I’m never one to turn down good free food.” Leonard smirked at her.

“Of course you’re here for the grilled vegetable skewers not me. I know those are your favorite.” She told him with a mock pout as they continued walking. Part of her wish that the Starfleet HQ was in a less urban area. More than anything she missed trees, but this part of San Francisco was nothing but concrete.

“I mostly came for the company and the French fries.” At that moment he grabbed her hand and she felt warm all over. In her mind she starts to curse because this was just another affirmation that she was in love with him. Seriously, how had this happened?

“They are good, but I know you would never eat them if Jim is around since he would call you a hypocrite for criticizing his eating habits.” She smiles back, not letting go of his hand. She never wants to let go.

“They need to be criticized because it’s not just the high amounts of junk food. It’s the fact that he will skip meals or live on ration bars for weeks at a time. That really worries me. Now that he has a kid, I hope Jimmy will eat something other than blueberry pie and ice cream. That metabolism is not going to last forever and I don’t care how much cardio he says he does with the hobgoblin.”

“You know by cardio he means…” She finished off with a smirk.

“Don’t even finish that sentence. I know what they’re doing. So do you since you’ve lived next to him and the hobgoblin for so long. They’re probably off having car sex as we speak just because it’s been so long.” Even though Leonard is joking, that’s probably a distinct possibility with those two. It’s probably even more likely because Jim is going to have to calm Spock down before he has lunch with his mom. Okay, finding out that your mom was getting remarried during a dreadful debriefing was bad on so many levels, but it’s still better than how she found out about Ivy.

She completely understands that Spock is not happy, probably more for being left out of the loop than anything else. She tried to speak with him after the debriefing when he went to his room to pick up a few things before leaving the ship. But he wouldn’t say anything. She hated it when Spock was like this. She was so going to have to pick him up a box of truffles for after his meeting with the lawyer. Maybe they should hit up a sundae bar. Spock likes to drown his sorrows in ice cream and chocolate.

“You’re probably right. Until I met those two, I had no idea that the honeymoon stage could last
this long. Let me just say how nice it is not to be woken up by sex sounds at 2 in the morning.” Nyota told him just as they arrived at the restaurant. Christine was at the bar looking slightly annoyed. But that probably had more to do with her receiving unwanted attention from some random guy that looked old enough to be her grandfather than the fact that they were an hour late thanks to Admiral Asshole. She really hopes that guy does not become their permanent Admiral. From the bits and pieces of the conversation she could hear, Christine obviously did not want the man there.

“Get the fuck away from me. I don’t want to speak to you or your client. If you could just leave, that would be good.” They hear her yell at the man as she turns back to her drink, but he doesn’t leave. Instead, he whispers something to her that they can’t hear over the Jazz in the background. Christine just laughs at his words. It’s not a pleasant laugh, but rather it’s bitter and painful.

“Do you really think I’m going to help you, even if David’s stepfather broke my heart years ago? He may be a prick, but only because he fell in love with someone else. He’s still a better father then your client ever was. How can you sleep at night defending that child abusing psychopath? Do you have any idea what he put my friend through? You have to be stoned to think I would do anything to help him do that to another generation.”

At that moment Nyota realizes that this man was most likely one of Alexander Marcus’s lawyers (the one who did not have the good sense to quit) and was trying to manipulate Christine to testify against Jim and Spock. It was obvious that she would do no such thing despite the way they’ve all treated her in the last couple of days. That revelation made Nyota feel horrible. At that moment they moved closer, so they could hear what was going on and intervene if they had to. She doubted this man was going to leave on his own.


“That’s a fucking lie.” Christine shouted.

“Do you really think it is in his best interest to be with a man who put his ex-boyfriend in a coma? He is also married to another man who has a reputation for being reckless and callous, especially with the feelings of others as you well know. Is that the type of environment you want your godson to live in?” At those words Christine just laughs again.

“It beats the alternative of Alexander Marcus and his country club airhead wife Mercedes.” Christina spat out. “Your client is the most unfeeling and manipulative man I have ever had the displeasure of meeting. Just because he has enough money to retain your services doesn’t mean he’s not a monster. He was never a good person and he was an even worse father. Do you have any idea how many times he hit her?”

“That is merely hearsay. My client would never …” He started to deny, but Christine cut him off in the middle of his sentence.

“Oh, it’s more than hearsay. I know everything he did to her. In my mind, her blood is on his hands. If you help him get David, despite the fact that he has two fathers who love him very much, than his blood will also be on your hands. People like you make me wish hell actually did exist. You deserve to go to a torture dimension because you’re doing nothing to stop this. I will die before I let your client anywhere near David.” She said, slamming her now empty drink on the table before walking over to her and Leonard. As Christine walked away, Nyota was pretty sure the lawyer in question said something along the lines of “you will regret that decision.” However, her ability to read lips is questionable at best.

“Are you okay?”
“Not at all,” Christine said shakily. “That was the shark Carol’s father hired to get David. He wants me to testify on his behalf, but I pretty much told him to get fucked. I promised Carol I would not let her father get near David and I intend to keep that promise, no matter what.”

“Let’s just leave. Maybe we should go back to HQ, he can’t get in there.” She was tempted to say something about how Admiral Jackson was shot dead in his Starfleet apartment complex, but instead she just grabbed her communicator as they continued to walk out of the place. Thankfully, the slimy lawyer was not following behind the trio.

“Who are you calling? Leonard asked.

“Jim,” she answered simply, but Christine did not look happy.

“I know you don’t like talking to our Captain outside of a professional capacity even before the David incident, but you’re just going to have to get over your crush. He chose Spock, get over it. He is your commanding officer and your godson’s stepfather. If you love that little boy at all, you will get on this phone right now and tell his dad everything.”

“Says the woman who is afraid to try a real relationship because her now deceased former boyfriend screwed her over years ago,” Christine mumbled under her breath, but she just glared at her.

“Fine, give me the communicator.” Christine held out her hand and she quickly passes the device to her only for Jim not to pick up. If they were alone, she would’ve said something about their car sex prediction coming true, but Christine would not appreciate that type of joke. Instead she just dialed Ivy’s mom instead.

Xxxxx
Even after 3 years in therapy and a whole lot of medication, Jim is well aware that his husband does not freak out like a normal person. Spock either keeps everything in to the point where you assume he’s cold and indifferent or he explodes and people end up hospitalized (think Cupcake). Okay, maybe those were the same strategy at different stages, neither of which is very healthy, which is why his husband is well medicated. Regardless, Jim is glad that his husband’s future stepfather listened to Jim’s request not to come with them to the restaurant. If Spock and Chris had to share a car right now, somebody would probably end up in the hospital which would be bad, considering the precarious custody situation. There was no way they were going to give Alexander Marcus anything else to bring up in court. Spock getting arrested for choking a superior officer would just look really bad right now.

“Are you okay?” Jim asked once they reached the restaurant because Spock hasn’t said a single word since he returned from his talk with Nyota. He already knows that Spock is anything but fine. You know it’s bad when Spock does not say anything even when Jim sort of kind of went through a red light (it was yellow when he started). When Spock does not complain about his driving, Jim knows things are bad.

“I did not see the point of answering that question when you obviously know the answer. I have been anything but okay since we discovered Carol’s body nearly 2 weeks ago.” Spock tells him with eyebrows knitted together.

“And the fact that you did not count that down to the minutes and seconds worries me. Along with the fact you did not chastise me for using the term ‘okay’.” Jim tries to joke, but it falls flat.

“And the fact that I had a hallucination where I worked out my problems with my deceased former girlfriend does not?” Spock asked flippantly.
“Considering I was there for most of it, I still do not believe it was an actual hallucination. I’m not sure what that was, especially because she knew the name of the big giant ship hiding behind Jupiter that will soon be renamed the USS Gandhi.” The briefing was filled with little things that made Jim believe that maybe they did have an actual conversation with the deceased Carol in a completely different dimension. Considering he was going to have lunch with another version of his husband, they have no room to be that skeptical. Spock responded by giving him two eyebrows and something that looked very suspiciously like a sigh.

“In regards to the Carol stuff, you’re probably not going to be okay for a very long time. She was your 1st love and the mother of your child. For so long you thought that she hated you and just used you as a quick fuck. Instead it turns out…”

“She made questionable decisions; including leaving me and having our child put in cryogenic storage in the name of protecting me without consulting me or taking into account my feelings on the matter.” Spock finished for him.

“Okay, unilateral decisions completely suck and she should’ve talked to you. If somebody did that to me, I think I would be completely furious. But Carol doesn’t matter.” Jim said as he grabbed Spock’s hand.

“Considering that we now have David and our ability to keep him hinges on…” Jim placed a finger to Spock’s lips to get him to stop being overly Spock right now.

“That’s not what I mean, Spock.”

“Clarify?” His husband demanded.

“There is nothing we can do right now to change the Carol situation except deal with it. She’s gone and as much as you wished that was different for David’s sake that fact is not going to change. At this point, the only thing we can do is just pick up the pieces and make sure Alexander Fucking Marcus doesn’t get a single dirty evil little finger on our son.”

Jim is pretty sure he saw a Spock version of a smile when he said ‘our son’, but he’s not entirely certain because it was so quick.

“Your mom and Chris are still here and… Your mom is getting remarried to a guy that you had a crush on for a good portion of your Starfleet career and that’s probably making this situation a lot worse for you. Although, you should probably keep in mind that in general, nobody likes their mom getting remarried. I hated it when my mom married Frank.” Jim gave him another reassuring squeeze of the hand that, by Vulcan standards, was probably a make out session.

“Frank killed your mother. You had a right to be concerned. However, Christopher is a good man.” There is certain sadness in Spock’s eyes that only Jim understands.

“I know he’s a good man and maybe that makes it worse for you because even though most of your crush is gone you still have a little hero worship thing going on.”

“That is not an issue.” Spock told him a little too quickly.

“Somehow I don’t believe you,” Jim rolled his eyes. “But I’m going to let it go for now because any discussion about you and your mom having the same taste in men is just too surreal for me. Maybe you’re upset because it was a total surprise. We didn’t even know that they were actually dating, even though your sisters have been suspicious for years.” Spock just gives him a look.

“Oh, we were all suspicious, even you were suspicious.”
“Lieutenant Gaila gave my mother a condom bouquet for her birthday this year.” There was a slight edge to Spock’s words as he said the engineer’s name. Spock was not completely okay with the fact that his other self was sleeping with her, although he was probably more okay with it then his mother marrying Chris. Maybe, it was a tossup.

“They have been close friends for the last 3.3 years. In Vulcan culture, it is not unheard of for close friends to become romantically involved.” Spock said in the most matter of fact way possible, which told Jim that he was going in to pure logic mode to divorce his emotions from the situation. That was never a good sign.

“Considering your native language has a word that means friend and lover simultaneously, it’s not shocking at all. However, your mother is not…” Considering that dark look he was receiving from his husband, Jim knew not to finish that sentence as intended; otherwise there would be no sex for him anytime soon.

“Okay your mom is a Vulcan citizen, but she’s not a biological Vulcan.” He rephrased.

“However, she has spent the majority of her life adhering to Vulcan principles.” Spock corrected.

“Which is more important than DNA. Your mom is a lot more Vulcan then that idiot on the Council who is trying to take David away from us so he can be raised in a proper Vulcan home. Who the fuck decides what a proper Vulcan home is anyway?”

“Him, apparently,” Spock remarked dryly.

“Well, he is a dick. Why did you save him?” Jim says, leaning into his husband. Spock quickly wraps an arm around him.

“My goal was not to save him, but rather my father. Unfortunately, because that Vulcan pushed my father aside during the evacuation…” Spock doesn’t finish, but it’s enough to make all the pieces click inside Jim’s mind.

“Are you upset that she’s moving on?” Spock turned around to look at his husband.

“She deserves to be happy. However…” Spock doesn’t finish his thought.

“You just cannot see how she can simply let go of your dad and fall in love with someone else?” Spock doesn’t answer, so he takes that as a yes.

“Just because she moved on doesn’t mean that she doesn’t still love your father or that she never loved your father. I mean, we know for a fact that barring something catastrophic, you’re going to outlive me and someday you’re going to have to find someone else.”

“I do not want to think about that.” Spock interrupted.

“Neither do I.” he quickly gave Spock a chaste kiss on the lips. “But there’s a pretty good chance that we went to a reality where that already happened and I’m glad you, or rather other you had Nyota. I’m sure other me from Selek’s dimension would be fine with him ‘dating’ Gaila. I don’t want you to spend the rest of your life alone and I’m sure your father felt the exact same way.” Jim said squeezing his hand again.

“Come on, let’s get some pizza and play something bloody and violent. I think this arcade specializes in 20th century games. I think you would like whack-a-mole. You get to hit plastic things with a stick. You can pretend they are David’s grandfathers.” Jim said deliberately using the plural.
“I am uncertain if I’m ready to see my mother at this time, I may say something inappropriate.” Spock sighed.

“Which would just mean that it’s Tuesday,” Jim joked.

“I believe it is actually Saturday.”

“It’s just a-- never mind.” Jim said shaking his head before remembering what he put in the David preparedness bag that he brought with him (and if anyone had told him months ago he would ever be carrying around a toddler bag, Jim Kirk would have laughed in your face).

“We don’t have to go in right now. The windows are tinted and the good thing about having to take care of a 2-year-old is you always have to bring supplies with you. I managed to bring a few other things.” Jim said, pulling out a bottle of lube and condoms because it would make cleanup a little bit easier. At this point in their marriage they usually don’t bother with that sort of stuff anymore unless there’s a reason.

“We are not engaging in intercourse in the car in the middle of the parking lot for a children’s theme restaurant.” Spock protests. But Jim could tell it was only a halfhearted attempt, especially because Spock was filling up his hands.

“So if we were parked somewhere else, you would be okay with it?” Jim didn’t get to find out the answer to that question because alarms started to go off everywhere.

XXXXX

“Gaila is dating my son.” His girlfriend says as soon as she picks up his call. He was actually expecting her to ask where he was when he called to tell her that both he and Jim decided that it would be best if Spock spent some time with his mother without him there.

He is a brave man, but there was no way he was getting in a vehicle with those 2 under the current circumstances. If they weren’t mad about the engagement, they would be mad about the new asshole in charge. He knew they were upset. He didn’t need Jim to pull him aside and tell him that lunch with Spock right now would be a bad idea. That was obvious from the angry glares he was receiving during the last few minutes of the meeting from hell. Seriously why did they have to keep promoting assholes?

“I don’t think your son’s into polygamy,” he joked as he made his way to Jane’s lab from his office after his impromptu meeting with Jim and later his meeting with Admiral Lume about Jane and the idiot. His boss wanted him to find the scientist and talk to her about the leak. They were both certain she had something to do with it, especially since 30 minutes ago, he received the text message from her backing out of the lunch. That made everything seem more suspicious because he knew that the Doctor wanted to see David badly. “If he was, I’m pretty sure he would choose Nyota. I know my meeting with the boss took forever, but I didn’t even think Jim would be there yet.”

“Jim and Spock are not here yet. However, Selek and his brand-new girlfriend are engaging in a riveting conversation with Alexis about her daughter’s, sister’s love life or lack thereof. According to the woman sleeping with my other son, Nyota is completely in love with Leonard McCoy, so I doubt that will ever become an issue.” Amanda said with pure sarcasm which pretty much told Chris everything he needed to know. Apparently other Spock was the one who showed up with the surprise girlfriend and Amanda was not happy for reasons unknown.

“You know when your child is 3 times your age; you’re not allowed to criticize his or her choice of partners. You are barely allowed to criticize Spock the younger’s choice of partners.” He sighed as
he finally made his way out of his office.

“Considering my son-in-law, who has been arrested more than a dozen times for computer crimes is the best of the best of all the people that Spock has dated, I think I have a right to have an opinion.” At this point Chris wasn’t sure if his girlfriend was joking or not. She had the deadpan Vulcan voice down perfectly.

“Remember, he was never actually charged with anything.” Chris reminded her. “Okay. I thought you liked her. She was practically your assistant after-- everything.” More than 3 years later, and he still doesn’t like bringing up the events that made her a widow. Genocide is never a good subject for conversation.

“They met when she was my assistant. Selek was going to do something suicidal because he’s just as stubborn as his father and she stopped him.” Amanda sighed again.

“How exactly does that lead to the two being together?” He asked Amanda because he was missing something.

“You know that I adore her.” She said, ignoring his question. “I just don’t think she should be dating a guy 6 times her age.” So apparently, Amanda was more worried about Gaila then Elder Selek. This makes sense to Chris. Amanda has known the young woman since she rescued her more than a decade and a half ago from a slave ship.

“I think I get it. You see her as another daughter because your heart is just that big, but she’s a grown woman and gets to make her own mistakes. Now if T’Pen came home with a prospective boyfriend or girlfriend for that matter who was significantly older than her then you can be angry and I promise to help you hide the body.”

“I don’t think it will come to that, but we are going to have to have the birth control talk now.” Amanda sighed once more. “Technically, Spock made me a grandmother before he even made it out of the Academy. I’m not having that again.”

Chris wondered if he prevents Amanda for screaming at Spock for the entire getting Carol pregnant thing, the Vulcan will forgive him for falling in love with his mother. Chris isn’t so sure. He’s a smart enough man to know that’s why Spock is upset. Yes, they can tell him that the wedding is just some scheme to keep Alexander Marcus away and keep David safe, but there’s no way he can tell Spock that he doesn’t love Amanda. Chris has been in love with her for so long that he’s not even sure when it happened, but he knows that it’s true. Chris is unable to deny that fact.

“If he was old enough to be at the Academy, he was old enough to have consensual sex with a fellow cadet. Besides…”

“I know.” Amanda cut him off. “The whole thing was dubious consent at best. Why are you defending him? You are supposed to be on my side.” He wished this was a Vid chat because he is sure that she’s pouting at him.

“It’s my job to make sure you see things reasonably.” He told her with a slight laugh.

“If this was a vid conference, I would be giving you the look right now.” She said laughing too.

“T’Pay, don’t throw the wooden ball at David. Go play with the plastic ball. Those balls you can throw at each other.” She ordered the two children.

“Do I sense pseudo-sibling jealousy?” He asked slightly worried.
“Yes and I don’t understand why.” She sighed.

“Maybe she doesn’t like you paying attention to other people.” He said it as a joke, but he realized that may be applicable to Spock as well.

“Look, my replacement is an idiot and managed to tell Spock about not only the fact that we are dating, but also about our upcoming nuptials before I could say anything and…”

“And now Spock is channeling his little sister?” Amanda asked, knowing her children a little too well.

“Pretty much. In an effort to avoid him throwing wooden balls at me, Jim and I decided it would be best if I’m not there at lunch.”

“That’s the only reason why you’re canceling on me?”

“There are other reasons, but it is complicated and I need to find Jane.” Chris told her, just as he passes the office that formerly belonged to Jonathan Jackson. Inside was Jane looking at an old-fashioned notebook with all the lights turned off. “And apparently, I just found her.”

“Why do I have a feeling that this conversation is approaching the ‘it’s classified’ threshold.” Amanda joked.

“Everything involving my new job crosses that threshold. If I survived this afternoon’s meeting with Jim, Spock and the lawyers, I promise to come by tonight.” He says just before ending the call, not even giving Amanda time to respond.

“What are you doing in Jonathan’s office?” Chris asked, not even trying to surprise her. It’s impossible to do that when you’re in a wheelchair, anyway.

“I’m not even sure.” Jane says, looking up in tears.

“Maybe I came to get his sketchbook because he would hate for it to be tossed out with everything else. Maybe I’m here to find answers to questions that can only be answered by a dead man.” She seemed broken as she spoke.

“I’m pretty sure the computer has been cleared by now, so you probably won’t be able to find anything else to upload to the net.” He doesn’t know why he said that, but the look she gave him told him it was the wrong thing.

“With my security clearance, I wouldn’t need to. Just so you know, I’m not The Rising Tide.” Jane said closing the sketchpad.

“How can I believe you?” Chris asked.

“First of all, Starfleet is the only home I have in this world, even if certain factions are not exactly the good guys. Besides, if I was going to leak severely classified material, I would’ve attributed it to Hydra, not the Rising Tide,” she joked.

“That’s another comic book reference?” Chris asked hesitantly.

“You are sorely missing out on the classics.” Jane said sadly before continuing. “Jonathan was obsessed with all things comic books. I swear he got some of his ‘best’ ideas from comic books and their assorted movies. Apparently, he thought dumping most of Starfleet’s dirty laundry out in the open was a good idea.” She said with another sigh.
“Jonathan has been dead for days.” Chris said, not believing that Jonathan could be responsible for his latest headache.

“That really doesn’t mean anything,” she shrugged. “Jonathan always has a contingency plan for any situation, even screwing over Alexander Marcus.”

“I thought they were friends? He was his mentor.” Chris asked confused and Jane started to laugh maliciously.

“Marcus was also your mentor, but that doesn’t mean you can’t see him as the absolute bastard that he is. John and Alex hadn’t been friends for a long time, ever since Carol got pregnant with David the first time.” Her words are punctuated by bitterness. “After we found out about Carol, Jonathan cursed Alex and told me that if something happened to him or me, Alex would live to regret it.”

“Jonathan was the Rising Tide?” He asked.

“It’s not that hard to set up files to be released posthumously. There’s even a program for it to be used for wills and things like that.” Chris is aware of that considering he knows several in Starfleet that have used the program.

“I can see that as a possibility, but why are you here? I thought you wanted to spend time with David?”

“Jonathan’s sketchpad has the best stuff. Maybe I’m looking for confirmation. I’m not sure. Besides the best thing I can do for David is to make sure that he’s safe and having usable dirt on Marcus can guarantee that.” Jane said, just as her communicator chirped.

“That was your girlfriend/fiancée telling me to bring you to the happy house of pizza or whatever despite what you told Jim earlier.”

“Apparently, she must enjoy an uncomfortable lunch with her children,” Chris tells her, but he knows it’s in his best interest to go along with Amanda’s requests. They arrived at the restaurant 20 minutes later or at least they tried to. They were unable to get into the parking lot because it was now covered with cop cars. Jim and Spock were arguing with the police bot to let them in, but were not successful. He tried to call Amanda, but she was not picking up her phone.

XXXX
T’Pay was not happy and, according to her mom, it was perfectly normal for her to be unhappy even if mommy Amanda’s assistant said that ‘Good Vulcans’ feel no emotions whatsoever. It seems like everybody’s attention is focused on David because he is Amanda’s real family and according to Anthony from preschool, she’s just ‘some stray’ that Amanda brought home. She does not like that everybody is fawning all over him because that means they don’t want her anymore. Even T’Pen likes him more. She doesn’t want to go back to that big place that they send unwanted kids. She doesn’t remember it that well but her sister said that it’s a horrible place, which is why they can’t let David go there.

She really doesn’t want to like David, but he shares his toys and carrot sticks with her. He also let her order the pizza she liked, even after she threw a ski ball at him. As they wait for their food, they are now playing in the ballroom together. Her sister thinks playing in the ball pit is illogical since daddy Chris can’t get inside because of his wheelchair, her big brother is never around and her best friend Georgia doesn’t get to go out that often because her mommy is very protective. Now she has David and maybe it’s nice to have somebody her own age or at least closer to her age to play with. (She is almost 2 years older than her replacement. Maybe mommy Amanda likes
younger children better, but if that is the case why did she adopt T’Pen as well.

She tries not to think of that when they are in the ball pit. She was going to focus on having fun and if she has an excuse to throw balls at the interloper that is okay. Mommy Amanda said that was okay as long as she did not throw anymore wood ones. She does not understand the explicit purpose of the ball pit except to release excess energy.

After 5 minutes together in the ball pit another little girl started throwing balls at David and T’Pay goes on the offensive. Nobody throws balls at her nephew but her. As she attacks the girl in the yellow sweater who is twice David size, her nephew started to scream. T’Pay thinks that someone else is throwing balls at David, but instead, there is a blonde woman trying to drag him out of the play area. Other parents look concerned, but the woman tells everyone that he is her husband’s grandson, but he just doesn’t like her very well. The parents believe her, but T’Pay knows better.

Her mom is a council elder and kidnapping attempts were pretty normal. When she was just 2 years old, somebody tried to take her out of the house in the middle of the night, but mommy Amanda shot him. After that, Daddy Chris told her everything she needed to do if a stranger tried to take her. Because mommy Amanda told her to take care of David, that advice also applies to the situation, especially because the woman already has David out of the ball pit and is trying to make her way to the door.

“You’re not his grandmother.” She shouts as she throws a ball directly at the woman’s head. “My mom is. Get away from my nephew.” She keeps throwing balls at the woman, but it doesn’t slow her down even if the other parents are now looking at her suspiciously. As she tells them a story about a messy divorce, her big sister T’Pen approaches the woman from behind and put her fingers on her neck. Just as alarms in the restaurant started to go off, the woman crumbled to the floor.

To be continued
Jim was now sitting in the main living room of Admiral Lume’s summerhouse, only Chris knew where, drinking a glass of tea with one of Amanda’s signature cookies. Did he mention that his tea was of the Long Island variety? Chamomile just doesn’t cut it when your husband’s ex-girlfriend’s crazy father uses his bimbo wife, Mercedes, to try to kidnap your kid.

They were on the Admiral’s private property because the woman did not trust anybody right now. “They” included Jim, Spock, David, Chris, Amanda, Bones, Nyota and their lawyer. Amanda decided that it would be best for the sister-in-laws to stay with the parents of T’Pay’s BFF Georgia River, whose mom just happens to be her preschool teacher. The rest were essentially in hiding because the good admiral is convinced that this morning’s debriefing from hell was a set up to allow Marcus’s ‘allies’ easy access to baby David. Jim was inclined to agree with her and he was glad they were somewhere very few people would know to look.

From what they could piece together Alexander Marcus’ flaky wife Mercedes Marcus, decided it would be a really good idea to take Baby David from the restaurant. How they knew where Amanda would be still remains a mystery, but Jim wouldn’t be surprised if their calls and emails were being monitored. According to information provided earlier, Marcus had very little respect for the privacy of Starfleet personnel when he was in charge. Leaving in place a mechanism to check up on the guy who got his daughter pregnant seems like something he would’ve done. The guy was just that evil.

“I thought Alexander Marcus was supposed to be some great tactical mind. Did he really think country club Barbie would successfully make it out of the restaurant with David?” Jim asked his lawyer, slightly annoyed. Honestly, Jim is not surprised that Marcus tried to kidnap his son. He’s just shocked that it was done in a way that was so obvious and destined to fail from the beginning.

“Especially in an establishment where guests under the age of 18 are required to wear a tracking bracelet and they have an entire kidnap prevention protocol. That’s probably the main reason why Jim suggested that place for lunch in the first place.” Nyota said from beside him.

“Actually, I just like to play whack-a-mole, but that’s good to know.” Jim quipped.
“Marcus is a tactical genius and that was just a test.” The lawyer sighed. “According to evil lawyer number two, the guy is not even on earth right now. I’m expecting his publicist and legal team to release a statement any minute now disavowing any knowledge of what Mercedes was planning to do and blame the entire thing on a messy divorce and the woman going off her medication. If they do something like that, it will be difficult to bring up Spock’s history of mental illness later on, so it will still be a win for us.”

“I’m not surprised. While country club Barbie was trying to steal David away, idiotic lawyer number three was sent to intimidate Christine. It’s interesting that they knew exactly where to find her.” Nyota explained to the group.

“Very interesting,” Alexis said darkly.

“By the way, I think we owe her an apology.” Nyota said turning to him. “She didn’t sell us out even though we’ve been…”

“Unbelievably horrible to her,” Jim supplied for her. “I find it more remarkable considering that she absolutely hates me.”

“She doesn’t hate you. She’s just…” Nyota was unable to finish that sentence.

“Completely in love with me,” Jim supplied for her. “Christine rather risk being a sitting target in Starfleet housing then come here to talk to me about what happened. I think if she hated me, it would be better for her in the long run.”

“That’s not love. That’s obsession or maybe infatuation, which can be a lot more dangerous. I’ve seen what it could do firsthand.” His lawyer Alexis said from the sidelines. “Are you sure she’s not going to…”

“Switch sides?” Nyota supplied for the mother of her sister. “I don’t think so, especially after what happened to David. He’s her godson. She would do a lot for him.”

“The woman is as stubborn as a mule.” Bones supplied. His friend has been extremely quiet this during whole thing.
“Which is probably the other reason why Marcus would want to make her disappear.” Jim mumbled to himself. “Chris is there any way…” Jim started to ask, but Chris cut him off.

“I’ve already arranged for her to have a security detail, but short of ordering her to do it, I can’t make her go into a safe house.” Chris explained.

“That would probably be best. She’s probably one of the few people alive that can authenticate most of the things that Carol left behind.” The lawyer explained.

“Have you already met with her?” Jim asked.

“Why do you think my associate was the one who met you at the police station?” Alexis said effortlessly.

“Good point.”

“I am going to speak with her again tomorrow,” Alexis said before she looked at the time. “Okay, I’m going to speak to her again later today,” Alexis said, getting up from the couch. “I think it’s time for me to go home. There’s nothing else we can do now and I need to be rested enough to deal with Marcus’ annoying lawyers in the morning.”

“You don’t have to leave. It’s already 2 in the morning and this house has a dozen bedrooms.” Nyota suggested. “Did anybody know our big boss came from money?”

“Tempting, but I cannot leave your sister alone for so long and thankfully, because your big boss has all the latest toys, I will not have to drive.” Alexis yawned.

“Ivy is a big girl. She’ll be fine for a couple of hours.” Nyota suggested.

“But she can’t deal with A…” Alexis was cut off mid-word by Nyota.

“Dad is living with you again? I can’t believe you would fall for his shit.” Nyota said angrily. Jim probably knows more about her daddy issues than anyone else in Starfleet. This is not going to be good.
“Yes, your father is living with me, but not in that way. No, we are not sleeping together again.” Alexis told her quickly. “Trust me; we don’t have that type of relationship, not anymore.”

“Then why is your baby’s daddy living with you and why can’t my sister take care of him overnight?” Nyota yelled at her sister’s mother. “Actually, why can’t he take care of himself? What are you not telling me?”

“He’s sick.” Alexis said simply and Bones quickly wrapped an arm around a shaking Nyota.

“How sick?” There was a hint of panic in Nyota’s words. “Because it has to be bad if you’re letting him back in your life after what he did.”

“Cancer of the esophagus most likely triggered by OPV,” Alexis responded without inflection.

“Cancer caused by a STI. Why am I not surprised?” Nyota scoffed.

“It doesn’t matter how he ended up where he is right now. He is still your father. He’s also the father of my daughter. He’s always been there for Ivy and therefore it’s only right that I be there for him.” Alexis explained and Nyota continues to give her a dark look. “He may have completely fucked me over, but he’s always going to be in my life no matter what. That’s what family does.”

“It’s just great for her to have the good father and to know what’s going on. Why didn’t you tell me?” Nyota’s voice was cold, masking the fact that she was seconds from breaking apart.

“Nyota, you’re the one who hasn’t accepted a single one of his calls in almost 3 years!” Alexis said defensively.

“Because I don’t want to talk to him, but I still have a right to know!” She yelled. “Is he dying?”

Given the completely stricken look on his lawyer face, Jim thought it was best for him to get the hell out of that living room right now. This was going to get dangerous. Chris was right behind him, but being the brave man that he was Bones stayed behind with his arms still wrapped around Nyota. It occurred to Jim that Bones must be completely lovesick if he was willing to brave this family moment. Yes, he decided, this was definitely love.
The Admiral’s kitchen was spectacular and designed for someone who actually likes to cook. However, Jim liked it because it was far away from the dysfunctional family chaos unfolding in the main living room.

“I’m going to go check on Spock.” He tells Chris because he is not exactly sure he wants to be in a room alone with Chris right now. Otherwise he would be making himself another “iced tea”.

“I just saw Amanda leaving the kitchen with hot chocolate right when we came in here.” How did he not notice that? Then again, Jim is pretty sure that Chris has Amanda radar.

“Okay, now I’m definitely not going in there. I’d rather walk unarmed into a room with Klingons.” Jim said with a shiver as he went for the admiral’s large liquor collection. A major part of diplomacy is alcohol and this woman had a nice selection. Actually, he’s pretty sure half of the things in her ‘hostess collection’ are not exactly legal. Jim was planning on having a fun night or a semi-fun night. He can get tipsy but not drunk, because Marcus and his goons could show up at any moment. Lunch was testament to that. He feels really guilty about what almost happened in the car while that woman was trying to take David.

“It’s not going to be that bad. They just need some time to talk things out. Amanda feels guilty for what happened.” Chris said motioning for Jim to pour him a shot as well.

“She was in the bathroom and the other adults who were there were supposed to be paying attention. Honestly, I’m more pissed off that none of the parents that were right there didn’t even think to alert security. Spock is definitely not going to be upset with Amanda. Honestly, I think he would be more upset about the wedding.” Jim explained taking a drink. The Admiral definitely has the good stuff.

“There’s something you need to know,” Chris started to explain, but Jim cut him off.

“Look, it’s fine. I expected this for a while. I think Spock did as well. It’s just there are a lot of things he has to deal with right now. We were talking about it earlier before the pizza kidnapping attempt. Nobody’s completely comfortable with their mom remarrying, even if you’re not a bastard like Frank. I think it’s just -are you aware that Spock had a crush on you?” Jim decided it was best just blurt this out.

“Extremely aware of,” Chris said downing his shot in one go. “But not only was he my subordinate, he was too young and…”
“You were in love with someone else.” Jim finished for him as he went to pour Chris another drink. Although Jim thinks the subordinate thing probably played more of a role than anything else.

“Essentially.”

“Which is why you let my husband believe that you were completely straight, as not to hurt his feelings.” Judging by the look he was getting, Jim called that one correctly.

“It seemed like the best strategy at the time,” Chris mumbled.

“Especially because you’re now fucking his mom.” That just got Jim a very dark look. “And don’t get me wrong, I’m really happy that you 2 are together, even if it took you guys forever because you were both in denial. I just can’t believe that you’re already engaged.”

“Actually,” Chris tried to interrupt.

“Don’t tell me you guys already got married. If Spock missed his mom’s wedding, I’m not going to be able to save you.” Jim said in all seriousness. “There aren’t enough blow jobs in the world for me to calm him down from that.”

“No, we’re not really engaged.” Okay, considering how enamored the two were earlier, Jim doesn’t believe that for a moment.

“What do you mean?” Jim questioned.

“Although the judge that has been assigned to David’s case is perfectly fine with same-sex multi-species couples, he has a problem with single-parent families.”

And thus began an absolutely convoluted story of how Amanda and Chris not only confess their feelings for one another, but agreed to fake an engagement for the sake of keeping David out of the slimy hands of Alexander Marcus or the normal child welfare system. By the end of it, James was laughing so hard he was in tears. This was definitely a story for the great grandkids.
“So, you and Amanda went from pure denial to engaged in about 5 minutes?” Jim asked still laughing. “I hope there is security footage of that.”

“We’re not really engaged we’re just dating.” His former boss said giving him a dark look.

“Yes, you are.” Jim shot right back. “Whatever you do, do not tell Spock this real story of what happened.

“I think he would be happier if he knew the truth.” Chris suggested, but Jim knew better. There was no real way to make Spock happy right now.

“No, especially because you’re not even aware of the actual truth. He’s going to be upset that you and Amanda rushed into a relationship just to save David or he’s going to be upset that—just trust me, Spock is going to be upset. Think about it, either way, you’re still sleeping with his mom.”

“Good point.”

“Can we talk about something else, like how my favorite 4-year-old is doing in preschool?” Jim suggested.

“I’m not sure that would be a happier subject. Her classroom is populated with nasty spoiled brats, few of which are Xenophobic. I mean, not everybody is horrible, but if it wasn’t for Wi-Whitney it would be a lot worse.” Jim catches the last minute name change but doesn’t think anything of it.

“Should I be worried that you’re on a first name basis with my sister-in-law’s preschool teacher? Isn’t that where the girls are right now? Considering how protective Amanda is, I’m surprised about that even if she is the mom of T’Pay’s best friend.”

“Wi-Whitney is an old friend of mine.” Jim found that hard to believe.

“Yet you keep mispronouncing her first name. Is there something that I’m not getting?”
“Yes,” Chris said putting his head in his hands for a moment. “Since this place has already been swept for listening devices, I might as well tell you now. You may want another shot first.” Chris suggested.

“It can’t be that bad.” Jim declined the offer drink.

“This is your baby sister-in-law’s class picture.” Chris said grabbing his PADD and passing it over to Jim. Under other circumstances, Jim would question why Chris had a copy of T’Pay’s class picture. Now he understood why he was being offered alcohol. Her hair color was different, along with some of her features, but he knew those eyes, even though it had been seven years.

“She’s dead. Frank killed her.” James repeated over and over again as he looked at the picture in front of him. There’s no way Winona could still be alive. It’s just not possible.

XXXX

“I brought you some hot chocolate. The good stuff made with French truffles.”

Amanda walked into the room where her oldest child laid beside his son, stroking his hair gently. She brought chocolate because she felt like she needed to come into the room with a peace offering and Spock would need something to calm him. The first time this happens is always the hardest. Although, the 15th time isn’t much easier either. She was really tired of idiots trying to kidnap her children and she hates the fact that this tradition is continuing to her grandson.

“I thought you prefer Riso chocolate.” Spock said, taking the offered mug from his mother’s hand.

“But you prefer French,” Amanda said sitting beside him.

“You were 3 years old the first time it happened. We were at the market just down the street from our old house. I turned around for just a second to grab a few things and someone took you out of your stroller.” It has been 25 years and she still found this memory painful. There’s nothing worse than discovering that your child is missing. “It turns out he was some Vulcan supremacist who had a problem with interspecies children and I really don’t want to think about what would have happened if your grandmother wasn’t with me.”

“I assume that she did something similar to what T’Pen did this afternoon.” He said taking a very large drink a chocolate. She purposely made this batch triple strength. It was probably closer to ganache then actual hot chocolate.
“Yes, but only slightly more deadly. I don’t think I left your bed for a week afterwards. I would barely let you out of my sight to go to the bathroom. I was a mess.” Amanda said running her fingers through Spock’s hair. The fact that he was letting her do this spoke volumes about his mental state. The last time she was allowed to do this was after Sarek’s death.

“I do not recall this incident. I thought the first time was when I was 5 and the Vulcan embassy was attacked by militants.” That was another unfortunate incident.

“Spock, you have been kidnapped at least six times and I’m not counting anything that has happened during your time as First Officer on Enterprise.”

“There have been 4 attempted abductions during the last 3 years and only one was somewhat successful.” Her son was completely nonplussed as he spoke. “However, James was able to find me using our telepathic bond.” But she was pissed.

“This is the type of thing you tell your mother.” She nearly yelled at him before remembering that there was a sleeping child in the room.

“It is illogical for you to be upset about something like this considering you have been involved in a clandestine romantic relationship with Christopher for some time, to the point where marriage is a possibility.” She should tell him that the engagement wasn’t real and that she and Christopher just began their relationship. Yet, something about the way Spock phrased his objection upset her greatly.

“Technically, you and James were married within 3 days of acknowledging that you were together.” She said pointing out his hypocrisy.

“Yet, we were friends for 7.4 months by that point.” Spock said in his defense.

“Technically, Christopher and I have known each other for 14 years.” Amanda responded in kind. “I knew him before you even started at the Academy, even if at that time he was just a casual acquaintance. We have been close friends for 3 years.”

“I am aware.” Spock said indifferently. “When did your relationship shift from platonic to one of a romantic nature?”
“I don’t know.” Amanda answered honestly. “I can’t even tell you when I fell in love with him. I was fighting it so hard and then I realized that there was no point anymore.” She didn’t want to talk to Spock about still wishing his father was alive. She did not want to burden her oldest child with such a revelation.

“When did your and James’ relationship go beyond mere friendship?” She asked, purposely knowing that such a question would distract Spock.

“From my perspective, our relationship has always been of a romantic nature. However, from James’ perspective it began the first time we engaged in sexual intercourse.” The odd thing was even though Spock said the term so effortlessly his cheeks still became green. She couldn’t help but laugh.

“There’s no need for shyness and/or modesty that you claim not to have. You have a child and I found you and your husband’s sex toys before on more than one occasion. I am well aware that you had sex at some point in the past. What were you thinking sleeping with her? She was practically a baby. She was only a couple years older than your sister at the time.” Amanda promised herself that she would at least wait a day or 2 before the Carol discussion, but she’s not entirely happy with Spock questioning her relationship with Chris.

“According to our legal counsel, if Jonathan Jackson was still alive, he would be charged with facilitation of sexual assault among other charges.” Spock responded nonplussed.

“I’m aware of that as well, but that doesn’t absolve you of everything.” Amanda said, realizing she was losing this argument. Spock would blame the drug that he was given to push him to be with Carol, but they both knew it was more than that.

“You’re in love with Christopher.” Spock said returning to the subject she was trying to avoid.

“I was really hoping an awkward conversation about your sex life would help us avoid that particular question.” Amanda sighed.

“It was not a question, but a statement of fact. I am already aware of the answer.”

“Yes, but that doesn’t mean that I don’t still love your father. It’s just that I love Chris too. But that doesn’t diminish-- did you or do you still love Carol?” This is a question that she never thought she would ask. After the break up, her son assured her that it was merely infatuation, hormones, and
that emotions were not involved in any capacity. However, Amanda knew her son better than that.

“Not in the way I feel about James,” Spock answered after a moment as he ran his fingers through David’s hair.

“But that doesn’t make what you feel any less important. It also doesn’t make the pain of her death hurt any less.” Amanda said just as Spock suddenly got up from the bed. “Where are you going?”

“James needs me,” and with that her son was gone.

Xxxxx

Chris and Amanda had everything planned. It was going to be a nice family dinner tomorrow with lots of alcohol and things that they could throw at each other without causing property damage. He was even considering having Dr. Margarita Cruz be there to play family therapist. However, when Jim started asking questions Chris realized they couldn’t wait that long. All it would take would be for Jim to walk in on a video call between Winona and Amanda or his baby sister in law bringing out a picture of her best friends mom. Both scenarios were highly likely, especially considering the children were staying with “Whitney” and her wife right now.

Amanda and Chris felt it was best for the girls to be somewhere else considering Andrew Marcus would be perfectly willing to kill all of them to get to David. In Chris’s mind, he is positive that Marcus killed his own daughter for that reason. Winona was an obvious choice because Marcus did not know of her connection to Jim and she already has a security detail due to being in witness protection. Also, he knows what Winona can do with a phaser. The girls were better off there.

“That’s what I thought until about 2 weeks ago, when I went along with Amanda to convince T’Pay to leave the bathroom. The moment “Whitney” turned around, I knew it was her.” Chris explained.

“But she’s dead. I identified her body.” Jim said on the verge of hyperventilating.

“Via video screen. She’s in witness protection.” Chris explained and Jim started breathing normally again.

“Oh, that’s plausible. Frank was a bastard and doing all sorts of illegal things. I think mom always knew that the asshole had an extensive reach. That obviously explains why she took so many off planet assignments during my teenage years. I’m assuming it got to that point again.” Jim said darkly.
“Worse than that, actually. I’m fairly certain that those bruises you saw when you identified her body were not fake.” Chris can see Jim become visibly sick at those words.

“Why didn’t she just leave?”

“It wasn’t that simple, Jim. She knew too much. Besides, at that point, I don’t think she cared that much about her own life, but she did care about you and Georgia. Frank threatened to kill both of you if she ever left him and she already knew that he had no trouble whatsoever killing her children. She knew she would be next regardless and did what she had to do to protect both of you.” Chris tried to explain, when he himself was not completely satisfied with the explanation.

“So she left the only way she knew she could in a body bag.” Jim supplied and by that point, Spock was in the room with his arms wrapped around Jim.

“Essentially, yes.”

“Just one question, who is Georgia? I know she is T’Pay’s best friend but…”

“Georgia is your sister or rather half-sister. Frank got Winona pregnant and she…” Chris stopped talking at that moment because Jim was now lying in his husband’s arms, completely unconscious.

To be continued.

Chapter End Notes

As I post this, I’m working on new chapters for various stories. Your reviews keep me focused and prolific. Also, I’m starting to branch out again and I am working on stories for the Marvel Cinematic Universe. If you like Tony/Steve stories, check out my one-shot Complicated Love Stories from the District of Insanity. I’m currently writing a sequel.
Why can I just do the Sunday crossword like a normal person today?

Chapter Notes

Thank you to everybody who read or reviewed the last chapter. I know it’s been a little while. I’ve been distracted by shiny new stories and characters. For those of you that love Spock/Jim/Nyota, I just started the third story in the Idiot’s Guide to Multi-Species Polyamorous Relationships, entitled The Idiot’s Guide to Family Bonding. From the title, you can tell that much like this story, that story is family focus. You will find all sorts of goodies in my profile.

When I originally started this story, I had a completely different plan for how it would go. Originally, there were going to be 2 major villains, Carol’s father and the terrorist organization that killed everybody on NCX 17. I was also planning to spend more time planet side exploring Jim and Spock’s foray into sudden parenthood. Then STID came out and that caused me to throw out my original plan, but in a good way. Now, Carol’s father would no longer have to be an original character and well you’ll find out about the terrorist group eventually.

However, Alexander Marcus isn’t the type of villain to sit around and let me write cute fluffy chapters about our protagonists dealing with bath time (other than the one I already wrote). Things are moving faster in the story than I had planned and I have decided to just go with the flow. This means that we only have about 5 or 6 chapters left. However, if there is desire for it there is potential for a fluffy follow-up story. Let me know because this will alter the way I do the last few chapters.

Warnings for this chapter: Violence and character life left in peril.

---

“I just don’t get it, Spock. Why didn’t she tell me?” James asked him for the 18th time since the events of the night before. Each time, Spock has been unable to provide an explanation to his husband regarding why his mother chose to not only fake her death, but keep him ignorant to the fact that she had done so.

“I do not know James. We will be able to ask her ourselves in 3.2 minutes time.”

They were currently sitting in the diner that Amanda recommended for this meeting. She said ‘neutral ground’ would be best for such a potentially emotional confrontation and Spock agreed with her. His mother offered to accompany James and Spock to the meeting with Winona on this Sunday morning, but they both preferred for her to stay at the Admiral’s compound with David. Yesterday’s events proved that it was not safe for David to be outside right now. Alexander Marcus has proven himself once again to be an unscrupulous individual.

“I mean, I understand why she did what she did on an intellectual level.” James started again. “Frank was always a bastard. If she already knew that he was responsible for what happened to Sam, I completely understand why she was worried about what the bastard would do to me and baby oops and would be willing to take desperate measures.”
“Do not refer to your sister by such a derogatory term.” Spock chastised his husband.

“Well, I doubt that this was a planned pregnancy, considering mom decided it was best to fake her death to get away from the bastard.” James defended himself. “I could see her being that desperate. I just don’t see why I couldn’t be in on the secret.” Spock has no explanation for that either.

“David was not a planned pregnancy.” Spock chose to say instead.

“Not on your part.” James scoffed. “Seriously, what type of sick bastard plans to get an unknowing teenager pregnant for the sake of science?”

“Jonathan Jackson.” Spock responded nonplussed despite the anger he felt at being an unwilling and unaware participant.

“Spock, that was a rhetorical…” James stopped speaking as he was attacked by a very small hyperactive 4-year-old Vulcan. As a child, Spock would have never hugged anyone, including his mother, in public. However, his younger sister was currently wrapped around the legs of his husband. Oddly enough, no one else was with her.

“I missed you so much baby girl.” James returned the embrace. Due to the incident yesterday, they were unable to see the girls before they were turned over to the custody of Mrs. River also known as Winona Kirk.

“I missed you too. Mommy Amanda says that you’re going to be here for a long time.” The four year old said enthusiastically.

“At least a year,” James told her pulling out of the hug.

What was left unsaid is both he and James have started considering moving into the private sector. Recent events have made it very clear that Starfleet has become an extremely corrupt organization or maybe it was always corrupt (the farce known as the Kobayashi Maru trials being a prime example). Unfortunately the new top leadership, including Christopher Pike, have been unable to stem that corruption, even after the reforms. They have David now and even though they are now able to raise him on board Enterprise, he and James need to evaluate if that environment is the best option for David’s physical and emotional well being. Unfortunately, they do not have time for such a serious discussion. Their primary focus at the moment is to keep David safe and in their custody.

“That means that you can come over to our new house to play with me even though you have David now.” The way she phrased the question Spock wondered if his younger sister was threatened by David’s presence. Spock made a mental note to discuss this with Amanda at the next opportune occasion.

“I remember jealous little brother/sister syndrome very well.” James said with a soft smile as he knelt down to be at eye level with the four year old. “Just because we have a kid doesn’t mean I’m not going to have time for you. Just between you and me, I’m a little afraid of being a daddy. Maybe I can practice on you and you can tell me what I’m doing wrong.” The 4-year-old readily nodded her head in agreement.

“What is this new house you are referring to?” Spock asked his younger sister. He has yet to talk to his mother about housing arrangements due to more pressing issues. However, he assumed that they would be living in Starfleet housing as soon as it was safe to do so as not to displace his mother and sisters.
He also chose not to mention James self-deprecating comments about his parenting skills. This is neither the time nor place to talk about this. Spock personally believes that James is adapting to parenthood at a faster rate than Spock. Again, he made a mental note to discuss this with James at a later date.

“Admiral Daddy is moving in with us, so we need a house that is completely wheelchair accessible.” That explanation is completely logical on the surface. However, this showed Spock that his mother’s relationship with Christopher was much more serious than Amanda allowed him to believe before he learned of their engagement. It was obvious to Spock that they have been more than friends for a very long time. “And mommy Amanda says we should give you your house back.”

“Don’t baby Vulcans say the cutest things?” James smiled sardonically.

“T’Pay in light of recent events, it is ill advised for you to run away from our guardians.” His other sister stated as she caught up to her younger counterpart.

“Sorry, T’Pen,” the young girl apologized without making eye contact.

“There is no purpose in apologizing. Please do not engage in such a potentially dangerous behavior again.” T’Pen reprimanded the four year old.

“I think that’s stuck up Vulcan for ‘you scared me to death, please don’t do that again’.” James said with a smirk as he stood up again.

“I am pleased to make your acquaintance again, Mister Kirk.” James actually rolled his eyes at T’Pen addressing him in such a formal way. This did not happen last time.

“It is Jim or if you must be as formal as your brother use James. I am your brother-in-law.” James sighed.

“Of course, Mister-James,” the preteen stammered out.

“Close enough.” Jim shrugged. “If I try to hug you, will you freak out?”

“I would prefer not to engage in such culturally inappropriate human behaviors in public.” T’Pen responded curtly.

“Well, at least it’s not a no.” James shook his head.

“Where are your guardians?” Spock questioned his sisters.

“At present, Mrs. River is recovering from a panic attack in the car. Her wife, Kayah, is currently explaining to Georgia why her mother is suffered a panic attack. Is it true that you are Georgia River’s older brother?”

“That’s what I’ve been told, but I’ve never met her.” James sighed again.

That resulted in T’Pay pulling James by the shirtsleeve out of the restaurant. She was also excitedly talking about her best friend, who apparently likes Barbie’s (particularly Starfleet Captain Barbie) and wants to be a starship captain when she grows up. Spock felt it would be best to allow T’Pay do the introduction between sister and brother.

“I have been informed by mother Amanda that you have procreated with your former girlfriend Carol Wallace, also known as Carol Marcus.” Her words were devoid of emotion.
“This is true.” There was no point in deceiving the preteen.

“I was also informed that if I engaged in similar sexual behavior before coming of age by her standards, outside of a medically necessitated time, I would be grounded for the next 18 years, especially if such actions resulted in procreation.” James would have laughed at that if he was there, but Spock did not.

“I believe Amanda was using hyperbole.” He is also certain that Amanda was very upset with him regarding what happened at the academy and his younger sister was suffering the consequences. “However, you are too young to concern yourself with such things.

“According to mother Amanda, I am only 3 years younger than Miss Wallace when you and she began your physical relationship.” Apparently, Amanda was very angry about this and shared several private details of the incident with T’Pen.

“I was not aware of that at the time.” Spock said in his defense.

“In addition, since the destruction of Vulcan premature puberty has become a regular occurrence among our people.” Spock is positive that premature puberty is coded language for premature Pon farr. It is a common occurrence among the surviving population of Vulcans. Individuals as young as 10 have become sexually mature. Many are considering this an evolutionary adaptation due to the loss of population. Certain members on the Council felt that this adaptation should be exploited. His mother was not one of them, which may explain another reason why a certain Vulcan was trying to force his mother off the Council.

“Did you enjoy spending time with your nephew yesterday?” He asked in a deliberate attempt to change the subject.

“I found yesterday’s meeting with young David pleasant until I had no choice but to incapacitate his grandmother.”

“She is not his biological grandmother, but rather merely married to the man who is David’s maternal grandfather. Carol’s mother died when she was younger than you are…” He was unable to finish due to the sounds of ancient gunshots and phaser fire coming from the parking lot.

“Where were you last night?” Chris asked as he made his way into Jane’s lab. He is not surprised at all to find her here. She was supposed to come to the safe house, but she never arrived last night and Chris was too preoccupied with Jim’s reaction to finding out about the Winona situation at the time to be concerned.

After Jim regained consciousness several pieces of ceramic ware were destroyed. Fortunately, they were all diplomatic gifts that Admiral Lume completely despised. She may see this as James doing her a favor. It was not a pleasant evening or rather morning. He was currently functioning on 2 hours of sleep. It wasn’t until this morning when he received a very strange email from Jim and Spock’s attorney that he realized he had reason to be concerned.

“In the company of our favorite Admiral and my great-nephew many generations removed. We chose to stay at their house in the city due to the guest staying at their country compound. Yes, I had a security detail with me at all times. Scary and Scarier are still outside.” She answered without even looking up from her lab equipment.

“For some reason, I do not believe you. I received an email this morning stating that Mercedes
Marcus received a visit from her sister, who just happens to match your description except for the fact she had a standard American accent.” He glared at her.

“I’m an expert at languages, accents, and dialects.” She said, sounding Mid-western rather than British or Indian which he is used to hearing from the woman. This should not surprise Chris, the British accent that he has heard from her over the last 3 ½ years was fake and yet he never once questioned the accent’s authenticity.

“So you’re not going to deny this?” He asked.

“What’s the point? Yes, I was there. I wasn’t lying earlier either. Our esteemed leader was the one who allowed me access in the first place. By the way, I speak over 15 languages or dialects, several of which are practically lost languages in the 23rd century. I can mimic any accent after hearing it just once.” She was now using the upper-class British accent he was more accustomed to hearing her use.

“Sometimes I forget that being a scientist is just your cover and you’re probably one of the most dangerous operatives to ever be part of Starfleet. You could pretend to be anybody if you wanted to.” He sighed to himself.

“I will always be a scientist first. I only use my other gifts as a means to protect my family and for purposes of atonement.” She said walking over to something that looked like a refrigeration unit.

“So would you like to explain how breaking Mercedes Marcus’ wrist is some form of atonement?” That was another thing mentioned in Alexis’s email.

“David is my family. Therefore, if I did touch that wretched woman, it would be for his protection. However, I didn’t have to. She was like that when I got there.” Jane actually smirked. “It must’ve been a side effect of being dropped like a brick house by a prepubescent Vulcan that happens to know martial arts or whatever the Vulcan equivalent is called.

“I don’t believe you.” Chris scoffed.

“You can ask your boss or my security team. I’m merely asked Mercedes to pass the message on to Marcus.”

“What was that message?” He asked slightly worried.

“To tell her husband or most likely soon-to-be ex-husband that if he wants me or my research so badly he should come after me instead of trying to kidnap 2-year-old babies or killing his own daughter and for him to stop hiding behind others.” Her voice was pure venom at that moment.

“So you just decided to poke the gorilla?” He sighed. Great he was dealing with another Jim Kirk, one with “super powers”.

“This man has already killed my friends and my husband. Don’t tell me that we don’t know that for sure because in my heart I know it was him. Now he tried to kidnap a child, who I consider my family, in a crowded children’s restaurant. He already poked the gorilla and I’m ready to tear him to shreds.” The way she said it he knew she was planning to do it with her bare hands.

“If you go after him right now, he will kill you.” Chris warns her. Even before recent events, he was well aware that Alexander Marcus was a very dangerous man.

“I’m hard to kill.” She told him with obvious false bravado. “You saw what happened last time. I survived, but my husband did not. I don’t want to see anybody else hurt.”
“This man knows how to kill you!”

“But he doesn’t want me dead, at least not yet. After my conversation with Mercedes, I’m pretty sure what happened last time was actually a botched kidnapping attempt. He wants my research. It’s the only thing that makes sense. Why else would he want a grandson that he never cared about before? I’m sure the traders told him how special David is.” Jane spat out bitterly.

“Marcus doesn’t need you alive for your research.” Chris cautioned her. “He doesn’t even need you. Most of it is now on Enterprise’s servers. For all we know his Starfleet mole already forwarded him all the files. I’m sure eventually he’ll figure out your encryption. Don’t be overly confident.”

“The files are not encrypted, at least not the file that he wants the most. I purposely wrote them that way. I told you, I know 15 languages including several that are barely used in this century. He’s going to make another attempt for me and I’m going to be prepared.” Jane told him as she placed several large rings on her fingers. She then handed him the hypo she retrieved earlier in the conversation. “This is for you.”

“What’s this?” He asked as he reluctantly took the hypo from her.

“This is the reason why Marcus wants me.” Jane starts to explain, but it still sounded extremely cryptic. “This is the secret ingredient to turn any run-of-the-mill soldier into me. However, in your case, it means being able to walk down the aisle at your own wedding. Jonathan called it AH 325.”

“That doesn’t tell me anything.” He told her still confused.

“What you are holding in your hand is a drug derived form the antibodies that kept me alive as a child. This is the perfected version of what brought David back from being clinically dead. It’s powerful. This may be the only thing in the universe that could repair the damage done to your spinal cord.” He’s not surprised at all that she looked at his medical files. Not one bit.

“I could walk again?” He asked skeptically.

“We had success with several paraplegic patients.” She explained. “Marcus is coming after all of us and you need to be in the best shape possible.”

“So I need to be out of the wheelchair?” He asked sarcastically. “I know you’re from another time, but my being in a wheelchair doesn’t make me useless. I’m still a pretty good shot.” He said, pushing the hypo back in her hand.

“This may be a miracle drug, but not enough to instantly turn you into a master fighter overnight. If you’re lucky, you may be able to walk around with a cane after a week. It will be months before you can fight like you used to, and that’s after lots of training and physical therapy. In the meantime, a phaser blast won’t kill you.” Jane explained. “Just keep it for right now.”

Just as she tried to give him back the hypo again, Admiral Lume's assistant Ensign Lee walked into the laboratory with PADD in hand.

“Please tell your boss I’ll be up in a few…” That’s when Lee pulled his weapon. At least the now Pike had a good idea who the mole is. “Seriously, you’re using a phaser? Apparently, somebody didn’t read the ‘how to kill Jane Jackson’ memo.” Jane quipped as she pushed the hypo in his neck. That may have been a good thing considering at the same time Ensign Lee fired his phaser at him on the kill setting. ‘I hope this miracle drug actually works.’ Chris thought to himself before everything went black.
Jim seriously wished he could be as excited to meet Georgia as his baby sister-in-law was. Under normal circumstances he would find a little girl who collects starships and has Starfleet Captain Barbie cool. Yet, he can't help but resent someone who was essentially the reason why he's been mourning his mother for the last seven years when there was no need.

"If Georgia is your sister, does that mean she’s my sister to?" His baby sister-in-law asked excitedly as she pulled him outside of the restaurant. Jim had no idea how to answer the question. Right now all he felt was complete dread. His mom was back from the dead and he had a seven-year-old half-sister from the bastard.

He still hasn’t wrapped his head around that. Jim is not entirely sure if he ever could. How exactly do you deal with the fact that your mother decided to fake her death because the condom broke and she didn’t want your new baby sister to deal with the bastard. She’s been hiding in San Francisco as a preschool teacher for the last 7 years living this brand-new life with a brand-new wife and a kid who gets to live the happy childhood you never had and never tried to make contact with him. How absolutely fucked up was that? Part of Jim wonders if his baby sister-in-law had not ended up in Miss River’s class, would he have ever found out the truth? Did she care about him at all? He didn’t know.

Maybe, it’s all a mistake. Maybe, it’s not real and his mom is still dead like he has known for the last seven years. Maybe, this Whitney River just looked a lot like his mother and was playing Chris for reasons only known to her.

Jim successfully convinced himself of this until he saw Whitney River, sitting in her car crying into her wife’s lap (who looked young enough to be Sulu sister). There was no doubt the woman in front of him was his long-lost mother. Jim would like to think that the shock of having his mother back after 7 years was the reason why what happened next actually happened.

He was in such of a state of shock he failed to notice the group of men carrying firearms he’d only seen in his ‘Military Weapons through the Ages’ Academy class coming right at him and the baby sister-in-law. Actually, he didn’t realize something was off until he no longer felt the tug of T’Pay at his wrist. Then suddenly he felt a gun pointed at his head and T’Pay was screaming kidnap at the top of her lungs. She was also employing every single Vulcan self-defense skill possible. Angry attacker number one was currently getting kicked in the stomach a lot.

“Shut the fuck up or I will shoot both of you.” The attacker with the gun screams, we will just call him angry attacker number two. Jim was trying to figure out the best way to incapacitate the attackers to give T’Pay enough time to get the hell out of there.

“She’s the wrong kid. Dammit! All Vulcans look alike. This one’s a girl. Mr. Alex is going to be pissed.”

Shit! They were actually after David and the people hired to do so were too dumb to notice the difference between a two and a half-year-old multi species boy and a four and a half-year-old full Vulcan girl. One would think ‘Mr. Alex’ could afford to hire smarter henchmen.

“Take her anyway. She must be related to the one we're supposed to take. Maybe they'll do a trade.” Angry attacker number three yelled at the other two from someplace Jim couldn't see.

“I’m thinking no.” Jim said as he threw himself at the guy holding T’Pay, which gave the 4-year-old a chance to get out of the man’s grip. At that moment, angry attacker number three fired his gun and Jim feels the bullet penetrate his right shoulder, which hurts like hell. Energy weapons were so much more civilized.
He didn't have time to focus on the pain. He had to keep his baby sister-in-law safe. However, the
guy that shot him was currently laying down on the ground unconscious.

"Grab his weapon and get baby girl out of here." He heard the petite woman with his mother shout
at him. Not only was she already out of the car, but she was dealing with two assailants on her own,
rather quickly at that. By the time he had angry attacker number two’s gun, angry attacker number
three was being tossed into a car. Spock was out there now, and he had T’Pay in one hand and a
phaser in the other. Jim just loved the fact that his husband had the good sense to bring a weapon
to this breakfast. Actually, his husband was allowed to. Jim wanted to bring a phaser, but Amanda
took it from him.

It didn’t matter because Jim had a gun now and it was currently trained on angry attacker number
four. He shot the guy in the leg because he wanted that idiot to live to be interrogated. Practically
simultaneously, Jim saw his supposed stepmother took down angry attacker number five before his
husband even had time to take a single shot.

“Who are you?” He asked looking at the woman who just knocked out another guy 3 times her
size.

“Your stepmom,” she answered nonchalantly as she kept her phaser on the supposedly unconscious
assailants.

“I just saw you take down 5 guys with guns without even breaking a sweat. I don’t think you’re a
child psychologist like Chris said.” Jim told her with his borrowed gun still drawn.

“That is my day job. I am Agent 13 of section 31. My old boss was a fan of 20th century comic
books.” That’s when several police cars pulled up into the parking lot of the diner.

“Seriously, 3 minutes and 27 seconds?” she looked at her watch with annoyance. “We could all be
dead by now. It’s bad enough that he was shot.” She said pointing to him. That’s when he looked
down to see the spot of red on his shirt.

“Amanda honestly, I’d don’t know what to do with Nyota. I’ve tried to call her a thousand times
this morning and she hasn’t picked up once.” Alexis told her friend and sort of client as she made
her way to interview Christine again to find out everything she knew regarding Alexander Marcus's
treatment of his daughter and grandson.

Last night was horrible. She didn’t mean for Nyota to find out like that, but her daughter's half-
sister was a very stubborn woman. Telling her like that was the only option given that Nyota hasn’t
spoken to her father for more than a few seconds in years. It couldn’t wait any longer otherwise
they may end up telling her about the whole thing at his funeral which would be worse.

“If it makes you feel better, I think she’s still in her room with Leonard. They have been together
since you left last night. They haven’t even come out for breakfast and I made pancakes.” Amanda
said cheerily. She is not surprise that Nyota is with Leonard right now. He was the sole reason why
the fighting didn't get out of hand last night. It was obvious to her that the man was completely in
love with Nyota. Alexis would love for her to have a good boyfriend for once.

“Thank God. I think he would make a nice pseudo-son-in-law…” Alexis stopped speaking, when
she noticed the door to Christine’s quarters open. When she walked inside, she saw that the 2
security officers in charge of Christine Chapel were lying on the ground. One had a pool of blood
beneath her. The other was obviously hit by a phaser.
"Amanda, I have to call you back." She said, ending the call abruptly. She felt for a pulse, but couldn’t find one on either individual. She was just about to call for assistance when she saw a third body dressed in Starfleet blue. She instantly recognized it to be Ms. Chapel. She could see the blood, but this time she could also see labored breathing.

“Starfleet Security. What is your emergency?” The overly chipper voice said on the other side of the line.

“I need an emergency medical evacuation and security personnel at this location. My client has been shot multiple times at close range with an actual gun, not an energy weapon. She is still breathing, but just barely.”

To be continued.

Chapter End Notes

Just to cut down on some of the digital pitchforks, I want to remind everyone that I promised that Chris and Amanda will still be alive at the end of the story. However, for all the other characters (except David), I make no such promises.
For the first time in a very long time Nyota woke up to the feel of sunshine on her bare skin. Apparently the windows at the Lume estate open on a timer. She knew she would be waking up in a strange room, but it took her a few seconds to realize that she was waking up in the wrong room. She distinctly remembered there should be cream-colored walls, not charcoal black. It was also at that moment that she realized there was an arm draped across her stomach.

She slowly opened her eyes to see Leonard lying down next to her. Really that should not surprise her at all. It wouldn’t be the first time that she has woken up next to Leonard McCoy. Movie nights and away missions that always result in being stranded with minimal supplies and sharing a sleeping bag in a cave together (if she didn’t know better she would swear she was being set up by somebody who was way too into Harlequin for their own good). However this was the first time that sleep over involved nudity. The only thing she was wearing right now was the fuzzy blanket of the guest room. If she wasn’t dressed then she was sure Leonard was in the same state. She seriously doubted said nudity was the result of her spilling tea all over her outfit.

Shit! Exactly how much did she drink last night? Because that’s the only thing that can explain why her memory is patchy. The last thing she remembers clearly was screaming at Alexis and following Leonard into his bedroom. Vast quantities of alcohol would explain why they apparently made very good use of his bed. Most of the pillows were on the floor and the sheets were a mess.

Yes, she’s willing to acknowledge after that very weird incident that she hopes was just a dream that she really does have feelings for Leonard McCoy, but it was the wrong time to start a relationship. Trying to start a relationship is the last thing she should be doing with Alexander Marcus trying to kidnap David and discovering that her father was dying of cancer because he
fucked the wrong person. (She’s not just using this as an excuse because she still extremely terrified of having a real grown-up relationship with somebody.)

And yet, she was in bed with Leonard. She can’t say that she regrets it. This was going to happen eventually, she completely acknowledges that she was fighting a losing battle from the first moment they met. Actually, the only thing she regrets was she really didn’t remember what happened and this was something that she wanted to remember. She blames Jim Kirk’s very special Ice tea for her lack of memory and good judgment (in addition to all the other alcohol that she apparently consumed afterwards). Seriously, what did she do last night? (Other than Leonard apparently.)

She should be panicking. She just had comfort sex with a guy that she has possibly been in love with for longer than she is willing to ever acknowledge, but she isn’t panicking. She’s not even running out of the room, which was normal for her post one night stands. She never even bothered to have breakfast with her shore leave fucks. Most of the time she doesn’t even bother to spend the night. It was a survival strategy that she adopted a long time ago after the Jordan incident.

But she didn’t want to run away from Leonard. She wanted to wrap herself entirely around him and ask him what he would like for breakfast. This is an obvious sign that she really does care about him. Instead she settles for pulling just a little bit closer. This is also when she discovers that he’s still wearing a T-shirt, which may mean they didn’t do anything last night. Maybe the real reason why she doesn’t remember what happened last night was because nothing actually happened. Maybe she should be more worried about the fact that she’s actually disappointed that nothing did happen the night before.

“You’re not looking for an exit?” She heard the man beside her ask as his lips brushed her neck. Definitely a more intimate kiss then she would receive from somebody who was just a friend, but then again they have not been just friends for a very long time. It just took her a while to realize that.

“Only to find the nearest bathroom.” She said with a small laugh. Of course her head started to hurt and she had the sudden urge to throw up as soon as she said the words.

“If you were also naked I would be, but apparently this is just another platonic sleep over.” Nyota joked, but Leonard to give her a worried look.

“I always sleep dressed, because you never know when Jim Kirk’s going to have an allergic reaction in the middle of the night. I already had to leave you once because Jim does not take bad news very well.” He joked which pretty much told her that her first instincts were right. They had sex or at least they did something last night. It was obvious that their relationship had shifted.
She thinks she remembers Jim reacting badly to finding out his mother is also the mother of T’Pay’s best friend, but that doesn’t make sense. Jim’s mom was dead and has been for years so how can Nyota remember her being alive with a seven-year-old daughter.

She’s starting to wonder if those brownies from earlier contain cannabis or something harder. Drugs can only explain something like this. If she woke up naked next to anyone else this disoriented, she would be in Leonard’s office asking for a rape kit. But this was probably all Jim Kirk’s fault because he would so spice up his special Ice tea with something ‘harder’ and his husband does come from a planet where marijuana is their version of Tylenol.

“That was so not his fault. Anybody could suddenly develop an allergy to a lubricant that they have been using for months.” Nyota said in Jim’s defense, despite the fact he was probably to blame for her disoriented state.

“Yes but only Jim’s allergic reaction would involve handcuffs. I’m actually hoping that the toddler will cut down on that sort of stuff now that he and the hobgoblin have a kid to take care of. Sex is usually the first thing to go.” He snarked.

“This is Jim and Spock. They’re probably going to just stick to bathroom sex.” she quipped.

“Speaking of bathrooms, it is over there because apparently our boss can afford to have a bathroom in every single room.” He said pointing to the white door off to the side of the bed.

When she looks into the room, she remembers standing in front of the mirror alone with hot tears streaming down her face. She also remembers breaking the mirror at some point. There are untreated cuts on her left hand. Maybe this happened when he left her to deal with Jim. But she remembers him finding her on the floor of the bathroom, crying, with glass shards scattered around her.

She also remembers him wrapping his arms around her and pulling her close to his body. She remembers the touch of his lips on her forehead. She also remembers redirecting said lips to her lips. The kiss was warm and comforting. Kissing him was like chocolate chip cookies fresh from the oven. It was the only analogy she could think to describe it. She remembers needing to fill something, anything. Maybe that’s why she kept kissing him even as the tears fell down her cheeks.

Nyota also remembers him stripping her of her blood covered clothing and pushing her into the
shower. She pulled him in after her, still fully clothed, but she is certain that he didn’t stay that way very long.

“I think I remember us making really good use of the shower last night.” As she said the words, she has a faint memory of his fingers stroking her clitoris. She thinks it’s him anyway. “Things are fuzzy.”

“I had to give you a sedative because you didn’t take Alexis’ announcement very well.” Why did she feel that was an understatement? “After what happened in the bathroom, not before. You broke a mirror and a few other things. Just a little something to help you go to sleep. However you forgot to mention you were drinking the Jim Kirk version of ice tea. That’s why you’re still a little bit out of it.”

“I didn’t have a panic attack after we had sex in the shower?” She blames the drugs still in her system for asking that question out loud.

“Do you have panic attacks regularly after sex?” Leonard asked using his doctor voice.

Definitely should never have said that out loud. It only happened once and it was the second time she had sex right after the Andy fiasco. Although if she was going to have another post-coitus panic attack, she would have one after shower sex with Leonard after having a complete meltdown over the fact her father is dying. (Nyota was going to be in so much trouble for wrecking the admiral’s guest bathroom.)

“Could you be any more of a doctor right now?” Nyota smiled at him, trying to get out of answering that question.

“I’m always a doctor.” Leonard replied effortlessly. “Answer the damn question.”

“I don’t-not usually-it just happened that -I need to pee now.” She said before running into the bathroom (that was thankfully clean of the mirror that she apparently broke yesterday). It really was not an excuse because she really did have to pee. Okay, it was an excuse because she really didn’t want to talk about her past sexual history. Or current sexual history for that matter, especially because she didn’t remember most of what happened last night. See this is the reason why she usually got the hell out of there post sex.

Okay maybe she left because she was trying to avoid post sex panic attacks. Maybe some part of
her was afraid of a repeat of the jerky ex-boyfriend incident from years ago. Maybe she ran away because she was terrified this guy was going to be another version of her father who…

She closed her eyes in an effort to push all thoughts away regarding him. She didn’t want to think about her dad. He was unwell and it was his own damned fault and she just didn’t want to talk about it. She was okay. He was leaving her again and this is what he does and maybe a part of her was glad that she didn’t let him back into her life. Maybe she was tired of everybody leaving her. She buried her mom and Jordan. She wasn’t sure she had the strength to do it again so she keeps almost everybody at arm’s length.

That makes sense. She pushes her father out of her life before he can push her away. Nyota tries to date a guy who she could never have a deep and meaningful relationship with because he will always keep her at an emotional distance. Maybe that’s why the conversation with her other self (or her delusional conversation with her other self) hit her so hard. She doesn’t want to lose Leonard.

She feels her lungs tighten. She’s trying to remind herself to actually breathe.

“Leonard is not Jordan.” Nyota spoke out loud as she took another deep breath. “Leonard is not Jordan.” She can handle this.

“He sure as hell isn’t Andy or any of the other absolute dicks that I have dated over the years.” She takes another deep breath. “Leonard is not that person. If he was just in it for sex, he would still be with someone like Gaila, who is now sleeping with another version of Spock, but that is neither here nor there.” She exhales slowly.

“He is definitely not my father. Leonard left his ex-wife because he didn’t want his little girl to grow up with her mom and daddy attacking each other all the time. Where my father managed to destroy three marriages and things with Alexis by not being able to keep his dick to himself.” She inhales again.

“I’m a grown up. I’m not a scared little girl anymore. I’m not going to run away from him. If I don’t go out there, I will lose him and I don’t want that.” She exhaled. “I can do a relationship.” With one last deep breath, she opens the door only to see that Leonard is now fully dressed and making his way to the door. Instantly her panic from a few minutes earlier returned, and now it was exponentially worse.

“Where are you going?” Nyota asked worriedly. Of course she was an idiot to think that things would be different. He was leaving her.
“Starfleet medical.” It’s at that moment she realizes that he’s wearing medical scrubs not a regular uniform or civilian attire. If she is going to be in a relationship with the doctor she knows that this is going to happen. It has nothing to do with her. And yet there’s the cynical side of her that’s telling her otherwise. She needs to stop listening to that voice.

“Christine’s been shot with real bullets and I’m one of the few surgeons on this side…” Before he was even done speaking she was grabbing the new shirt that he obviously brought her from her room. Okay exactly how long was she in the bathroom not panicking?”

“I’ll be ready to go in two minutes.” She said, already slipping her shirt on not even bothering to put on a bra.

“You need to stay here.”

“My friend was just shot…” She protests. Nobody was going to tell her to do anything. She was such a bitch to Christine and now…

“Probably because there is some psychopath going after Spock’s friends, especially anyone who could attest to what a bastard he really is. You’re at the top of that list.” Even though Leonard has a valid point, that statement pisses her off. Actually if anyone else said that to her there’s a very good chance that they would be getting punched.

“I’m not some weak little girl who can’t defend herself.” She said angrily putting on her shoes. She’s a Starfleet officer. She knows how to get dressed in 90 seconds or less if she had to. And this was one of those situations.

“I know that.” His voice sounded anything but patronizing. “However, a few rooms away there is a scared little boy who needs you to defend him. As good of a shot as Amanda is, she’s going to need back up.” She knows he is right, but she needs to talk to Christine. Of course if she let something happen to David, Spock will never forgive her. Christina may never forgive her either.

“You win. Knowing Jim the way I do, there are extra weapons in their room.”

“Probably.” For some reason she kissed him again. Don’t ask her why she did it. She just did and yes, it did still feel good. Actually it was better than what she remembered from the night before, maybe because she could actually remember everything about this kiss.
“We have to talk about this.” Leonard said pulling away from the kiss.

“But not when Christine may be dying on the table. Go.” She literally pushed him out the door as she gave him one last kiss.

The first thing she does after he leaves is finish getting dressed. The second thing she does is raid Jim’s private armory. Seriously, why does anybody need to bring that many weapons on vacation? That reason becomes obvious when guys with guns start invading the compound 10 minutes later.

“Where’s ninja wife?” Jim asked the woman currently known as Whitney River as she walked into his hospital room.

He didn’t know why they were keeping him in here. The bullet was already removed even though the doctor treating him really had no idea what he was doing. Jim wanted Bones, but he wasn’t going to call the guy in from the secret guest house just because he hates being touched by other doctors. Besides Bones leaving the house could lead somebody to David’s location and after what just happened two hours earlier, which was not something he wanted to happen.

“With your husband on their way to relocate David and your mother-in-law. Apparently, Lume’s assistant was the Starfleet mole that was providing logistical information to certain unknown parties.” His mot-Winona answered quickly. He refuses to call her mom right now. As far as he’s concerned, she doesn’t deserve that title.

“How exactly did this come out?” Jim sighed.

“Right about the time you were being attacked at the restaurant, he tried to kill Chris and Dr. Jane Jackson.” Jim sat up in the bed as soon as he heard this. He doesn’t even think to ask her how she even knows about this. Ninja wife probably briefed her anyway.

“Is Chris okay?” He asked, not really caring about the doctor. Yes, she may have saved David’s life, but her experiments also made his new son a target.

“Chris is fine miraculously. According to security footage, Chris was hit with a phaser on the kill
setting and yet the EMTs were able to get him breathing again. Unfortunately he’s still unconscious. Thankfully the attackers left him, but the other person he was speaking to wasn’t as lucky. She’s missing.” Jim pinched the bridge of his nose at her words.

“You mean Alexander Marcus’ band of thugs?” Jim remarked bitterly as he touched his now mostly healed bullet wound. Seriously of all the Admiral’s daughters that Spock could have possibly knocked up, why did he have to knock up the daughter of a guy who was absolutely crazy?

“You don’t know if Alexander Marcus was the one responsible yet.” Winona admonished.

“One of the guys trying to take my baby sister-in-law referred to their boss as ‘Alex’. You may want to pass that to your superspy wife, if she really is your wife.” Jim told her angrily. “Hey maybe this was an elaborate cover. “I mean Alexander Marcus was your boss sometime when I was a little kid. We did move around a lot when I was a child. I wouldn’t be shocked at all to find out you were a member of his super-secret government agency that entire time. I mean you are an excellent liar.” Jim essentially screamed at her.

“I’m currently not a member of section 31.” Just the fact that she referred to it as section 31 made him wonder if at one time in the past she had been a member, but not at present. “She is my wife or at least I think she is actually my wife. I just found out about her belonging to an organization that technically doesn’t exist. I do not need this attitude from you right now.”

“For some reason I don’t believe you. Maybe because you have been hiding the fact that you’ve been alive for the last seven years. Should you be that surprised that you also married a compulsive liar? How does it feel to realize that your entire life is a lie?” Jim asked angrily.

“I left because I didn’t have a choice. I knew he was going to kill me in Georgia if I stayed in that house just one more minute. He had too many connections and the only real way for me to ever be safe was to turn on him. Witness protection was my only option.” She spat out.

“No, that part I understand. You already knew Sam was dead before you found out about Georgia?” Winona nods her head in agreement.

“What I don’t understand is why you leaving involved me thinking you were dead?” That question has been on his mind after he discovered that his baby sister-in-law’s best friend was his half-sister.
“Don’t think I don’t love you because I left. I just…”

“That is complete and utter bull shit.” Jim screamed at her. “You left and started some new happy family without me with ninja wife.”

“James, I didn’t have that many options. But that doesn’t mean that I forgot about you. I met my wife at your favorite bar because I was there all the time just to get a glimpse of you, to see if you were okay. I went to your commendation ceremony despite the fact that the place was filled with people who could identify me thus resulting and my cover being blown.” This doesn’t surprise him anymore considering he swore he saw her at the ceremony. At least he now knows that he’s not losing it.

“Jim.” He corrected, irately. “The only one allowed to call me James is my husband and Amanda or, as I like to refer to her, my good mom. You lost that privilege when you ran away. You following me around like a creepy stalker doesn’t make up for that.” She looked at him sadly.

“I didn’t run away.” Winona defended herself. “Or, at the very least, I didn’t run away from you. Frank was a monster. He taunted me with the fact that he killed Sam in cold blood constantly. He would hold the knife to my stomach as he talked about how much easier it would be for him to murder this child in utero.”

Winona pulled up her shirt to show him the scars there. The name Frank carved in her flesh. This made Jim realize that the bastard really did see her as his property.

“Why don’t you get rid of it?” Jim was almost tempted to touch the scars, but doesn’t.

“So I never forget who he is.” Winona whispered.

“Like you did last time?” Jim spat out heatedly.

“Exactly,”

“Well it’s been nearly 8 years this time so I guess things are working out better.” Sarcasm was dripping from his every word.
“Jim.”

“I don’t have the time or energy to deal with you right now. I have to concentrate on more important things like…”

"David.” Winona finished for him.

“Exactly, and that is my first priority. I don’t have time for this.” Jim said as he started to get up from the bed.

“Fine, I’ll leave. I just hope that now that you are a father, you will understand that the needs of your children become more important than your own needs and you will make choices that you wouldn’t under normal circumstances.” Those words from her just make him angry.

“If you actually believe that, you would have never ended up with Frank in the first place.” Jim sniped. “You definitely would not have gone back to the fucking bastard. Or maybe it’s that one child is more important than the other.”

“Or maybe there’s a really big difference between a grown-up who can take care of himself and a child who is completely dependent on your protection and you’re forced to choose between the two. I hope you’re never in a position to make that choice.” Winona looked him directly in the eyes.

“I don’t want to hear it. I’m going to go see if one of my good parents is not dying.” Jim said angrily. This whole argument has been so heated that he almost completely forgot about the fact that Marcus’ people also attacked Chris. He just had to push all the Winona stuff away and concentrate on handling Marcus.

“I told you he was okay. He’s just still unconscious and heavily guarded by Lume herself.” Winona sighed.

“For some reason I don’t believe you.” Just as he was getting up, Alexis walked into the room. He would like to blame the fact that he was just involved in a very heated argument with his moth--Winona for not picking up on the blood splatters adorning Alexis’ dress or the grave expression she was wearing.

“Please give me some good news like the courts have come to the conclusion that Carol’s father is a complete sociopath that shouldn’t be allowed to babysit a cockroach.” Also confirmation that
Chris was okay from somebody other than the liar would be good, but after the last few weeks he doesn’t want to push his luck. He really can’t take one more bad thing happening right now.

“Even if they did, I doubt he would abide by it. We’ve moved beyond civilized legalities.” Alexis closes her eyes, then takes a deep breath. “Christine is dead.”

This would be one more bad thing. There’s no way that that could be considered good news under any circumstances despite their complicated relationship.

“What?” He didn’t believe her or maybe he just didn’t hear right. It wasn’t possible --Christine couldn’t be. He was expecting awkward encounters in the hallways for the next 30 years, not-- he felt his lungs tightening again.

“I was talking to Amanda this morning about-- it doesn’t matter, anyway I was on my way to speak to Christine about the David custody situation when I found the dead bodies of her security team. I’m pretty sure one of the guards turned on Christine and the other member of the team. They were dead. Christine was still breathing, but not… They shot her with an actual gun and by the time they got somebody here that actually knew what they were doing…”

Jim knows that she is still talking, but he doesn’t hear the words anymore. His mind is going through information overload and he can’t process this. It makes sense that Spock entered his mind at that moment. They can always find each other during the really bad moments and this qualifies. Anytime he loses a crew member it qualifies, and maybe it’s worse this time because he feels personally responsible.

“Just tell me that you guys are at another safe house. I can’t…” He started to tell his husband telepathically, but he’s cut off before he can finish.

“When we arrived at the compound, the gates were breached and the occupants were no longer inside.” Spock said completely detached which was never a good sign.

“Fuck!”

45 minutes earlier.

Amanda has gone through too many kidnapping/hostage situations for her own personal liking. She herself has been the victim of three kidnapping attempts and one attempted assassination. This
would be attempt number four. However, her protective instincts kicked in the moment she realized they were breaching the compound and that she needed to get David out immediately. She had no idea how long the commander could hold off the unknown number of attackers.

She thought about going to the compound’s transport room but she knew it wouldn’t be possible and it would be too easy for the attackers to follow behind. Therefore she went with plan B and activated the pendant around her neck. In the aftermath of the destruction of Vulcan, the Vulcan government decided to create an emergency evacuation system for government leaders, such as herself. Granted it only evacuated you to another location on planet, such as a space port or in this case a panic room at the Vulcan embassy.

Of course she was greeted by several men holding various weapons and Councilmember Sank because that was just a little too easy.

“You did exactly what I expected you to.” The council member said in a voice completely devoid of all emotions or empathy. She pulled David closer to her. This was not good.

To be continued.

Chapter End Notes

I know cliffhanger. To completely make up for the fact that I'm leaving the story at this precarious point, I promise to start working on the next chapter earlier than normal in my rotation. You may now commence with tossing cyber tomatoes at me.
Conversations with Monsters

Chapter Notes

Thank you to everybody who read or review the last chapter. I'm glad you enjoyed that action-packed installment and were only slightly pissed off about the cliffhanger ending. As promised I started working on the next chapter out of sequence. I will warn that it's going to take a couple of chapters for everything to resolve itself.

However, those of you who really like the Take a Third Option series are going to be a little disappointed since it's probably going to be a little bit longer before I get another chapter of that story up. Basically it's the only story I'm working on now not at a critical point and therefore it's the only one I can put on the back burner for a little bit until I get all my other stories to a place of emotional stability.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Spock surveyed the home that seemed like a luxury resort only mere hours ago. Now it was in ruins. Dead bodies littered the ground, 10 in all. Thankfully, his mother, son, and Nyota were not among the casualties. However there was blood in the entrance way. Spock wondered if it is appropriate that he is happy the blood in question is red.

“There’s nothing appropriate about preferring your mother’s death to that of your son that you’ve known for a week at most. You do realize this is all your fault?” The voice in his head was angry and definitely did not sound like James from earlier. James went into captain mode as soon as Spock related the situation. He was already convening a meeting of the Starfleet personnel that he actually trusted to help with the investigation.

The voice was nowhere near as kind. This was the Voice of somebody who took pleasure in his pain. This individual feeds on his misery and tries to make Spock doubt himself. He knew exactly who this entity was. Spock hoped that the medication would prevent this, but apparently the situation was too dire for such a thing.

“Marshall, I presume.” Spock turned to see his human looking double once more. This time he had spiky hair and was wearing blue jeans (the pair that Spock wore for James on their second anniversary).

“Did you really think you could get rid of me? I'm part of you. I'm the part of you that cried for Carol, despite how badly she screwed us over. Or rather it was us that screwed her over. If you never met her, she would probably be alive right now.” Marshall taunted.

“I find no truth in your words.” Spock retorted.

“Ask your other self how long she lived in his world.”

"I am not responsible…”

“But you always feel responsible. I should know because I’m the one who feels that responsibility.
I'm the one who hates that our father is dead. I'm the one who's worried about your husband that is in the hospital. Bullet to the shoulder, right? You weren't fast enough. You are never fast enough.” Marshall’s tone is just as mocking as ever. Yet he knew better than to listen to it. Spock could not allow himself to be controlled by his anguish.

“If you were the one responsible for all my human impulses then you were also the one who believed sleeping with Carol was a good idea.” Spock sniped at his human counterpart.

“The sex was good.” Marshall shrugged.

“We were two teenagers who had no idea what we were doing. By your logic, you were the one responsible for what happened, including her death.” Spock snapped right back at the illusion in front of him.

"Don’t try to blame me for all the dumb things that you did. You’re the one that screwed the underage. You really thought that she was 17?”

“I’m not arguing with you.” Spock told the figment of his mind as he went back to processing the crime scene. They needed as much information as possible to figure out what happened. Arguing with the personification of his human side would not help get his mother back.

“No, you're wandering around the space looking for clues, trying to find out what happened to Amanda and our son. Do you really think Marcus’ people are going to leave you a card that says our son is here?” Marshall snickered.

“He's my son.” Spock corrected violently.

“Our son. Remember, I'm a part of you.” Marshall taunted.

“I would really appreciate it, if in the words of my husband, you would just ‘fuck off’.” Spock felt that profanity may be the only thing that would work on Marshall.

“I love Jim. He makes it so much easier for me. Your humanity is closer to the surface now. It’s almost impossible for you to push me away like you used to. I get to come out in little pieces. A hug here, a kiss there. Sometimes you even scream. You actually cried. I consider that progress.” Marshall said scornfully.

“Yet, you are still here.”

“I’m not completely integrated yet. You still try to shut down sometimes. You think it’s better to not feel, to shut yourself off from everything. You really think the medication is helping, but it can only do so much. Your son is missing or dead. Your mother may be with him or she could be equally dead. Nyota is also gone. Do you think that is her blood in front of you? Do you think they took her as well? Or is she like Nurse Chapel? Remember Jim just told you about that. Your son just lost another one of his pseudo aunts. Or maybe he lost more than one.” Marshall goaded viciously.

“Why are you even bothering to look for clues? At this point you’re probably only going to find bodies.”

“Stop speaking to me. I do not need to listen to your negativity.” Spock shouted at Marshall.

“Who are you talking to?” Asked 'Agent 13', the woman who was also allegedly James’ new stepmother.
“Apparently, the personification of my human self. He is currently trying to convince me to give up searching for clues in the disappearance of my mother, son, and Nyota because they are most likely…

“Dead already.” Spock just nodded his head in agreement.

“And has this personification of your human side visited you in the past?” Agent 13 asked seriously.

“He appeared to me during the destruction of Vulcan, when my father died.” Spock said not wanting to give her all the details of that particular incident such as the fact that he tried to strangle his ex-boyfriend, due to the fact he marooned James on Delta Vega. “However, I have been on medication since the incident and have not had any reoccurrences.”

“Okay, extreme stress seems to be a trigger for you and this will trigger something like that.” She said pointing to the room filled with dead bodies. He tells himself that Nyota is the one responsible for this carnage and therefore she can take care of herself.

“Well, she's almost taking you seriously. Or maybe she's just humoring you. This is our new mother-in-law.” Marshall said once again in his usual mocking tone. “I think you might be older than her.”

“According to Chris, she is several years older than me and a psychologist. However I am uncertain of that career considering her Starfleet affiliation.” Spock defended.

"You're talking to the other voice again?” The woman asked watching him closely.

"Unfortunately, yes.” Spock told her non-plus.

“She’s quite annoying.” Marshall ridiculed.

“When was your last dose of medication?” She asked almost sounding concerned.

“This morning at 6:15 AM.”

“Well if you're taking your meds every eight hours you should've taken a dose 45 minutes ago which explains the special visitor.”

“You are correct.” Spock said realizing that due to recent events he did not take his last injection at the appropriate time.

“We were staying here earlier.” Spock said as he made his way to the guest room with the agent following behind him, weapon in hand. Due to the fact he was dealing with 'Marshall', Spock did not trust himself to hold a weapon.

When he entered the room, the place was in shambles. James’ suitcase was on the bed with everything tossed about. The weapons were missing. He wasn’t sure what to think of that yet. Thankfully the toiletry bag was left untouched in the bathroom. Spock quickly found the hypo.

“Oh, you're not getting rid of me that easily. I’m the one in control.” Spock paused for just a moment at those words.

“Whatever that voice is telling you, don't listen to it. I need you now. I know you’re one of the top hackers in Starfleet. If it wasn’t for your diplomatic ties, you would have been perfect for section
31. I need you to see if you can undo whatever they did to the surveillance system. We need that information and you may be the only person who can get it. But if you don’t take that shot, you are no use to me and you are definitely no use to your son.

"Do you really think this is going to have a happy ending?" Marshall taunted.

"It did last time. I found Jim again and we defeated Nero." Spock said defiantly as he placed the hypo against his neck.

“But your father still di…” Marshall’s words fell away as the drug quickly entered his system.

"Are you with me now?" The agent asked.

"I believe so. I’m no longer seeing a physical personification of my human side." Spock said realizing she was the only person in the room with him now.

"That’s always a good sign.” She said handing him a PADD.

"Let’s see if you’re as good of a hacker as your mom says you are. Focus on what you need to do.”

"You know my mother?" He remarked grabbing the device.

“Do you really think your mother would let us take care of her two daughters if she didn’t know us personally?” The woman asked incredulously. “Your mom has few friends and many enemies. I do not know her well, my wife does, but we both consider her a friend and I would like to get her back as soon as possible."

“As do I.” Spock needed to find his family and the first step was recovering the security footage.

"See if you can access the surveillance system. I'm hoping these guys are idiots and they left something behind.” Spock hoped that too.

It took Amanda a few moments to realize that she was not at the Vulcan embassy. Actually they may be on a starship. It doesn’t matter because it doesn’t change the fact that she is surrounded by people who probably want her or her grandson dead.

"Don't even think about taking my grandson." Amanda screamed as Sank’s henchmen tried to take David from her. She held on as hard as she could to a crying toddler.

“‘You're really not in a position to argue. I'm stronger than you are. You are no longer in a position to bargain with me." The Vulcan spat venomously.

"There are many definitions of strong.” She replied with as much dignity as she could muster.

"That isn't strength, that's arrogance. It's such a human quality." She is well aware that her fellow councilmember equates being human with weakness. It is a pity he doesn’t understand the strength one can gather from emotions.

"That's because I am human. But I'm also Vulcan. More Vulcan than you. I live by the principles. I embrace the uniqueness of all. What do you believe in? What do you care about other than power?" She held her head up as high as she could despite her fears.

"To be what we once were. To be a proud race of billions, not a few thousand scattered on a planet that is not the place of our ancestors. I wish for our children not to be raised by people like you who
have contaminated our culture because they have no real knowledge of it.” Considering she is considered one of the premier Vulcan historians, that last statement was so ridiculous she chooses not to address it.

“The only way to accomplish that is to go back in time. If you do that you wouldn't change the past in this dimension, only create another reality. This is the reality in which we must live.” Amanda chose to say instead.

"No we cannot go back, only forward and this child is the key to that.” The Vulcan pointed to David, practically salivating.

"He should be predominantly human, yet he is not. David is the key to genetically modified perfection.” Amanda always felt there was something off about the elder and now she is positive that he has lost all sense of sanity.

"What are you talking about?"

"Did your boyfriend not tell you?” He spat out venomously. “The researchers on NCX17 were not trying to replicate 20th-century human genetic engineering. They were trying to figure out how to restore the Vulcan species to its rightful place. David is the key.” Definitely mentally unsound.

"My boyfriend doesn't share extremely classified information with me.” Amanda lied. She was briefed earlier about the recent discovery of unsanctioned experimentation on Vulcan embryos. Dr. Jackson and Dr. Marcus discovered this seven weeks ago and reported their findings to Lume. That was why Dr. Jackson was on Earth when the rest of the team and David's mother was murdered. Amanda was not surprised that the elder was involved. That would explain the vast amount of funds that have recently been disappearing from the budget.

It also explains why he was trying so hard to get her off the council. She would be the one who would have the most problems with the genetically modified embryos. Spock was created via in vitro, but not genetic engineering as most people assumed. However she would keep this information to herself. Because she was an expert in hostage situations, Amanda knew not to give out more information then she absolutely had to. The safest course of action was to play dumb right now.

“IT is a pity now he never will. Actually that human will never share anything with you ever again.” The Vulcan allows anger to enter his voice even if Amanda is sure that he would never acknowledge feeling such emotions.

"What are you talking about?"

"Your precious human lover is gone. I had my contact in Lume’s office kill him for me.” He boasted.

She took a deep breath and put on her Vulcan face of indifference. She wouldn't give him the satisfaction of seeing her pain and anger. He had no right and maybe Amanda hoped he was wrong. She would like to believe that just like last time she would know if he was gone, despite the lack of psychic link. This was probably some ploy to manipulate her. She refused to let him.

"Do not think I believe you, because I don't. I believe nothing that you say because you're a manipulative bastard and you always have been.” She spat back.

"My parents were married at the time of my conception.” Of course he took that statement literally. “The only reason why I grew up without a father was because of you.”
“How am I responsible for your father not being around? I never met the man. He’s been dead for years even before the destruction of Vulcan.” Amanda was getting very tired of this Vulcan blaming her for anything he does not like or anytime he does not get his way. It is as if he is completely unaware of the concept of personal responsibility.

"He died in prison because of you. He tried to take that brat away, the one that is an abomination and destroy him." It was obvious he was referring to one of the Vulcan supremacists who tried to kidnap Spock as a child. Considering the council members obvious xenophobia, it makes complete sense that he was raised by someone with such leanings. It would also explain his personal grudge against her (beyond the obvious anyway).

"Now I’m going to destroy you and your grandson will give birth to our people’s destiny." At that Amanda feels fingers against her neck and David being pulled out of her arms.

When she regained consciousness sometime later, she found herself in a cell. This confirmed her earlier suspicion about being on a starship of some type. Although David was not with her, she was not alone. An unconscious T'Panda was lying next to her.

It took Spock 4.6 minutes to make his way into the system. It helped that Marshall was no longer mocking him, but his emotions were still close to the surface. He needed to concentrate on finding Amanda and the security footage would assist with the investigation immensely. He finds it more productive to feel the emotions, then to suppress them. Suppression leads to Marshall (along with forgetting to take his medication). That would be worse right now. He needs to work through his fears.

They begin by watching footage from two hours previous, right when Leonard left the house for Starfleet medical. His mother was in the kitchen talking on the communicator as David ate in the background. He made a note to pull up records of her communicator activity. Who was she speaking to? Was that important?

The next thing he saw was Nyota going to his and Jim’s bedroom. She left 5.6 minutes later carrying several weapons. This confirmed his suspicions that Nyota had removed the weapons from Jim’s suitcase.

It was only mere minutes after this that most of the cameras in the compound stopped recording. However, a few did not, most likely because they were on a separate system that the attackers were unaware of. These cameras included the kitchen, the transporter room, and one of the cameras outside the front entrance to the house. No one utilized the transporter room which was good to know. They would not have to pull up the records now.

The camera in the kitchen provided the most information. As the attack began, Amanda grabbed David and seconds later she tapped at a pendant around her neck. Just before the room fills with attackers, Amanda and David are gone.

“Stop the file and back it up about 10 seconds.” Spock does as Agent 13 requested. “Do you know what that is?” She said, pointing to the pendant around Amanda’s neck.

“I am unfamiliar.” He has seen the pendant before, but assumed it was nothing more than a decorative charm. Obviously, he was mistaken.

“Both of your sister’s wear something just like it. I don’t think that’s a normal necklace.” The agent remarked.
"That much is obvious. However, if T'Pen wears something similar she may know what it is."

"They are at the hospital with Whitney. I do not want them to know that their mom is missing right now. Can you think of anyone else who would know what that is?"

“It is possible that Christopher may know.” Spock suggested.

“Who is still in a coma after surviving a phaser blast on the kill setting. What about someone else from the Vulcan Council? I heard rumors about some sort of emergency evacuation device or plan. I don’t know all the details.”

“Elder Selek. He may already be at Starfleet medical.” Spock decided not to explain that the elder most likely accompanied his girlfriend to the facility when James called in all of Enterprise’s top officers because of what happened. When a certain voice tried to bring up his displeasure at such a relationship, Spock pushed it away.

“Okay, we have a place to start. Let’s check with the last camera pick-up before we return to Starfleet Medical.”

There were three very important pieces of information discovered while viewing this file. First, Spock realized that two of the attackers were among those that survived the siege on NCX17. Actually, Spock believed one of these individuals was the individual who betrayed the other scientists at the compound.

The second piece of information was that an unconscious, yet still breathing, Nyota was carried out of the compound by two of the attackers. The final piece of information was that the two attackers left the compound using a device similar to what was found on NCX17.

“At least we know what happened to her. Now we just need to find out where she is. Look, they left us a clue.”

"Where the fuck am I?” Nyota asked out loud as she regained consciousness. The room was dark with just one light providing any illumination for the entire space. The ground was moist, but not very cold. Nyota has been stranded on enough strange planets to know that she was lying on top of rock and not any sort of man-made material.

"A basement. I don’t know if we are still on Earth, but if we are, we’re in one of the warmer parts of the world.” A voice responded, making her realize that she’s not alone.

"Who are you?” Nyota asked.

"That's a very complicated question or maybe it's a simple question with a very complicated answer." The woman replied.

“My head hurts too much for a response like that.” Nyota quipped.

"I guess in this time I am Dr. Jane Jackson." The woman out of time. She remembers this from the briefing, but never had a chance to make her acquaintance.

"Before that?” Nyota asked.

"A young girl sucked into a Revolution that she wanted no part of.” The doctor responded.
"So you're not on their side?" Nyota asked skeptically.

"This man killed my family, my husband in front of me. He murdered my friends. I will never be on his side. At most I would pretend to be, just so it would be easier for me to kill him." That last part was said in a language that she barely recognized.

“I find that hard to believe considering you were doing research on baby Vulcan embryos and my almost nephew was patient Zero." Nyota spat bitterly, not taking account of the woman’s earlier words.

“David was only exposed to the drug because it was the only way to save his life. However, I knew nothing about the research involving Vulcan embryos. I was working on finding a cure to diseases that still haunt us even in the 23rd century. The cancer that almost killed me as a child still takes thousands of young children every year." Dr. Jackson explained.

“You expect me to believe you’re that altruistic?”

"Believe whatever you like, I have no desire to play God. I already saw firsthand how destructive that could be. I already explained myself to you. If you choose not to believe me, that’s on you. You only hurt yourself if we don’t work together."

"Most people now don't believe in God. That's why there's less wars now." Nyota quipped.

"People will always find some reason to hate those that are different. I saw that firsthand. You may wish to think that things are different now and I too wish that they were different. Unfortunately, that is not the case.” The woman in front of her actually sounded sad about that.

"Do you know anything else about where we are?" Nyota asked, deciding that this was a safer avenue of conversation.

"No. Unfortunately this is not a James Bond movie where the villain comes in and brags about everything." The doctor replied.

"Who is James Bond?"

"Okay, I was sure that piece of culture would have made it to this time period." The doctor frowned.

“I’m not Jim. What about other prisoners? Have you seen Amanda or David?” She asked her fellow captive. The last thing Nyota remembered was trying to hold off the attackers. But if she was here then that meant...

"I haven't seen her. They could be holding her in another cell, but..."

"You don't think that is the case?"

"Because of what happened on Vulcan, all members of the council have on an emergency evacuation device that can pretty much transport them out of anywhere. Even if there are measures in place to prevent people from beaming in and out of the property. Jonathan told me about it." The woman explained.

"So you think Amanda got away?" Nyota asked hopefully.

“I hope she did.”
“She did escape, only to fall into our trap, just as planned.” Nyota heard a voice say that she didn't recognize. However when he stepped into the dark room she recognized his face. She remembered him as the traitor on NCX17.

"Why am I not surprised you're here, Eric? You've always been a yes-man for Marcus." Jackson spat out angrily.

"So was your husband." The man shot back.

"Jonathan is now dead, so I doubt that he was that loyal to Marcus’ cause. He also arranged for your boss’ dirty little secrets to be all over the net. Now everyone knows that he’s a monster." Jackson spoke defiantly.

"Not all of them. They don't know about you. If they did you would be in jail or worse." Eric retorted.

"I'm not as foolish as I once was, although that's mostly because I have all my memories again.” Dr. Jackson said cryptically. “I've also done a great deal of reading in this time. I know what you're saying is false. If you think I'm going to help Marcus build his army of super soldiers or whatever he's planning because of such worthless threats then you better think again. I’m going to need better motivation.”

"How do you know I'm working for Marcus?" Eric questioned.

“I would say it's because you just told me, but it's because who else could you be working with. I can't think of anybody else evil enough to try to kidnap his own grandchild or murder his daughter, even if you were the one who pulled the trigger.” Anger was dripping from every single one of her words.

"She was no daughter of his." Eric spat right back out.

"Because she was a lesbian, mostly, or because she slept with a non-human?" The man didn't answer her. Instead he slapped her. At least he tried to. Jane quickly grabbed his hand before he made contact with her skin.

"You forget who I am. Maybe that's why you came after me with phasers this morning instead of bullets." Dr. Jackson mocked.

“That’s because we were not trying to kill you, only Pike, and we succeeded at that.” Those words made Nyota’s entire body go cold. She hoped this was a lie. “Marcus wants you alive."

"And me?" Nyota spoke up for the first time since the man entered the room.

“According to your Starfleet CV, you speak more supposedly extinct earth languages than anyone else, excluding me. I'm guessing that they think you can translate my work if they can't persuade me to help.”

"You're very smart woman." Eric remarked with a vicious smile.

"What do we get for cooperating? Food? Maybe some better accommodations? A window would be nice. Maybe some sunlight?" Dr. Jackson asked without condescension.

"You would be aboveground at the very least."

"Let me talk it over with my companion.” She said before turning to Nyota. “Play along. And take
“This.” The woman said in the same ancient languages earlier as she handed a hairpin to Nyota. “We have to rescue ourselves.”

“Fine. If you want us to cooperate, I want a room with a view.” Nyota demanded, realizing that she needed to play along. At the very least she would be above ground and have a better shot of escaping or being rescued.

“I promise you will be able to see the new Vulcan sunrise.” She smirks to herself at his words. At least she now knew where she was. She’ll play along for now, but as soon as she could, she was getting out of here.
To be continued.

Chapter End Notes

I will try to get the next chapter out relatively soon, but I have family visiting which will cut into my writing time.
Thank you to everybody who read or review the last chapter. I apologize for the longer wait between chapters this time. I had family visiting and it took me a while to get through the proofreading on this. However, I did go to the International Spy Museum, which gave me some ideas for this story.

If her captor Eric hadn’t slipped up and told her what planet she was on, Nyota would've figured it out by the architecture of the structure she was in. As a student of languages, especially Vulcan-based languages, she did spent a lot of time on the now deceased planet. She recognized key elements of Vulcan architecture such as the long arches and earth tones. However, this building was young and put together fast. It had all the telltale signs of any structure built on New Vulcan. At first glance the structure looked entirely Vulcan, but underneath there are human undertones, such as the use of common earth building materials.

She wonders if she is in one of the main settlements or in part of the uncharted territory of the planet. If she escaped, would there be any other settlers in the area or would she be the only person around for hundreds of kilometers? She was trying to figure out a way to escape, but what would be the purpose of escaping if she is going to be stranded in the uncharted wilderness of a planet that was just newly colonized. However, she could probably survive in the wilderness for weeks if she had to, even without supplies. Because Jim is her Captain, she has gone through extreme wilderness survival training. Because of Sulu, she can identify most edible plants on the new colony.

She stops thinking about this as Eric and three of his goons take her to an empty room with just a computer and chairs. She is actually shocked they even gave her a chair to sit in. That can easily become a weapon. In her mind she was already trying to figure out how to use it to knock out those holding her hostage and get out of here. However, once she realized that the chair is bolted to the ground and her guards quickly change her to said chair she realized that they’re not worried at all of her misusing the item.

“Now that we are up here, what do you want from us?” Jane asked defiantly even though a vintage gun was pointed squarely at her back.

"Your research." Eric said bluntly as he chained Jane to the other chair in the room.

"Good luck getting that.” Jane voice was dripping with false cheerfulness. “I don't even have access to my files anymore. Everything on planet was either scrubbed by Enterprise or destroyed by your
idiots who damaged everything. I have a good memory, but it’s not that good."

"We made a copy first." Eric grunted. Dr. Jackson started to laugh at that, but it was a malicious type of laughter.

"And it probably destroyed every single computer on the network your goons tried to decrypt it on." Considering the look the scientist was receiving from their captor, that’s exactly what happened. “You don't think I would have protected my research by any means necessary?” The doctor asked viciously.

"We don't need that copy anyway when we have her." He placed a hand on Nyota’s cheek and stroked it in a sexual way. She just pushed him away.

If his hands touched her anywhere else, she would break them. Eric may be twice her size, but she has killed 10 people today or maybe it was yesterday. She had no trouble whatsoever making him number 11. He made baby David a motherless child just like her. He will pay for that. She wanted to scream that at him, but she didn’t. She needed to do whatever possible to stay alive long enough to actually get out of here.

“I’ve been a part of Starfleet long enough to know that Enterprise made copies of all pertinent files. According to my source, due to conflict of interest and to avoid the appearance of impropriety, you were Acting Captain at the time of the investigation of what happened on NCX17. That means you have access to all the files." The look he gave her made Nyota’s skin crawl. It made her think that if she didn’t have any useful information she would probably be dead at the moment. Or worse, much worse.

It’s obvious that useful information in the form of her credentials is the reason why she’s here. She should’ve known that she was kidnapped for some reason other than her linguistic skills. They needed the files before they could translate them and they didn't even need her to translate or decrypt if Dr. Jackson were to cooperate. Of course, considering the things she said about Eric on the elevator ride up to the main level, Nyota was well aware any cooperation was a façade. She didn't know anyone else who knew that many curse words in that many languages.

The entire scenario brought up images of Christopher Pike’s damaged body after suffering torture at the hands of Nero. She knew that they would do similar things to her to get the necessary access codes. Actually it would be worse. She was female and her captor already looked at her like he would want nothing more than for her to be naked and screaming underneath him. Yes all Starfleet members were susceptible to sexual assault as a war crime and torture technique, but the probability was higher for female officers.
Maybe if she served under anyone else she would be worried about being forced to give away Starfleet secrets under threat of death, torture, and/or rape. She now felt Eric’s weapon dig into the side of her back. If she worked for anyone else she knew her only option was to endure whatever torture they would give her in order to protect Starfleet secrets.

But she worked for Jim Kirk and the man is the king of taking a third option and being prepared for any outcome. After what happened to Christopher Pike, Jim and she developed a contingency plan for when a member of the senior staff was abducted for the sole purpose of gaining key information regarding Starfleet. It looks like she gets to be the one to test Jim system. She just hopes that they are actually able to trace it back to her.

xxxxx

Spock looked sadly at the lifeless body in front of him. This should never have happened. She was just another life lost due to the harshness of this timeline, triggered by his own failure to prevent the destruction of Romulus. If he had just been a little faster, this time line would’ve never existed and he would not be responsible for the deaths of billions of people including this world’s Carol Marcus or now Christine Chapel.

The Christine Chapel of his first life became a doctor and saved thousands. That Christine lived long enough to have a life outside of Starfleet. She even found true love. The Christine in front of him died before her 30th birthday with no family to actually mourn her. Even her aunt died during the battle of Vulcan. It was another thing not fair about this timeline.

“There you are.” Spock heard Gaila say, pulling him out of his thoughts with a gentle kiss to his shoulder.

“I've been looking everywhere for you. You disappeared when I went to talk to Jim about what’s going on.” Spock left because he felt he would be of no use in the captain’s makeshift ready room. Despite being shot hours earlier, the James of this world was surrounded by his trusted allies trying to piece together what happened. He could not offer any insight because these events strayed too much from his own world’s timeline. Alexander Marcus was long dead before Spock made the acquaintance of his daughter or grandson.

He felt like everyone in the room was blaming him for this in one way or another. He was responsible for the changes of this timeline. Even beyond that, he is the one who chose not to inform others of David's existence. If he had just spoken up, would Carol be here right now? Would Christine be alive? At the very least they could’ve been more prepared for Alexander Marcus’s bitterness.

“I am here.” Spock replied absently, not really paying attention to his lover.
"I see that. Did you know Christine?" She asked as she grabbed his hand for support. It was one of the ways she reminded Spock of his Jim. She just knew what he needed of her without saying a word. It was very rare to find someone like that, even rarer to find a second person like that in a second lifetime.

“Not this version of her.” Spock said with eyes closed. Spock spoke to her briefly during his latest trip on Enterprise and once when he visited Carol and the hospital after the London incident. Other than anecdotes from Carol, he knew very little about this Christine Chapel.

"That means you did know her.” She smiled at him. “It also means your mourning two people right now instead of just one. The woman said wisely as she brushed her fingers against his lips.

“I knew a woman who lived to 105. Not someone who did not even make it to 30. There were so many things she could have accomplished and now it will never come to fruition.” He also thought of Carol at that moment. He had yet to decide if a world without the Genesis device would be a good thing. But the fact she would never get to see the man that David would become might be the saddest thing of all.

“This is of no concern for you. Why did you come looking for me?” Spock asked trying to change the subject. He no longer wished to dwell on the all too short life of this Christine Chapel.

“During the meeting with Jim, Agent River asked me to get you. Because of something they found at the crime scene, they wanted to know if you know anything about a necklace/pendant that Amanda would be wearing that would allow her to escape the attackers?” At her words his fingers went to the bracelet that he himself wears. He chose the bracelet over the pendant because he felt it would be less conspicuous on him. In addition to the emergency transporting capabilities, the device could also be used to track the individual in question.

“This I can assist with.” The elder said as he left the room of the dead. He could not help Christine Chapel, but there were still others that he could and Amanda was one of these individuals.

XXXXX

Chris woke up in a room that was too bright and contained too much white. He recognized it as being one of the recovery rooms at Starfleet Medical. He remembered that as he tried in vain to get the color scheme changed for the last two years.

Considering that he was the one in the hospital bed, he had obviously done something stupid that put him in this room. It took a few moments, but he eventually remembered Lume’s assistant shooting him. He also remembered Jane pushing a hypo in his neck. He is pretty sure that’s the only reason why he’s waking up at all. He was almost positive that the assistant’s phaser was on
"Where am I?" He asked groggily. He wonders if he’s on any pain medication.

"Starfleet Medical." He hears Admiral Lume reply gruffly. “The doctors are currently trying to figure out why you’re not in the morgue considering my mole of an assistant shot you at point-blank range on the kill setting. Actually they’re trying to figure out why your spine is healing itself. However, you and I both know what happened.”

"Jane?" He said the name as a question, not sure if he was asking about her or asking if she was the reason why he was no longer dead.

"We don’t know." The admiral said gravely. “They left you behind probably because you really were dead. But they took her. They did make use of one of the transporter rooms before the facility was put on lockdown, but they jumped around so many times that we lost track after the third jump to London.”

At the words Chris tries to get up from the bed, but he’s pushed down by his boss.

"Rest. Your body is recovering. Others are taking care of it." She said helping him back into the bed.

"I feel fine." Chris said, trying to get up again, but the older women would not have any of it. She kept her hand planted firmly on his chest.

"That’s because Jane gave you her last prepared dose of AH 325.” His expression darkened at those words.

"That was the prick I felt.” Chris said almost absently. “I told her I didn't want it." Maybe there was a part of him that wanted to play catch with T’Pay and dance with Amanda, but there were too many consequences to the supposed miracle drug. Mainly, that it made you a target for Alexander Marcus.

"It was better that she injected you then allowing you to die. The attackers probably didn’t even realize what she injected you with. Not only are you still alive, but she made sure that they couldn’t get their hands on a sample that they could synthesize."
"So injecting me with some experimental drug with unknown side effects is better than letting me die?" He asked with a touch of annoyance in his voice.

“Yes and it's a lot better than letting the enemy get their hands on this super soldier serum/miracle cure-all.” His boss had a valid point that Chris did not want to acknowledge. This was dangerous and apparently injecting him with it was the lesser of all evils.

“Also the drug has been tested and trust me it's safer with you, much safer. Jane discovered that your personality affects how the drug reacts. I don’t think we have to worry about you trying to enslave the human race.” Lume deadpanned.

"So the violent and genocidal tendencies that we originally attributed to..." He began to ask, but wasn’t sure how to phrase the question.

"Those tendencies would have been there regardless. It’s just that the super strength and super intellect allowed them to be more ruthless in execution." His boss explained. "On the other side, a Good person would use those gifts for good things. It's the reason why I'm not worried about you staging a coup d'état."

"Why am I not surprised?" Really, he shouldn’t be surprised at all. Jane was nothing like what the history books said that she should be. Of course at that point, he tries to get up again and once more a gentle hand pushes him back down to the bed.

"Do I have to order you to stay in bed?" She asked annoyed. “I have no trouble whatsoever moving your chair to the other side of the room. I don’t think the drug has worked well enough for you not to use it yet.”

“I do consider Dr. Jackson to be a friend and she is missing right now. We both know she’s probably being tortured for the drug. I'm not going to just sit here and wait for your team of super spies to bring her back.”

“They are your team of super spies. And that is exactly what I am ordering you to do. You are not to leave this room or even this part of the hospital under any circumstances.” His boss said forcefully.

“Why can’t I at least watch over things from the situation room?” Chris countered.
“They think that they killed you and that's one of the few advantages that we have right now." She finally confessed.

"How do you know that they think I'm gone?"

"Marcus sent me an asinine condolence email."

"That's not at all surprising." Chris replied with a roll of his eyes.

"It's Marcus, nothing is surprising." She scoffed. “The man is evil incarnate. They went after you for a reason. I want to find out what that reason is. To do that, I need you to play dead or at the very least, stay out of sight."

"Fine, but you do realize that as soon as Amanda gets here I'm sneaking out.” At the name, her face became extremely grave.

"Where is Amanda?" Because if he really thinks about it, Amanda should be there instead of the woman in front of him.

Before Lume could respond, a young woman with short black hair walked into the room with a dark expression and PADD in hand. Chris is pretty sure she is one of his now. He vaguely remembers her picture from one of the dossiers that he has read.

"What is it, Lt. Carter?" She said, grabbing the device from her.

“It’s an emergency communication from the ops center. I was told to give it to you and wait outside for your orders.” The lieutenant said as she left the Admiral already engrossed in whatever the PADD contained.

"Someone has just accessed or at least tried to access Enterprise remotely using an ID that is technically valid, but does not match anyone who is supposed to have credentials." Chris closed his eyes. He didn’t think that Jim would really put his crazy plan into effect, but then again it’s Jim. At least he hopes this is Jim’s crazy plan in effect.
"What name was used?" He asked tentatively. If the name she gave him matched one of the five identities that Jim created for such an emergency, he knows that it's a member of Enterprise pretending to cooperate with their captors and not an actual attack. Even though he told Jim not to employ the strategy, Chris is certain that he did so anyway.

"Cmdr. L. Organa," Chris just closed his eyes at that. What did he do in a past life to get someone like Jim Kirk?

"This means something, doesn't it?"

“It means that somebody that is part of Jim's inner circle has either been kidnapped or coerced into breaking into Enterprise. Jim created fake identities that would simulate entry into the system, but would in reality, give the team time to extract whoever is missing.” Chris is sure that Jim would only give out the special IDs to his top people.

"Commander Uhura. She's been missing for 6.2 hours." She would definitely be someone who Jim would give the codes to. Also considering what Jane told him before she was abducted, they would need a linguistics expert to break the code that the documents were written in.

"Is Amanda with her?" He asked with an uneasy heart. He just knew that was what they were trying to keep from him.

"We don't believe so. Although she could be now. Thanks to ambassador Selek, we have a mechanism to track her. Her last known whereabouts was a ship owned by a Vulcan government official en-route to the New Vulcan capital. That seems to be close to the location of the person breaching the system." Lume explained

"Why do I believe that she's not there voluntarily?"

“Because she’s not and we believe that David is still with her. Another Vulcan elder is also missing. She was abducted from the embassy 7.3 hours ago.” He had a sick feeling he knew which Vulcan official was responsible for this. Apparently he was the one planning a coup d'état.

“You need Jim. He is the only one who knows how the system he created works. We need that location.” He knew that going after the commander was the right thing to do. He wanted to go after Amanda, but he knew he needed to stay and the mindset of a Starfleet admiral. He just hoped that Amanda would be with the commander.
Chapter Notes

Thank you to everyone who read or review the last chapter. Also, thank you to everyone who left kudos, who are following this story, or who added the story to your favorites. Sorry, this update took a little while. I was trying to finish up my Marvel Cinematic Universe story Tony Stark Is Not a Relationship Expert and that led to writing back to back chapters. However, now that that story is done, this is the story I’m trying to finish which means more back to back chapters as soon as I do an update for The Idiot’s Guide to Family Bonding. Yes, I know I’m horribly behind.

Warning: Violence, character death, and children in peril. Although, you might actually be happy about the character death this time.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Put the mission first. Focus on the mission. Don’t think about the fact that you are being forced to work with your mom’s new wife or that technically she is the one who is supposed to be running point on this mission because the grand Admiral herself is worried you are emotionally compromised.

Don’t think about the fact that you are emotionally compromised because for the first time in seven years you’re spending time around your mom, who you thought was dead. Don’t let your mind wander to the fact that your best friend, stepson, and mother-in-law have all been kidnapped by a man so amoral he had his own daughter killed. Also off limits is the fact that Chris, who should be dead right now, isn’t thanks to some miracle that no one is talking about.

Don’t think about the fact that your husband is having a ‘Marshall episode’ and you know that he’s having one. At least this time he is responding to medication which he is taking voluntarily rather than having to be forcibly injected by Nyota, who’s not available right now.

It’s really not in your best interest to think about why she’s not there. You should definitely not focus on the fact that she could –no, most likely is being tortured right now. Don’t think about the fact that she may just end up like your favorite father figure. Be happy that said father figure is not dead like certain idiotic former admirals are claiming in the media. Don’t think about the fact that Amanda is on a shuttle headed for what Jim really hopes is New Vulcan.

He's really not going to think about baby David being alone with a sociopath or the fact that he's
not even 100% sure which sociopath. His gut says the Vulcan supremacist, but it could be the bigoted biological grandfather who wants war with the Klingons at any cost. Of the two the narcissistic Vulcan with delusions of grandeur is a much better option than the guy who used to beat up his daughter and ordered her execution.

They have a plan. There's going to be three teams involved in this operation. The first team has two groups. Both will be going through the Vulcan passageway that leads straight to the Vulcan Council headquarters on New Vulcan (Jim would love to ask why such a passageway existed, but doesn’t). One will stay behind to guard Spock’s great-grandmother as well as the Council members to prevent the coup d’état from getting worse. The other is going on to intercept the ship carrying Amanda and David at the space port.

The second team was going to the location where they traced Nyota’s access of the Enterprise database with the emergency code. Jim is really, really thankful right now that they came up with that little system. He would be running point on that mission (with Agent 13 there to babysit).

The last team is what Jim likes to think as the cavalry. This team will be coming with Enterprise for back up. Even flying at maximum warp, they won't get there for several hours however.

Now, Jim wants Spock in charge of the team at the spaceport. However, he's been overruled by step mommy dearest.

"No. I know your husband is a highly capable officer.” Agent 13 said emphatically. “I know Spock is probably one of the best in Starfleet. However, even if he wasn't having a mental health moment, I would not allow him to run point on a mission involving the kidnapping of his mother or child. It's too personal. I wouldn't even be letting you run one of the teams if we didn't have a mole problem."

They definitely have a mole problem. Despite being a complete dick, there were people all through Starfleet who believed in Alexander Marcus's way of doing things. These people were unhappy with the measures Starfleet had taken in the last three years to get back to their roots and become the peacekeeping exploratory organization that they were initially. These people have been causing problems like derailing negotiations, causing bad publicity, and leaking information to certain groups. One of these individuals leaked the location of yesterday’s pizza lunch. Was that only yesterday? It seems so long ago right now. So much has changed in the last 24 hours.

“What do you mean by ‘mental health moment’?” Jim started to rub his temple. He hates that his assumption about Marshall has been proven right. He was hoping he would be wrong there.
"He started talking to the personification of his human self at the house. Once he took his medication he was able to help with the investigation but…” Agent 13 trailed off there. (He’s not going to think of her by her real name. There’s no reason to get to know her. After today Jim can avoid the woman and her wife for the rest of eternity.)

"Spock is a liability?" Jim supplied for her.

"Yes." She answered bluntly. You knew that, but he was still going to fight this, sort of.

"Okay, I concede your point. If things go south at the spaceport, I really don’t want Marshall in charge of the tactical team, but Spock could still be in charge of the Enterprise." Okay, even Jim realizes that he was essentially arguing for the sake of an argument at this point. Agent 13 realizes the same thing because she was sighing.

“I’m not completely grounding your husband. We don’t have the resources for that right now. He can be on the Enterprise, but I don’t want him there in a leadership capacity. You suggested Lt. Cmdr. Sulu earlier. I think he is still our best option. Commander Spock can run backup support, if he is able to." The way she said it made Jim positive she believes that Spock would not be able to. The fact that she was an actual psychologist, not just a secret spy is the only reason Jim did not challenge her on this point.

"Fine," Jim gave up. They really didn’t have time to keep arguing. Every second mattered and he would really like to get his team to Nyota before something bad happened. “But who’s going to run the welcome wagon at the spaceport?"

"Agent Gaila of course." Agent 13 pointed to the woman beside him.

"You’re Section 31?" Jim asked slightly shocked. Besides his husband, Nyota and Bones, there wasn’t anyone else that he was closer to. They were best friends or at least he thought that was the case.

"Jim, where else would I be in Starfleet? Where else would they put someone who looks like me?" Jim could see her point. Of the two of them, Gaila could go to places that he never could. People would never assume that she was Starfleet. Actually, he used her on a few away missions for that purpose. Anytime they dealt with a human phobic society Gaila and Spock ran point. Unfortunately, that happened of lot more than he would like. But she was more than just her species and it annoyed Jim that she didn’t believe something similar.
"You're one of the best damn hackers we have in Starfleet. I think you're better than Spock and me sometimes." Jim praised her and just wasn’t empty platitudes. She was good. There was a reason why he went to her for help with his grand scheme to reprogram the Kobayashi Maru into something useful.

"Yes and combine those skills with my appearance and you have an unstoppable agent. People underestimate me. They think I'm just a dumb sex slave. It's helpful." He would like to believe that in this day and age that people would not think that way, but he knew that they did.

“Also, I beat you all the time when we spar.” She was very good when it came to tactical thinking too. He’d learned to never, ever play war games against her. Her team kicked his team’s ass at paintball and Capture the Flag.

"Okay.” Jim acquiesced. "You are the best option we have right now.”

"I’m the only option we have right now.” Gaila quipped.

“No, you’re the best one. He’s not going to expect you to be a threat, especially if he remembers you as Amanda’s meek assistant.” A plan was already forming in Jim’s head.

"We can use that,” 13 said. “Pretend to be docile and submissive. Catch him off guard and then attack.”

“That works for me.” Gaila replied just as Agent 13’s encrypted communicator chirped.

"River here.” She said into the communicator as she stepped far enough away that they could only hear her part of the conversation.

"Seriously? No, we expected it. It doesn’t change the plan. I want everybody to be ready to leave in 20 minutes from Gateway H.” She quickly ended the call.

"We have a development.” Agent 13 turned back to Jim and Gaila. “Council member Sank is just as crazy and self-absorbed as we all assumed he would be. He has requested a meeting with Spock and Elder T'Pau to negotiate release of the hostages.”

"Please tell me that someone told him that New Vulcan doesn’t negotiate with terrorists? You just
know it’s a trap.” And there was no way at all Jim was going to let Spock get anywhere near it.

"Vulcans are more logical than that. They speak with the terrorists first to see if it’s possible to diffuse the situation before telling them to get fucked." Gaila quipped beside him.

"The joys of the Vulcan mind." Jim sighed.

“As we just discussed, Spock being there is not an option. He may get himself killed and your mom will make me sleep on the couch for the rest of eternity if I make her baby boy a widower."

Although Jim found that laughable, he agreed with her decision. However, he doubted that Spock would be the one getting killed. This woman obviously did not know what happened to Cupcake during Spock’s last severe psychotic episode. The council member would be torn in pieces. And while the image is one of his top 10 fantasies right now, Jim really does not want to be a single parent due to Spock being on a prison planet for murder, even though it would be justifiable homicide. However, that’s when Jim realized they had another solution.

"He just said that a Spock had to attend right?" He asked for clarification.

"Yes, but again we are not sending in your husband."

"Not my husband, her boyfriend." Jim replied with a smirk.

"He’s not really my boyfriend,” Gaila retorted. “We’re just sleeping together." Jim wanted to roll his eyes. Why was his friend so afraid of the B word?

"What are you talking about?" Agent 13 looked at the pair highly confused.

"You don’t know? I thought Section 31 knew everything." Jim snarked.

"Selek’s real identity is even beyond Section 31 purview.” Gaila explained. “I only know because I know your Spock very well, but I think using the elder would be a good idea. It would definitely catch him off guard."
"Do you think he will do it?" Jim asked.

“He feels guilty and useless right now. I think he will be willing to help any way he can.” Jim could understand that. They’re essentially the same person and if Spock Junior was feeling guilty and blaming himself, then Spock Senior would be feeling the exact same way.

"Would you like to share your plan with the class?" Agent 13 looked at the both of them.

"It’s better that you don’t know." Gaila replied.

"Plausible deniability," Jim quipped.

"Plausible deniability is good." The senior agent just closed her eyes for a moment.

Xxxxxxx

"So here we are at the transporter pad again." James said anxiously as he waited to go through the gateway to New Vulcan. He was obviously referencing the moments just before they boarded the Narada together.

"This time I am not accompanying you." Spock would feel more at ease if he could directly participate.

"You know I want you there." James squeezed his hand.

"However, I’m a liability." Spock was well aware of his own limitations.

"I’m more worried about Sulu blowing up my baby. You know I hardly ever let him have the keys." James joked.

"There are no actual keys for…” Spock finds James’ mouth upon his in an effort to keep him from speaking.
"This will work. I will get Nyota and the good doctor and Gaila will get your mom and David. Then we will be planning your mom’s wedding and deciding how we want to decorate David’s room,” James said with a touch of bravado. If Spock was in the right mindset, he would already be quoting the statistical probability of the mission’s success, but instead he remained silent. James needed to convince himself that the rescue plan would work because there are no other options. Failure is not an option either. A certain voice in his head is already quoting those numbers, but Spock refuses to listen. It is not productive.

"I expect you to keep with your pattern of accomplishing the statistically impossible." Spock chose to say instead.

"I married you. I think that proves I’m great at pulling off the impossible.” James kisses him one more time.

"Come back safe." Spock said before initiating one final kiss.

"I promise." With that, James steps onto the transporter pad and disappears seconds later with the rest of his team.

XXXXXXX

When they arrived at the Vulcan Council headquarters, a transport was already waiting to take Gaila’s team to the space port. They would be meeting their target and his security entourage just outside the space port in front of a nearby café. It only took her 15 minutes to convince Elder T’Pau not to accompany the team and stay with the officers there to protect her.

There were only six including the ambassador (Gaila would only refer to him as the ambassador right now because her training dictates she maintain some emotional distance. Of course, she’s not sure how she will accomplish that considering that she is posing as his fiancée.) The small team was their best shot at catching the man off guard and successfully extracting the two council members.

If they showed up with 50 people, Sank would know something was up. Instead, she was posing as Spock’s fiancé. Agent Six had a striking resemblance to Spock’s assistant, Janice. In proper Vulcan attire, it would be impossible to tell the women apart, which was why the agent would be posing as his assistant. The other advantage to traditional Vulcan attire was that it was very easy to hide weapons. Section 31 just happened to be in possession of weapons that would not set off the weapon scan that any good security team would do before approaching. As a precaution, Six would be carrying a weapon because they could always claim that the assistant was another security team member.
The other three members of the party were posing as the ambassador’s security team. Technically, one person was actually a member of his normal team who the ambassador trusted implicitly. The other was the only Vulcan member of Section 31, T’Ray. She was not happy with her fellow countryman at the moment.

Actually, T’Ray was never happy with her countryman considering she was once promised to the odious Vulcan. Gaila doesn’t know all the details, but it was enough to make the female Vulcan consider Starfleet as a viable alternative to an arranged marriage to such a despicable being. In the end, the choice saved her life because she was on Earth touring the Academy with her cousin when Vulcan was destroyed. She was a valuable asset now. Much like herself, Agent T’Ray could go places that more humanoid looking agents could not. Her personal knowledge of the target was helpful in setting up this all up. With her team in place, they waited for the Elder to arrive.

Gaila wasn’t shocked at all that the Elder arrived with Amanda by his side, in chains no less. Nor was she surprised that he was flanked by several guards all with weapons all of which happened to be trained on Amanda. It was superfluous. A means of intimidation. They would be just as effective with one sniper perched on top of the café roof like her team did. Apparently the Elder decided to go with a show of force instead of the practical.

What did surprise her was seeing Elder T’Panda tethered to the council member at the wrist. She was also dressed in traditional wedding attire and without the assistive technology which helps her see. The Vulcan was also kept in front of Sunk as a shield making it impossible for their sniper to get a clean shot. The fact that the normally fiery - by Vulcan standards - councilwoman was being so complicit made Gaila certain that drugs were involved. Both of these factors were extra complications in the extraction.

Baby David was nowhere to be seen. This worried her, but she tried to tell herself that they just left the toddler on the starship for this little confrontation.

"Where is Mr. Spock?" Sunk asked impatiently. If the two hostages weren’t so close to him, she would order the sniper to take him out now. “I specifically demanded to speak with him. I will not negotiate with anyone else.”

“I am Spock.” Her—okay, let’s just call him her boyfriend-- said to the petulant Vulcan.

“No, you are not.” Sunk replied coldly not a trace of emotion anywhere and has language or expression.
“If your guard did a DNA scan, you would know that we are telling the truth.” Gaila started to explain.

“My great nephew is technically a clone of myself.” Selek supplied. From a certain point of view that would not actually be a lie.

“You did not specify which Spock you wanted to see. So we decided to choose for you.” Gaila replied impatiently. She would not be part of this exercise in exerting one’s masculinity. Although, she sure that Spock would win.

"Who are you?" Sunk spat out with disdain. She is not surprised at all that the Vulcan whom she spent several months with post destruction does not recognize her. It’s better that way. Amanda must agree because she said nothing.

"My intended." The ambassador replied. A look of disgust instantly fell over the Vulcan face. That was the whole reason why they chose this particular story. This prejudice would help keep the other Vulcan off guard.

"This is a perfect example of why you should be stripped of your membership on the Council. Those who forsake our ways should not be on it. A half human consorting with a prostitute is an affront to the Vulcan way of life. How much did you pay for her?” Despite his best efforts, Gaila could feel the anger beneath his calm expression.

She visualized kicking Sunk in his genitalia to permanently prevent him from procreating. Sadly, he keeps his Vulcan shield in front of him and is more importantly a member of an endangered species. She hopes that whoever has the misfortune of reproducing with this bastard will be able to prevent their child from inheriting his more abhorrent qualities such as his prejudice and narcissism.

“Those who care only for themselves should not be on the Council.” T'Ray commented from the back. “Yet, you are still a member.”

“I am…” He started, but was cut off once more by T’Ray.

“An individual with no diplomatic skills whatsoever, who should not be on the Council let alone be attempting to run it? Those of us who ‘consort’ with humans are considered traitors in your eyes. Yet, you have abandoned the principles our society was built upon and remain on the Council.
Your Vulcan supremacist tendencies make you a disgrace to our people. You have twisted the philosophies of our people into your own racist rhetoric just like your father.”

“I am certain you remember your former fiancé, T’Ray.” Her Spock said curtly.

“T’Ray, I am pleased to see you here.” He was not. It looked as if he swallowed a lemon. “I assumed that you perished with the rest of our people. Your cousin Snek neglected to mention this.” He gestured to one of security team members.

Gaila didn’t dare hope that Snek was who she thought he was. The lack of weapons scan prior this meeting made sense if she was right though.

“I am sure you wished that to be the case. I assume my cousin turned your personal attack dog didn’t believe my survival would be of interest to you.” The specialist spat out. “I was always too emotional for you. I had the good fortune of visiting Starfleet Academy at the time of our planet’s demise.”

“How fortuitous. You will be able to attend my bonding ceremony.” That explains the wedding attire. Okay, this guy really was that crazy. He was also extremely dangerous.

“Only if I cannot free the bride from you.” T’Ray spoke without inflection. “We are here to negotiate the exchange of prisoners.”

“That is an unfortunate term. No one here is a prisoner.” Spock just raised an eyebrow at the Vulcan.

“Then why is Dr. Grayson in chains?” Gaila asked pointedly.

“This is merely her punishment for the false imprisonment of my father.” The specialist rolled her eyes.

“Your father tried to kill her son.” T’Ray shot back.

“Because he is inferior to us.” Gaila wonders why no one has challenged Sunk sanity, because it
seems obvious the Vulcan is insane. She was fairly sure sanity in a hypo wouldn’t help. The Vulcan was not rational enough to take care of himself, let alone a planet.

“I find that hypothesis illogical considering the fact that you are not superior to anyone. You would never have ascended to the Council if not for our planet’s great tragedy and the fact that you pushed her husband out of the way.”

“I did no such thing.” The Elder spat out.

“You brag about it. It is one of your favorite accomplishments.” Gaila wonders if T’Ray was inferring what Gaila thought she was inferring.

“This current dialogue is unproductive. We are here to discuss your demands.” Spock interrupted.

“I have no demands. I only want you here to watch.” His expression was ice and Gaila just knew something was going to go down.

“What would that be?” Spock inquired.

“Your mother’s demise, although I guess she is not really your mother. Your friend then. It does not matter. Kill her now.” He said gesturing to T’Ray’s cousin. As he said the words, his ‘bride’ pulled away from him finally allowing a clear shot and Gaila quickly signaled the sniper. At the same time, his former fiancée ran to get Amanda out of the way. Before her sniper could take the shot, Sunk was already on the ground lifeless. The cousin of her agent was standing serenely over the body weapon in hand and none of the rest of Sank’s security team were rushing to attack him. Clearly she was missing something here and it wasn’t just David.

To be continued.
Review to encourage me to write faster.
I will save myself. Thank you very much.

Chapter Summary

Thank you to everybody who read or reviewed the last chapter. See a timelier update; which is a good thing since apparently I left you with a cliffhanger even though I didn’t realize it was one. However, because you guys have no idea where David is, I can see how that qualifies. Thankfully for everyone, I wrote this chapter at the same time I did the previous one. It just took me a little while to proofread because I had family visiting.

Warnings: Minor character death, children in danger, past sexual assault, past sexual assault of a minor, discussion of sexual slavery, and me trying to do another action sequence. The last one took three attempts and a lot of guidance from my wonderful beta. This is why I normally just skip over this stuff and focus on emotions. Since this story diverges greatly from the movies, I had to do my own big damn hero moment climax this time. However, since I’m doing my own we will have different big damn heroes than usual as was evident by Gaila being in charge of the extraction of Amanda.

Jim wanted to go into the compound with phasers blazing and get Nyota the hell out of there. Instead, they were perched behind a rock formation in the way too hot New Vulcan desert waiting for nightfall. Why couldn’t the bad guys build their secret compound in one of the nice forests on the planet? Or at least one of the deserts by the beach. Yes, such places do exist. Jim has pictures.

They were also waiting patiently to confirm that Nyota was in the building. They were currently working on breaking into the surveillance system as well as getting their own cameras in place, but it was taking a little while. If Spock was here, they would already been in.

Jim acknowledged reluctantly that the waiting and the mission in general wouldn’t be so horrible if it didn’t require him to spend quality time with his-- Agent 13. Wasn’t it just lovely that the other agents on this op were staying away from them? Okay, maybe they were making themselves scarce because he may have caused one of the hackers to pee his pants when he was unable to do the simplest thing.

He refuses to think of 13 as his stepmom, but rather a fellow officer, one who is treating him like a child, despite the fact that he’s been a Captain for almost 3 ½ years. She can’t really be his stepmom if he has no mom. Except he does and it’s not that he is unhappy Winona is alive it’s just-- this is really not the time to focus on personal issues. At least not personal issues unrelated to Alexander Fucking Marcus and his mass kidnapping for who knows why. Could they please hurry up with the fucking cameras?
“You know she does care. I tried to talk her out of going to your wedding but…” And now Agent 13 was trying to play family therapist. Good luck there. Even Dr. Margarita is unwilling to touch that.

“That was not caring, that was stalking.” Jim shot back harshly cutting her off. Jim needs to be on his best game to get his friend back. Maybe he should take over for the idiots working on communications? Things would be going so much faster.

“She was trying to keep you safe. Frank wants her dead. He wants you dead. We are probably going to have to move after this if we can’t find a concrete reason to lock him up. Georgia is going to be furious.” She said that last part as if she actually cared how Georgia with feel about moving and his heart hurts just a little bit more, because of it. Why did the new baby get a decent step-parent?

“He’s really that powerful?” Jim asked trying to change the subject at least a little.

“Frank is at the top of one of the major criminal syndicates in this quadrant or at least we think he is. They specialize in black market Vulcan artifacts, sentient trafficking, and possibly weapons. I’ve been working on this case for years, trying to follow him to his big boss who may or may not be Marcus. It’s how I ended up in Section 31 after his removal from Starfleet.” 13 explained and that just made Jim more worried. Anybody who teams up with Frank had to have the morality of a serial killer.

“Is that the only reason why you married my mother?” She actually smiles when he asked the question. Then Jim realized he said mother instead of Winona. “I mean…”

“I know what you mean. Things right now are messy and complicated and the current situation makes it even more so, but I do love…” Just then she was cut off by the sound of his communicator. He was really hoping it was the team with visuals on the compound. He wanted to get Nyota out now. Even more, he wanted Agent 13 to stop talking about Winona.

“Kirk here.” Jim answered curtly.

“We have Grayson. She is safe now.” Gaila said quickly. This is the first time that Jim has ever heard Gaila reference her mentor solely by her last name. He exhaled in relief. That was one less thing to worry about. He couldn’t take losing another mom.
“The other elder?” 13 asked grabbing the communicator from him.

“She’s okay, well, not okay. I don’t know what he gave her to make her so meek and obedient. Neither does T’Ray’s cousin because he was otherwise occupied at the time. Grayson suggested we do a rape kit so…” Gaila trailed off. Jim didn’t like that. He was worried what that meant for his mother-in-law.

“One for Amanda as well?” He asked worriedly.

“No, but that’s only because the prick was too much of a Vulcan supremacists to actually rape a human. Thank the universe for small favors.” He easily picked up on her use of the past tense.

“So I take it Sunk is dead?” Jim asked calmly trying not to get his hopes up.

“Yes, and unfortunately I wasn’t the one to do it though I really wanted to be.” Gaila said with a hint of annoyance. “I wasn’t allowed to have a weapon and the sniper was a little too slow on the draw. Evidently, T’Ray is excellent at organizing a Plan B and getting revenge on evil exes.”

“What happened?” Jim sighed.

“Apparently, Sunk made the mistake of filling his ranks with security staff members that take their oaths to protect all councilmembers more seriously than their loyalty to him. One of his detail also happened to be related to the only Vulcan member of Section 31. A member that Sunk just happened to humiliate during their arranged engagement.” She sounded as if she was smirking.

“And let’s not forget, they love Amanda's cookies.” The way she said it Jim was positive she was being entirely serious. He could almost see Amanda bribing the Vulcan security staff with her cookies. Her vegan chocolate chip was so good you’d forget that it’s vegan. Plus booze or in this case the Vulcan equivalent is always good for making friends.

“Everybody loves Amanda's cookies.” Jim quipped.

“They really are that good.”
“The chatter is not necessary. Can we please get back on point?” Agent 13 forcefully requested from beside him. Jim just rolled his eyes. A few minutes ago she had no trouble whatsoever chatting about how his mom deserves forgiveness and what a bastard Frank is. (No argument there.)

“It turns out Sunk was a sick son of a bitch who set up the entire thing so Spock would see his mother killed in front of him. I have no idea what you guys are walking into.” He wanted to say something about they were not walking into anything because Agent 13 decided that they stay in observation mode until the morons break into the security system, but he didn’t. He was just really glad that his Spock was safe aboard Enterprise. Things would go completely to hell otherwise.

“Where’s Dr. Grayson now?” Agent 13 asked before Jim could.

“Getting treatment.” Gaila responded. “Nothing serious Jim. She’s fine, just cuts and bruises. She was also knocked out a few times.” That worried Jim. Who knows what could have happen while Amanda was unconscious?

“What about the junior target?” Agent 13 asked in regards to David.

“That’s what I wanted to talk to you about. He's not here.”

“Shit!” Jim murmured into the comm.

“What do you mean he's not there?” They usually unflappable Agent 13 screamed into the phone.

“Grayson Junior is not here. We’re going through the transporter logs but...” Just then he heard phaser fire and explosions coming from the compound. Jim really wished they had cameras working in the building right now.

“Gaila we have to go.” Jim is not even sure he hung up, but it doesn’t matter. Observation time was over. They had no choice but to go in.

Nyota was alone now that Jane was gone, if you don’t count the three burly security guards and the bastard who murdered Carol Marcus. The man keeps watching her as if he wants to screw her on the nearest surface. If you told her two weeks ago that she would despise the person who killed Carol Marcus with a fiery passion, she would say you were crazy. In all fairness though, she didn’t
know the whole story two weeks ago. She thought she had. She thought Carol was this horrible woman who’d broken Spock’s heart to the point where he couldn’t let Nyota or anyone else in.

Now she realized she didn’t know a lot of things two weeks ago. Such as Carol was just a child who was forced to grow up too quickly and for too long she’s been letting her daddy issues keep her from letting someone into her heart.

Also, until two weeks ago she hadn’t been completely aware of how corrupt Starfleet had become or how little had been done in the last three years to undo the damage caused by people like Johnson and Marcus. They were trying hard, but nothing was different.

Marcus and his cronies were still doing everything in their power to trigger a war with the Klingons. Their latest scheme involved installing Councilmen Sunk as a puppet leader of New Vulcan and capitalizing on the Vulcan paranoia created by the destruction of their world to create weapons of mass destruction or something like that, if what she was hearing was to be believed. She heard bits and pieces of said plan as she tried to act like she was getting the information they wanted.

The weapon they wanted the most was AH325. It was the stuff of comic book legends and could make an ordinary person into a superhuman (if what she was translating proved to be true, not that she was giving them an accurate translation). So of course Marcus wanted his hands on it. She was being held by gunpoint to get access to the AH325 files and Jane was taken away to get the necessary “ingredients” to re-create the serum. Considering the main ingredient in AH325 was an antibody only found in augment blood, getting that resource will involve a visit to wherever they were storing the bodies Enterprise found on NCX17. But if Nyota had no idea where they took the bodies to, then she doubted the scientist did.

If the clock on the computer they were forcing her to use was accurate, Jane left an hour ago. She wasn’t sure she could trust the time. Regardless, she has decrypted and semi-successfully translated 20 pages of data. She could modify a translation program to do it, but doing it by hand gave her more time and allowed her to modify key things just enough so the experiment wouldn’t work but not so much that they would realize what she’d done. So far her gamble had worked.

‘Hurry, the fuck up Jim.’ She thought to herself. She wanted out of this place before she got killed or worse.

The chair that they had her in was hard and uncomfortable. It was hurting her back which is why she kept wiggling to the point where one of the screws popped up. When that happened she realize that the chair was not that secure. She could use that to her advantage. She had to. She was through waiting for Jim to show up. She had to get out of here on her own and hope that she wouldn’t die of dehydration in the desert before making her way back to Vulcan civilization.
Half an hour later all the screws were gone from the chair and safely tucked away in the bottom of her shoe without her captors being none the wiser. If she adjusted her top just right the security guards did not pay attention to anything else. That strategy was probably the reason why Eric sent the rest of the team away.

He was either going to kill her because he realized she was making the translation and decryption of the files as difficult as possible to buy herself time to escape or he was going to do something worse. Considering he was now next to her and his right hand was caressing her breast, she’s going to go with worse. She pushed him away with the hand they’d untied to allow her to use the computer more efficiently.

“Don’t touch me.” She said forcefully.

“Why are you changing your mind now? You were being such a tease a few minutes ago. Don’t make this hard on yourself.” He stroked her other breast. It took all her strength not to regurgitate the food they finally gave her two hours ago. The touch of him made her entire body prickle with disgust. “You see what cooperation can get you.”

“Yes, being chained to a chair with phasers pointed at my back as you force me to break into a Starfleet database.” She snapped as his hands moved lower. She wanted to break that hand. He responded by placing a hand around her throat.

“As opposed to you being down in the dungeons, chained to the wall and having no option to consent.” He grabbed her pants and tugged them down with his free hand. She was about 10 seconds from kicking him in the dick.

“What option! I know you’ll do whatever you want regardless of my decision.” She snapped back.

“If you let me continue without fighting, at least you’ll enjoy it and maybe I’ll get you a better chair and something else to wear.” He gestured to her uniform that was in tatters.

“It would probably be a golden bikini.” She snarked as she pushed him as hard as she could, causing him to fall to the floor.

“I think you would look good in that.” He said getting off the ground.
“That’s okay, I like this chair.” She said getting up and taking the chair with her in her hands. Before Eric could reach his phaser, she deftly swung it at his head knocking him unconscious. Pity, he still breathing, she thought. The motion caused the chair to break apart allowing her more freedom of movement.

She hears footsteps in the hall and quickly takes both of his phasers. Just to be safe, she fires a shot at the guy who just tried to rape her. Despite it being on the kill setting, he continues to breathe. This surprises her because he doesn’t have the super strength of the others. Shit! No time to think about that now.

At the sound of phaser fire, three guards come into the room. She swiftly kills them all. More security guards were already filling the room. Two more guards fell down to the ground. She silently thanked her former roommate for making her go to shooting practice so often as well as learning to shoot with both hands. That skill has really come in handy today. She grabbed another weapon and a couple of old-school grenades along with one of the guard’s tactical backpack. She hoped there was some food and water in there. She was getting the hell out of here now even if she had to kill everyone in the compound to do it.

She shot three more guards on her way through the compound. She detonated one of the grenade bombs to make it harder for the goons to follow her. She finally made it to the last secure door. Thankfully, she could open it with the card she swiped from dead guard number four. Unfortunately, as soon as she opened the door, she could see another tactical team making their way towards the compound. She made ready to throw another one of the grenades. It was her best shot at getting out. That’s when she heard, “Princess Leia, put the weapon down.”

It was her codename. She had no idea where Jim had gotten it from, but she knew it was him. His crazy plan actually worked.

“What took you so long farmboy?” She asked exhaustedly before she collapsed.

XXXXXX

Amanda and Nyota were safe and sound or as much as they could be considering. Nyota was still unconscious after fighting her way out of the compound and killing at least 12 people. It seems she’d had the good sense to not kill the one person that might be able to tell Jim where David was. (Although, it is possible that she had tried to kill him, but he is special like Chris is now which may not be a good thing.)

“Personally, I wish Nyota had killed you like your comrades whose blood is currently splattered all
over the compound floors. Those grenades were so much less civilized than the phasers.” Jim said as soon as Eric started to regain consciousness. They were currently at the hospital in the capital city with Eric chained to a gurney and two security guards posted outside, with projectile weapons. Jim wasn’t taking any chances.

“Personally, I’m tempted to do it right now.” Jim clutched his weapon as he stroked it lovingly with a smile on his face. “But I’m much too civilized for that.”

“I’m not telling you anything. It’s not your kid. You’re just fucking his Vulcan whore of a dad. That doesn’t give you any right. He is with his real family now and safe from people like you.” Wow, this guy was a moron. If you discount Spock’s side of the family, David only had one biological relative left and he was a crazy xenophobic war monger, who completely fucked over his only daughter. The guy just told him who had David.

“Who were you trying to protect David from? His lesbian moms who you murdered or his gay dads that want to tear you apart for taking their child away from them?” Jim kept talking because maybe he could get more information out of the dick. “If you think I’m bad, daddy dearest wants to rip you to pieces. Did you hear about the Cupcake incident?” If Spock knew what this guy did, Eric would be nothing but blood splatters on the pristine white sheets beneath him.

“Yes, I’m sure a guy who arranged for you to murder his own daughter is the paradigm of virtue that you claim him to be and a much better parental figure for an innocent baby.”

“Still better than being raised by filthy #!%$,“ Jim wasn’t surprised at all by his use of homophobic slurs. Bigotry was bigotry.

“I’d rather be a #!%$, then a rapist. I saw the security footage. Again, it took great restraint for her not to make you a puddle of blood on the floor. Although, I’m betting you just got lucky because you have some of that miracle drug in your system. I wonder if we can find out how much it takes to kill you.” Jim smirked.

“You have all the best ideas.” Gaila walked into the room and took the seat beside him. The only thing in her hand was a PADD. “Besides a quick shot to the head is too good for someone like you.” Gaila said menacingly as she pushed him back onto the bed forcefully.

“Did I mention that I’m actually good cop in this scenario. Agent Gaila is the bad cop. She knows 98 different ways to kill someone.” Jim said with a smile.
“Actually, I’m up to a hundred and six. I picked up a few more while I was working on the Vulcan Council of all places. Did you know there are seven ways to kill someone with a stylus?” Gaila said twirling the device in question in her hand. “At least four of them involve extreme blood loss.” Now that statement cause the guy to sweat just a little.

“It wasn’t like that.” Eric said defensively.

“So you didn’t have your hands on her breast while she was restrained against her will?” Gaila asked angrily, but their prisoner did not say a word. “See, I know what you did because I’ve been there. I was eight the first time it happened.” At that moment, the stylus in her hand snapped in two. She dropped the pieces to the floor. “I hate when that happens. Human stuff is so fragile.” Gaila smirked just a little. Actually smirked may be the wrong word for it. Maybe a villain in training smile would be a more accurate description. “Just like humans themselves - even those with a little something extra.”

“This is why I love being married to a Vulcan. He doesn’t bruise that easily.” Jim said with a vicious smile.

“Although, you on the other hand…” She said pointing to one of the bruises he received that morning or was it yesterday from fighting Marcus’s goons.

“They’re just love taps. However, you will not be so lucky. The only way you’re not going end up dead is if you tell me where my stepson is?” Jim threatened.

“So you’re trying to be a good stepdad. Better than yours? Frank said you enjoyed being hit almost as much is your mother did. Well, until he killed her, but that’s not true anymore. Sometimes stuff doesn’t take, just like with me.” The man said eerily.

“You spoke to Frank?” That’s when Agent 13 walked into the room. Did Jim mentioned she was watching this entire interrogation via video feed? Gaila set things up this time because she’s considerably more competent than the team they’d brought. Seriously, it does not take that long to hack into a security feed no matter how much encryption they have. Idiots! Complete idiots!

Right now Agent 13 looked dangerously unhappy. Actually, she had that same look in her eyes that Spock got whenever certain now dead someone called his mom a synonym for prostitute.

“And this is insane cop. You just hit one of her berserker buttons.” Jim smirked.
“Winona’s new wife. Frank, says enjoy his leftovers.” Eric retorted and surprisingly Agent 13 did not react at all.

“I’m not insane cop.” 13 retorted. “You know that would be your husband. “I’m pissed off cop. So you know who I am, but how do you know Frank?”

“I don’t have to answer that question.”

“No, you don’t. Actually, you don’t have to answer any questions. This is why it was taking the communications team so long to set up the cameras. Dr. Jackson left us an Easter egg.”

That’s when Agent 13 turned on the video screen in the room to show the feed of Alexander Marcus walking down an unknown hallway with a squirming David in his arms. Actually, the almost 3-year-old was kicking and punching as hard as he could. Behind him an irritated Jane Jackson being held at phaser point. Jim was now completely willing to forgive the communications team since they found were David is. It had the looks of a Starfleet facility. They all have similar architecture. Lots of white everywhere.

“We already know where your boss is. There is an entire starship filled with angry officers and one pissed off dad waiting for him at a certain minimally used Starbase/ secret project construction site near Jupiter. So giving up information on David’s whereabouts can’t save you now. Nobody’s been tried for treason for a long time. I wonder if capital punishment will still be allowed.” 13 quickly ended the video stream.

“Let’s go. He is not worth our time.” Jim follows behind her realizing that she was playing some weird game.

“Did you wonder where all those old guns came from?” 13 turned around at that.

“My wife’s asshole ex-husband. I already know that too.” Agent 13 retorted.

“But you can’t prove it, I can. And I will for a price.”

“When I get my step grandson back, maybe I will feel like negotiating.” 13 turned right back to the
door and walked out.

“Gaila, do you have this.”

“Sure, I forgot to take my pheromone suppressor this morning because of everything. It’s best I stay here. It’s not like he can do anything chained to the bed like that.” The smile on Gaila’s face was simply terrifying.

Spock watched the video feed of David fighting with his grandfather as he waited calmly at Acting Captain Sulu’s side. As he fought to contain rage that filled him, he acknowledged that the correct decision had been made not to have him be in charge right now. He is compromised. It would be better if James was here, but the knowledge that Nyota was alive, if unconscious, helped him cope with his husband’s absence. They have taken the logical course.

The Enterprise was now hovering above the engineering outpost in orbit of the Jovian moon Io. Data shows this is where the construction of the soon to be renamed USS Gandhi took place as well as Alexander Marcus’s other special projects. It is the location of a secure facility where the augments found on NCX17 are being kept. And it is also the facility where his son is now. They discovered this thanks to the distress signals they received from Dr. Jackson.

He wants to beam down to the facility below and get his child. He wants to go down to avenge Carol’s death. To make up for the fact that he never questioned her story. To make up for the fact that he questioned her feelings for him, but never her motives for the way she behaved. He wanted to tear Alexander Marcus apart by channeling the viciousness of his pre-reform ancestors. A certain voice inside his head was encouraging all of these ideas. Yet, he stayed beside his Acting Captain.

If he acted so brashly, David may not survive. This was a situation for logic and logic dictated that they be strategic in the extraction of David and Dr. Jackson, who was also being held hostage at phaser point.

Mr. Chekov suggested beaming David up but that was not an option for two reasons. The first is that the base’s shields are up. Enterprise is working to deactivate the shields in the medical center remotely. By his estimate, it will be at least 4.6 minutes before the shields are down. The second is that Marcus has a hold of David. Even if they were able to lock on to his son, they cannot extract him without bringing Alexander Marcus and his team aboard. Therefore his only option was to watch.

“Why are you doing this? You never loved your daughter. Why would you even want her son?” Dr. Jackson asked as a weapon of unknown origin was pushed in her back again. According to the schematics they had, the party was standing outside of the medical wing inside the facility. There
were the bodies of at least two guards crumbled around their feet.

“I did love my daughter.” Marcus pulled David closer to himself, but the toddler kept pushing away. Internally, Spock was commending his son.

“Only when it was convenient for you. Only when she acted the way you want her to. You loved your docile little puppet, not her.” Dr. Jackson spat out despite the weapons trained on her. “She made a deal with the devil to keep her son away from you, a sociopathic asshole.”

“You were married to that devil.” Marcus shot back pointing to the obvious wedding ring on her finger. Spock is surprised that the jewelry was not removed as it could be used as a weapon.

“I fell in love with the person I wanted him to be rather than the person he really was.” Dr. Jackson defended herself.

“But then again I shouldn’t be surprised. You have a notorious history of sleeping with men of great infamy and questionable morality, some of whom you call brother. It must’ve been very hard for you to turn on your-- other John.”

“Did he just imply that she…” Lieutenant Madison, Nyota’s mostly competent replacement, asked from her station behind him.

“Had sexual relations with her brother? I believe so.” Spock commented.

“We’ve already played enough games. I know I’m who you want. You need me to produce AH325 and create your army of super soldiers. You also want ‘John Harrison’, your design expert, back despite the fact that he almost killed your daughter. Maybe you’re hoping the memory wipe will last longer this time. On the other hand, you may think him almost killing Carol was a good thing.”

“I’m not happy about her death. It was an unnecessary complication.” Alexander Marcus commented coldly onscreen.

“This guy is crazy.” Spock heard the Acting Captain mumbled to himself.
“I will give you what you want if you let me give David to his father.” It almost felt like the scientist was pleading.

“Do you think I’m going to give my grandson to a man who screwed a 15-year-old?” As Marcus’ words registered, several crewmembers turned to look at Spock.

“Who didn’t know she was 15 and who comes from a culture where the age of consent is significantly lower due to biological reasons? And of course you’re going to ignore the underlying circumstances which led to her relationship with Spock. You’re an asshole.” She spat out bitterly. “You tried to force her to have an abortion. You never gave a fuck about David.”

“But you do. Eric told me that you love David very much.” That’s when the weapon change trajectory towards David.

“Definitely crazy and a bastard. I want those shields down now.” Acting Captain Sulu commanded the crew.

“You win. What do you want me to do?” There was no sound of defeat in her voice which made Spock believe the scientist was planning something.

“Provide access to your lover’s, I mean, brother’s room.”

“Definitely implying incest.” Spock shot the communication officer a dark expression. The chatter was unnecessary.

“We’re not that closely related. And do you seriously think my codes are still going to work right now? They know you have me and know you will use me to get access to Starfleet secrets.” The doctor pointed out almost wistfully.

“Let’s see.” He guides Dr. Jackson’s hand to the biometric reader. The door opens and the team goes inside the room containing one unconscious man strapped to a bed. He looked similar to the protagonist in Jim’s favorite version of Sherlock Holmes.

“Their shields are down, Sir.” Spock hears an officer say in the background. “We have about 90 seconds before they realize what we’ve done.”
“I have no trouble whatsoever beaming that bastard up to a room full of security staff members,” Sulu suggested. Spock knew if his child could pull away from his grandfather and stay out of reach long enough they could safely beam David out alone.

‘Okay, Daddy.’ This time the voice in his head sounded more like David than Marshall. Seconds later David bit his grandfather providing him with enough of an opportunity to escape.

“Did David just…” Lieutenant Madison started to say but was cut off.

“Get him out now.” Acting Captain Sulu’s shouts as Dr. Jackson began to attack the security team to keep them away from David.

“Locked onto David.” Chekov responds. Spock watched the screen as David disappeared much to the surprise of his irate grandfather, who ineffectually reached toward the spot where the child had been. Moments later the boy materialized next to Spock.

Spock was only dimly aware of anything else after that. He vaguely heard Dr. Jackson say, “You were smart using David as a bargaining chip because he was the only thing keeping you alive. Too bad for you Starfleet got my message.”

He barely registered Dr. McCoy and Dr. Margarita Cruz arriving on the bridge to assess his son’s health. Spock was completely focused on the 2 ½-year-old who was now safely in his arms. He did not care that others were watching. A few tears flowed freely as he kissed David on the forehead. He could feel his son’s fear and relief. He was just happy to have his son back. So much so that he barely noticed when the location where David had been held just minutes earlier exploded.

To be continued.
Happy-ish Ever After part one

Chapter Notes

Thank you to everybody who read or reviewed the last chapter. I love your comments and feedback. I don’t always get to reply personally to everything but I cherish every piece.

The end is near. This is the first part of our two-part finale. This was actually all one humongous chapter but then it got too long and I decided to break it up so I could post sooner.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“At 0200 hrs. San Francisco time a Starfleet facility in Jupiter’s orbit was breached by an unnamed terrorist group led by former Starfleet Admiral Alexander Marcus. At this time we believe the attack may be retaliation for Marcus’ dismissal from the organization due to misappropriation of funds and misconduct. However, nothing is conclusive yet.”

Christopher Pike heard the Starfleet press secretary Jane Barnett say a little too calmly for the legions of press ready to pounce at any moment on the screen in front of him.

“Is it truth that he arranged for the murder of his own daughter?” And pounce they did.

“Let me give the rest of my statement and then we will have time for questions.” Several in front of her grumble at that but she continued on.

“The intruders tried to force the head researcher at the facility to give them access to all projects. Instead, after evacuating Marcus’ hostage, a child believed to be under the age of three, the project head activated the facility’s defenses and initiated a self-defense sequence. All those at the facility that were not evacuated were killed, including Alexander Marcus.”

What the press secretary said was mostly true from a certain point of view. Of course Jane Jackson did not actually activate a self-defense sequence but utilized her ring and a glass of water. The ring she put on the last time he saw her was actually a bomb triggered when it made contact with water or rather the hydrogen in the water. That was in his classified briefing that he received only 30 minutes earlier before the press conference.
The pretty words don’t really matter. It all essentially boiled down to Jane Jackson sacrificing her life to make sure Alexander Marcus would not get his hands on her research or her brother. It was drastic, but necessary. David was safe and his former mentor would never be able to hurt anyone ever again.

However, the press was not satisfied with the simple statement. Maybe they all realized that there was more to this crazy story than what was being told. Of course maybe it was Jane’s own fault for opening the floor to questions.

"Is it true that Alexander Marcus’s grandson David Marcus was the young child in question? According to other reports, the child was forcibly removed from the care of his grandmother, Vulcan Council member Dr. Amanda Grayson, prior to the incident at the facility. Are the incidents connected?" Chris closed his eyes at that first question. Barnett did not even blink.

“In line with Federation guidelines we cannot reveal the identity of the young child that was evacuated prior to the self-destruction of the facility especially due to the fact that there is a pending investigation into how the child found itself in the custody of Alexander Marcus. Therefore, I am unable to comment on that at this time.” Chris was sure that the press will interpret this as a yes.

“Can you release the identity of the project head that activated the self-defense sequence?”

“We cannot disclose that information until her family is notified.” That was such a bullshit answer considering that her only ‘family’, and Chris uses the term loosely were either killed in the explosion or are currently being relocated to another secure Starfleet facility. There is her great great great nephew, but Chris is sure he already knows considering he’s at the press conference.

“However, I can tell you that she was a citizen of Earth and has been with Starfleet for nearly 4 years after coming out of the private sector. Next question.” That was almost true from a certain point of view.

“Was this incident connected in any way to the massacre on NCX17?” Some unknown guys screamed from the back.

“Yes. Both facilities were conducting similar research. The scientist who activated the self-destruct sequence was the head of the research team on the NCX17 facility. However, she suspected that there was unauthorized research going on and was meeting with Starfleet officials about this. We are still investigating this allegation. In addition, it has since come to light that one of the terrorists
involved in the recent incident participated in the NCX17 attacks.” The press secretary said before signaling for another person to speak.

Personally, Chris is surprised that factoid was released publicly although they did not give out names. That was only because the individual in custody was cooperating. By cooperating Chris means selling out everybody after being locked in a room with Gaila without her hormone suppressant for 20 minutes while being chained to his hospital bed.

“I’m sorry; I cannot give the name of this individual out because the investigation is ongoing. I will say that the individual is in Starfleet custody and at present is being held on suspicion of conspiracy to overthrow the Federation, suspicion of terrorist activities, multiple counts of murder, and kidnapping of a Starfleet Captain.”

The bastard was also being held on attempted sexual assault charges, but for the sake of Nyota that information was not being released publicly. He’s sure that the press will figure it out eventually, but they want to give the woman a little time to breathe especially considering she is still stuck in a New Vulcan hospital. So was Amanda for that matter and Chris hated that. He needed to touch her to know that she was all right. He just needed her almost as badly as he needed air.

“So you can’t give us a name?” Someone else yelled. Okay, that time Barnett actually rolled her eyes.

“As I just stated moments ago, I’m not able to give that information out at present. Other agencies are still investigating. This is just our first press conference and I’m sure we’re going to want something to talk about next time. Next question. Jennifer, you always ask good stuff.” She said pointing to a woman in yellow.

"What was the research being done on the facility?"

"The sanctioned research included trying to cure cancer, leukemia actually.” No, they were trying to cure dying but its best not to say that out loud, Chris thought to himself.

“Although they accidentally came up with a treatment for paraplegia. However, the majority of that research is now destroyed and only one of the test subjects still remain.” Chris is that test subject. He assumes that they’re trying to prepare the way for his miraculous recovery. The fact that he could wiggle his big toe this morning was considered extreme progress.
"Is it true that this facility stored augment embryos? And that the embryos were being used in the research.” Chris wondered how they were able to ask questions so close to the truth

"Actually it was nano-tech research.” Complete bald-faced lie in the fact that the press secretary did not blink at all, which made him wonder if she was part of Section 31.

It would make sense. Winona’s wife was. Jonathan Jackson grabbed her after she was forced out of the Federation Bureau of investigations for reasons not in her file. She was a consultant/profiler before she met Winona. Afterward she became a field agent. Chris wondered if this happened so she could help protect her wife from her ex-husband. From his briefing, the agent took the gateway back just so she could be there when they arrest Frank on everything from conspiracy to overthrowing the Federation to sentient trafficking.

"However, as we stated earlier, unauthorized research was taking place at both facilities. It is believed that the organization headed by Alexander Marcus was responsible for this research and wanted to utilize resources at the Jupiter facility. The scientist decided it was better to lose the facility and research than to allow them access. At this time we are uncertain of what that research was. However, we are investigating all possible avenues.” She responded before pointing to an individual who was obviously Vulcan.

"Is it true that Elder Sunk of the Vulcan Council funneled an estimated 123.7 million credits to researchers on NCX17 to create Vulcan augments?”

"Right now this is a rumor. We are investigating all possibilities, but we’re not at liberty to discuss this information at present. Once we know more we will have another wonderful discussion. Right now I know as much about this as you do.”

“Do you think we can get her for the Vulcan Council briefing?” Chris hears a voice say from the doorway and he quickly clicks off the press conference. Besides at this point he expects it to mostly be dodging questions about the role of the New Vulcan government and the entire fiasco since the next question was about Elder Sunk involvement.

"I’m not sure she would be needed. Vulcans are very skilled at saying A when they really mean B.” He said turning to Amanda. “I thought you were still on new Vulcan.”

"I took the pathway back with Agent River. I still can’t believe that she is an agent. From George’s description, I would never see her like that.” Amanda said taking the seat beside his bed.
"Neither can I, I’m her boss.” The room gets silent again.

"They told me that you were dead.” Amanda said after a minute. He actually sees her shaking.

"I’m not.” Chris grabs her hand in an effort to calm her down.

"I know that now. Gaila told me that after I was rescued, but I just need to…”

That’s when Amanda’s lips descended on his. Apparently hand contact was not enough. He understands. He needed this to. He needed to know that she is still with him just as much as Amanda needed the same thing. Chris was certain that the only reason they stopped kissing was she needed to breathe. Thanks to whatever Jane shot Chris with, his lung function was better than ever and he did not have the same issue.

“‘I’m here.” Chris’ words were punctuated with another kiss. “So are you and it’s going to be okay.”

"Because of Jane?” Amanda asked hesitantly. “They told me you were hit with a phaser on the kill setting and yet somehow survived. She’s the reason you survived?”

"Yes."

"I owe her a lot. She saved you and she saved David. She gave her life for that.” One tear fell down Amanda’s cheek for the now gone scientist.

“I think she knew this was going to happen.” Chris tells her after he reaches the box of tissues to her. “Before Jane even injected me with her secret formula, I think she was planning to destroy the Jupiter outpost. Actually I think she knew they were coming and she injected me with the formula so they wouldn’t get it. She’s always two steps ahead which is why I’m shocked she didn’t find a way out.” Part of him expected her to survive the explosion. Jane Jackson was a survivor, regardless of everything else. She survived cancer, injustice, and waking up in the 23rd century. Yet according to Admiral Lume, she was taken out by the same explosion.

“I’m just glad you’re still with me. And you are never leaving me again.” Amanda’s mouth was on his again. Actually at this point she was mostly on the bed. The fact that he could feel her touching his legs was comforting. It meant that whatever Jane gave him was really working.
"So when’s the wedding?" Winona joked as she walked into the room carrying a very large bouquet of balloons. He wondered if some shop actually sells balloons that say “congratulations on not dying” or whether she had to custom order those balloons. Regardless they pulled away rather quickly and Amanda went back to her chair.

"I was thinking about a June wedding." Chris joked.

"That’s too long away. I was thinking Christmas.” Amanda said as she straightened her robes. There was something about the way she said this that made Chris believe she was entirely serious.

"You were? You’re really thinking about an actual wedding at Christmas.” Originally their engagement was fake, but their relationship was real. Everything that’s happened made Chris realize that he really did want to spend the rest of his life with her. When they told him that she was missing, it killed him. He can’t deal with a reality without her. He needs her.

“Of course I’m serious about marrying you as soon as possible, but Christmas may be too soon. It’s almost November now. Do you want to marry me on Valentine’s Day?” And if Winona was not in the room he would have pulled Amanda back onto the bed.

"Yes I want to marry you. Actually tomorrow would be fine as well.” And if Winona was not in the room Amanda may do the exact same thing.

"You’re not allowed to run off to the courthouse or New Las Vegas.” The older women chastised. “Your friends and family need to actually be there. Your daughters would never forgive me if I just let you guys run off together. They really want to plan the wedding. Your son may feel the same way and he already has enough reasons to hate me.” The part about Spock was probably very true, but Chris knew better than to say anything about that.

"That’s what you did for your last wedding." Because nobody was supportive of her relationship with Frank, for good reason, it was a ‘surprise’ wedding. Chris is not even entirely sure if Jim and Sam were there. Chris knew that he wasn’t there. He didn’t even find out about it for a while.

"No. My wife actually has family. I think she does anyway. They could’ve been spies. I don’t know. But I had a real wedding this time, complete with Georgia as flower girl and a gigantic wedding cake. I have pictures.” Winona seems very sad when she said this. While they were waiting for Amanda to be rescued, Winona told him all about not knowing that her wife was Section 31 until things started to fall apart.
"She could be from a family of spies." Chris gave as an excuse.

"I don’t even know. I didn’t even get to talk to her for more than 10 minutes before she was off on another mission. She told me that Amanda was back and visiting you as soon as her debriefing was finished and she was going on another mission that she can’t tell me about until it’s over.” Of course she wasn’t going to tell Winona that she was going to arrest Frank. She wouldn’t want to get the women’s hopes up.

“It doesn’t matter I have two little girls who…” At that moment, one very excited little Vulcan and one girl who was obviously Jim Kirk’s little sister rushed the room with a sulky almost teenager behind them. He was instantly enveloped by two Vulcans, who were hugging him. He’s not surprised by T’Pay doing it, but he wasn’t sure such actions were in her sister’s vocabulary.

Of course once the moment passes, T’Pan quickly reverted to traditional Vulcan reserve. “I’m pleased that you are both safe. I have already lost one set of parents. I wish not to lose another.”

“I can’t make any promises, but I’ll try hard to make sure you don’t.” With that he kissed all three of his girls on the forehead. So this is what having a family is like. Maybe he could get used to this.

XXXXXXXXXX

When Jim left the ship three or four days ago (he’s not sure which because time has gone really wonky in the last few days) he thought that would be the last time he would see his baby for months. Instead Jim slowly opens the door to see a sleeping David curled up into the arms of an exhausted Spock. He was almost considering taking out his PADD to snap the picture, but that would be totally inappropriate. Instead he slowly takes the seat next to Spock and gently kissed the brow of his Vulcan.

"You’re here." Spock said sleepily which explains the contractions.

"Well more like you came to me. The Enterprise is orbiting New Vulcan so that you guys could pick up a truckload of Marcus’s co-conspirators, the ones that are not dead anyway. Nyota and Gaila’s team did a lot of damage. Actually Nyota did the most damage.” It was a massacre at the compound where they found Nyota. He was glad that he wasn’t the one dealing with the cleanup. But considering what he saw on the video file, it was probably best that they were already dead.

"I was informed that the extraction was successful before we were redirected to Jupiter. However,
I was not provided with any information regarding Nyota status nor was I given any information about my mother." Which makes perfect sense. Knowing that Nyota was unconscious would have been a distraction for Spock. It was best that he did not know.

"Your mom is probably on her way back to Earth if she’s not already dead. The fact that her captor was extremely human phobic probably saved her from worse punishment. He did a real number on elder T’Panda.” Jim saw the file before arriving on the ship. According to the video footage they had, she was drugged, sexually assaulted, and then taken to a room where they ran all sorts of tests on her.

“What happened to the elder?”

“Nothing good. The doctors are still trying to sort everything out.” Jim answered vaguely. “Thankfully for us he stuck with psychological torture for Amanda. He pretty much relished telling her that Chris was dead and because of that, your mom has an intense need to prove to herself that he is not.” Jim could feel the rage coming off of Spock in waves. “Don’t worry about it Spock. He’s dead now. He will never be able to fuck with your mom again.”

"I am unable to see this as a negative thing. But what about Nyota?" Jim was hoping that he could distract Spock from talking about Nyota He wanted the Vulcan to be in a better mood before he finds out about that.

"She’s okay considering everything. She’s just really tired and she over exerted herself during the extraction. Okay she really extracted herself and Nyota killed a lot of people in the process. She’s still at the hospital in the capital. Bones is going there to see if we can move Nyota to the ship. Really it’s merely exhaustion." Jim emphasized again.

"That statement makes me question your definition of ‘okay’." Spock said darkly.

"She is okay, just a little unconscious.” Spock raises an eyebrow in alarm. "Not really unconscious, like I said exhausted. She just needs a good 24 to 48 hours to sleep and she will be fine.” Spock decided it would be best not to mention that the sleep was probably medically induced. There was a baby Vulcan sleeping on his lap.

“YOU are not telling me something.” Spock stated darkly.

"Of course I’m not telling you something. You have a 2 ½-year-old in your lap who has gone
through enough shi-- stuff in the last month that he’s going to need more therapy than what we can afford. I don’t want to add anything else.” Thankfully James caught his use of profanity mid-word.

"I find that improbable due to the fact my family still have vast holdings.” The family lost a lot including any tangible assets such as property or antiques that were destroyed during the destruction of Vulcan. However, there were other assets, mostly stocks, that added up to a good size fortune. “Even though Dr. Margarita Cruz has recommended a specialist, Dr. Alayna Suarez, I’m sure we would be able to afford all sessions necessary for David to adjust to recent circumstances if our Federation health insurance does not cover such visits."

"Mostly because your father was smart enough to diversify his portfolio and invest in lots of non-Vulcan companies. I was also exaggerating to make a point.” Of course Jim couldn’t help but kiss one of Spock’s eyebrows at that point. He was always extra cute when he was annoyed.

“I’m not sure what that point was.”

"Let’s not talk about unpleasant things in front of David. We can talk grown-up things later once we are safely back on Earth.” Because Jim knew way too much as a little kid and David already knows way too much. He wants him to have some semblance of a normal childhood.

“This is logical.” Spock pulled James closer to him.

"I do try sometimes." He smirked.

“It also displays your aptitudes for being a parent.” Spock praised, but honestly Jim felt like he didn’t deserve it at all. Actually he felt like a failure right now. David deserved better.

"I’m not sure. I got my kid kidnapped within the first month.” Because keeping David out of Alexander Marcus’s hands was his number one priority and he didn’t do it.

"In the last year, there were 17 instances of babies being forcibly removed from nurseries shortly after birth.” When Spock is worried, he usually quotes random statistics at Jim.

"Spock, that is not reassuring. I said we were going to talk about happy things. Let’s talk about how we should decorate David’s room. Should we get bunk beds or something totally different? We need to get him more toys. Toys “R” Us shopping spree.” Jim needed new action figures, not
that he would ever admit that to his husband.

"I assume this would be even more for you than David." Because Spock knew him way too well.

"Of course it would be more for me and he needs a new teddy bear. I think David has squeezed the fluff out of this one." James said trying to grab the bear away from David, however the 2 ½-year-old refused to let go of the bear.

“Okay it looks like we’re going to have to get an exact replica and just switch it out in his sleep.” Although considering the child was asleep now Jim was not entirely sure that was going to work, but it was worth a try.

"Logical."

"And building blocks." They were going to have so much fun building a skyscape of San Francisco together. Jim always wanted somebody to build things with and he never got that as a kid (Sam always had other things to do and his mom wasn’t always there). David was going to have that

"Again, more toys for you." Spock kissed his neck.

"Of course. That’s also why I am getting the Enterprise playset." He smirked. “I just want David to have a good childhood. Happy things. A better childhood than I ever had Instead he has lost both of his mom’s, Christine, and even Dr. JJ. So many people have died for him. Stuff like that really f--messes with a kid.” Jim said sadly.

"But he still has us." Spock pointed out to his husband.

"Yeah he does." James said as he kissed David on the forehead before kissing Spock on the lips. Maybe, just maybe they can pull this family thing off.

XXX

Nyota opens her eyes slowly to only see white. Nyota seriously wondered where she was, but the fact that she was wrapped in a very fluffy blanket made her 98% certain she is no longer in the custody of the assholes. The last thing she remembered was fighting her way out of the compound. Apparently she made it.
"Where am I?" She asked groggily.

"Sarek Memorial Medical Center or at least that’s what they’re planning to call it eventually. Amanda is not 100% sure she wants a hospital named after her dead husband.” Only one person could deliver that so deadpan. It was Leonard. If he was with her, that meant she was safe.

"Amanda said that they should at least name things after him that makes sense like an embassy or a school." She said remembering a conversation they had months ago. She was actually on very good terms with Spock’s mom.

“A response like that tells me that brain damage is highly unlikely, Commander Uhura or maybe I should say Captain. They already want to give you your own ship for this." She doesn’t feel like being rewarded for what happened. She just wants to forget about all of this.

"I don’t want to talk about what happened.” She’s killed more people in two days then she has during her entire Starfleet career. She was a linguistics officer. She was never supposed to see combat like this. If she had a roommate other than Gaila, she probably would not have stood a chance.

"You will. Gaila needs to take your statement. Then Dr. Margarita is going to make you talk to her whether you want to or not. The security footage shows that you beat off the bastard the last time before things got worse but…”

"If you do a rape kit right now, the only evidence of sexual intercourse you’re going to find is my last consensual time with you.” Nyota told him sharply. “I stopped him.”

"Well it’s good to know that you consider that entirely consensual." Leonard tried to joke, but it fell flat.

“I don’t regret what happened that night." She tells him honestly.

"I was worried that…” Leonard started but did not finish that thought.

"I could’ve died today. They could have killed me at any moment. I just killed them instead." She doesn’t look at him. Nyota stares at her hands instead. She knows that they are clean, but she still feels the stickiness of blood.
"You didn’t have a choice." There’s a part of her that doesn’t believe him. She didn’t have to place those phasers on the kill setting.

"I know that.” She lied. “I’m tired of being afraid. Of letting fear control everything. I have spent so much time and energy on trying to avoid my mother’s mistakes that I keep making completely new ones and I don’t want to be that person.”

"What are you trying to say?” Leonard seemed confused which makes perfect sense because half the time she was confused, but not this time.

"If I was some silly schoolgirl, I would say I want you to be my boyfriend, but I don’t really like that term. We were already friends and have been for a very long time. Also you’re way too old to be a boy.” She explained in a very rambling way.

"I’m not that old." He said with mock offense.

"Older than me, but that really doesn’t matter. I want a relationship with you complete with Thanksgivings with your daughter and applying for tandem assignments. Not just sex, not just what I’ve been sticking to for the last few years. I want to let you in to my heart.” His response was to kiss her in a way that made her heart monitor go crazy.

"I may not be able to pull off the Thanksgiving thing because of the cow, but everything else is yours, especially my heart.” She was already mentally making a note to call Alexis. She would need to apologize to the mother of her sister for being a total bitch. However, maybe the legal genius would be willing to pull some strings.

““That’s good to know.” She said pulling him back down for another kiss just in time to completely miss Gaila walking into the room and sharing.

“It’s about fucking time. Too bad Christine didn’t live to see this.” And with those keywords her happiness fell away. Actually everything fell away including herself, but Leonard caught her. He held her tightly as she cried for her lost friends and everything left unsaid.

XXXX

Everyone else was back on Enterprise traveling back to Earth, but Gaila was asked to stay behind
to help clean things up. Part of her wanted to stay with Nyota. She felt horrible for the way she found out about Christine, but Nyota pushed her to stay here and finish things.

Cleanup duty in this case meant finding the others within the Vulcan government who were sympathetic toward now dead Elder Sunk’s cause. She’s sure that she will find a few. Prejudice breeds in times like these. She is certain there are factions that want things to be like they used to be and would so easily want to blame people like Amanda for the loss of Vulcan-of-old when the only one responsible for the lost was a particularly disturbed Romulan.

Maybe she would’ve volunteered to stay here anyway without the orders. She’s not sure, at least not until Spock brings him to her house.

"If you like I can put your things in the guestroom…” Spock said hesitantly.

"I’m your girlfriend.” Gaila said out loud for the first time realizing that that was the best way to describe the relationship even if she found the standard word quite strange. “I mean we have been sleeping together off and on for three years as well as emailing each other back and forth in all that time. That seems like a relationship to me, at least from the outside looking in."

"I was under the impression it was an open relationship.” It was once upon a time. But taking a hard look at herself, Nyota has been sleeping around more than she has in recent months.

"It doesn’t have to be. Besides if the most relationship phobic person I know…"

"Then maybe it’s something you want to try." Spock finished for her.

"You and I are not normal people. We have seen too much.” Spock paused for a moment as he grabbed her hand for a Vulcan style kiss. “But maybe we can get through things together.”

Gaila response was to kiss him on the mouth. She had time to figure out what all this meant. The Enterprise is going to be out of commission for months for the renovations and honestly she’s not entirely sure how long it’s going to take to completely infiltrate the Vulcan Council. She had time and she wouldn’t have to do this alone.

XXXXX

Whitney River a.k.a. Winona Kirk managed to finally get two overactive adolescents to sleep. The third was quietly reading upstairs which was fine with Winona since she was practically a teenager and she really required less sleep due to her Vulcan physiology.
Winona volunteered to keep the girls for another night so that Amanda could stay with her fiancé. She realized that Chris needed the woman right now and Winona was really happy that her oldest friend found somebody that really loved him. Besides even if Jim was still mad at her, Amanda was family and so were her daughters. Winona will make sure these family members are safe. It was the least she could do.

Now alone, Winona flicked the screen on in the living room downstairs and started to stream the news. Most were reporting on the Jupiter incident as they dubbed it and the attempted coup d’état of the Vulcan government. It was being framed as an isolated incident that only one member participated in. They managed to keep out mention of the plans to use the Vulcan puppet government to start war with the Klingons. That would just cause mass hysteria.

Winona was just about to flip to something entertaining when she saw the image of her ex has been being dragged out of the Iowa City spaceport in restraints. She knew it was him because Winona has been on the alert for him ever since the day she ran away. She was always worried that he would find her.

In the back, trying not to be seen was Kayah and again she would recognize her wife anywhere. That explains why her wife couldn’t say anything about the mission. She didn’t want to get Winona’s hopes up in case Frank actually made it to the spaceport. If the media were to be believed, the bastard almost made it, but was caught before he could board a shuttle to who knows where.

She quickly pulled up the second screen and started searching for anything about Frank. Apparently the bastard was the Dragon for Marcus, doing all of his dirty work such as securing weapons and finding people perfectly willing to off his own daughter.

The bastard was charged with everything from corruption to attempting to overthrow the Federation. Considering Frank was one of the highest ranking members of Marcus’ group that was still alive, they were probably going to throw the book at him. There’s no way he’s going to be able to wiggle out of it this time.

Winona wasn’t sure she wanted to laugh or cry. For the first time in years, decades even, Frank couldn’t hurt her. For the first time in forever, she was safe. Of course before she could decide, she heard the telltale signs of somebody entering their code into the front door. It had to be Kayah. No one else had access codes.

"So, I guess you know where I was." Her wife said as she pointed to the screen up front.
“He’s really in jail now?” She asked hesitantly. Frank has been arrested before, but he always managed to get out. Nobody believed her. No one wanted to believe her.

“I locked the door on his cell myself. He’s not getting out this time. You can’t get bail when you’re being charged with something like conspiracy to overthrow the Federation and insight war with the Klingons. That’s in addition to the sentient trafficking and everything else. He won’t get out. I won’t let him.” She sat down beside Winona.

"He has good lawyers.”

"They don’t stand a chance. I’ll make sure it.” She tried to grab Winona’s hand, but she just pulled away.

"So it’s done now. You caught your man. Will you leaving soon?"

"Why would I be leaving?” Kayah looked at her with a hurt expression.

"Because your mission is done. What’s the point of you staying any longer?"

"I love you." Winona doesn’t believe her.

"As I just found out a few days ago, you are a professional liar.” She said bitterly.

"So are you. You were Section 31 before I was out of elementary school. You were the legendary Black Widow. That was part of your past you never mentioned.” Kayah said defensively.

"Because we work with too many assholes and Jonathan Jackson couldn’t keep his head out of the comic books." She hated that nickname. It was inappropriate considering she was a widow.

"You were never my mission.” Kayah pleaded with her.
“Yes, I was working on the Frank case before I met you. I was a profiler for the Federation Bureau of investigations, but more of a consultant really. I worked for them part-time. We were trying to figure out who was responsible for a massive sentient trafficking ring responsible for the kidnappings of at least four dozen people around major Starfleet installations including Riverside. Then one night I was blowing off steam and I ran into the most beautiful woman I’ve ever seen in my entire life. I instantly fell in love with her. I had no idea you were Frank’s ex-wife until you told me who you really were and by then it was too late, I was already head over feet in love with you.”

"Again, you are a professional liar and you have a psychology degree. Do you really have a psychology degree?" Because how much does she really know about the woman she’s married to. Not much apparently.

"Yes. Not everything I told you was a lie. You knew I did some consulting work in law enforcement in addition to the work with kids. Actually most of my lives were lies of omission. You met my real family and my real friends. I got kicked out of the FBI for you."

"What?"

"When I found out you were actually Winona Kirk, I had to tell my superiors. I was given a choice. I either had to leave you or stop working as a consultant. However, somebody in section 31 was watching and I ended up there instead, full-time this time."

"You lost your job because of me?" Winona asked slightly surprised. She remembers a couple of weeks where Kayah was very stressed out after the engagement, but she just thought it was normal wedding stress.

"It was never a choice. You are worth more to me than anything in the universe except for maybe Georgia. I know she’s not biologically my daughter, but in my heart she is.” At this point Winona was crying.

"I will do whatever I have to do to earn your trust. If you want me to resign from Section 31, I will. If we need to go to therapy for the rest of my natural life to work through this then that’s what I will do but I’m not giving up on you.” Winona actually crying by this point.

"So you’re perfectly fine sleeping on the couch for the next month." She said through her tears.

"Whatever it takes." Kayah took a Kleenex from the nearby table in an effort to physically wipe
away Winona’s tears.

"I’m expecting breakfast in bed tomorrow." She said grabbing Kayah and dragging her upstairs to their bedroom.

To be concluded

Chapter End Notes

Yes we are only one chapter away from the end of the story. I was originally going to do this in one big chapter but when the chapters started to go over 10,000 words I decided to split it.
Chapter 27: Happy-ish Ever After part two

Chapter Notes

Thank you to everyone who read or reviewed the last chapter. Thank you to everybody who has left kudos or added the story to your alerts. Now, the end is really here. This is the final chapter of the truth about love.

Anyway, I would just like to take a moment to thank everybody who has worked on the story with me and all of you that have hung on for the last two years through everything including a movie that completely altered the plot. It’s been an insane ride and I loved every single moment of it.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

It has been a very long four days in Jim’s personal opinion. Lots of briefings, several of which are with his sort of step mom. Kayah keeps trying to get him to call Winona, but he isn’t ready yet. Maybe by Thanksgiving Jim will be ready for a real heart-to-heart, but not right now. There’s too much going on at the moment to deal with his Winona issues.

Seriously he hates when major incidents like this happen. Jim will have paperwork for months to come. Although, not enough to keep him from teaching command classes at the Academy.

The other thing of major importance was getting their house together. Amanda and the kids have temporarily moved into Chris’s apartment. Amanda said this is so she can take care of him on the road to recovery. Jim thinks otherwise considering Chris only has one guest room which means the girls are sharing and Amanda is obviously sleeping in his bed. When Amanda moves into her much bigger townhouse, Jim knows that Chris is coming with her. The giant engagement ring is testimony to that.

This probably just means that his mother-in-law will speed up her timetable for finding their new house before the wedding especially if they try to pull off a Christmas or Valentine’s Day wedding. They are still talking dates, but Jim is sure they will have something soon. Jim was personally hoping for Valentine’s Day because maybe by that point Jim hoped that Spock would be perfectly okay with his mom getting remarried. Spock is okay-ish with the relationship right now, but not completely ready for the wedding just yet. He can take the two holding hands in front of him which is progress.

However, Spock definitely does not share the enthusiasm of his baby sisters who are having too much fun planning this wedding. They already have files filled with wedding stuff and ideas. Color swatches are everywhere. He sees a future in wedding planning for baby T’Pay. Even Spock smirked a little when his mom was ambushed to pick a color scheme, in a very Spock way.
Getting David’s room together was easy now that they had control of the townhouse again. David took over T’Pay’s bedroom. They kept the room purple, but the Disney princesses are gone. However they kept the Ms. Marvel and Captain Marvel posters. The dollhouse has been relegated to the play room/guest room and most of the Barbie doll stuff was gone. Although David still had a few that used to belong to Rebecca. Neither Spock nor Jim had the heart to get rid of her dolls and just gave them to David who loved playing with them especially a certain blonde one that looks like Carol in her blue Starfleet uniform. Besides David should have something of his Aunt Becky.

So now that David was mostly settled, they were meeting with Alexis again to hopefully get everything squared away with the custody situation. Alexander Marcus was dead, but the courts may decide that anyone else would be better than a same-sex interspecies couple where one party has a history of mental illness and the other party has a history of being a punching bag for one of the most notorious criminals in the history of the Federation along with his own colorful criminal record.

Of course, now that Frank was locked up, Jim is certain the courts are going to see some of his childhood arrests in a completely different light. Actually, the fact that half of the Riverside Police Department has been arrested in the last four days due to corruption and being part of Frank’s network was doing that anyway. Let’s just say that most of Jim’s teenage arrests are now being called into question and there’s a really good chance that they’re going to all be expunged before Christmas, if not Thanksgiving.

“Things are better now that Marcus is gone. No emergency custody hearings for one thing, but as a side effect the courts are still going to have to determine if you and Spock are the best fit for David.” Alexis explain to the couple.

“What does that involved?” Spock asked.

“You still have a social worker and I’m sure David will need to see a court appointed psychologist. His grandfather arranged for his mom to be murdered. That’s going to cause all sorts of problems.”

“We are aware of the social worker. However, we have already made arrangements for David to meet with Dr. Alayna Suarez so the court appointed psychologists is superfluous.” Spock explained.

“The courts will still want David to see somebody not on your payroll. Somebody impartial.” Jim snickered to himself. Maybe David’s social worker would be different than the ones Jim encountered as a child.
“Actually our new social worker Daisy called to introduce herself. I’m sure she will be stopping by any moment. From the first phone call at least, she seemed like a decent human being.” She appeared to be a whole a lot nicer than most of the social workers Jim met as a child.

“I’m not surprised about that at all.” Alexis sighed. “I know you’re both worried, but you guys are in good shape. The house is clean, the fridge is filled with healthy food, David has lots of toys and the only marks on him were caused by his now very dead grandfather. Even the problem spots like your mental health history and Jim’s questionable past are less likely to be problematic now. All of Jim’s arrestors are now being called into question due to the Riverside PD corruption scandal and even Spock’s therapist gives a glowing evaluation. ”Alexis tried to reassure the couple.

“They could still bring up other pieces of dirty laundry like how David came to be in the first place.” Jim got a glare for mentioning that.

“That may not be as big of a problem now thanks to operation discredit Marcus. A lot of the facts involved in what happened including the fact that you were drugged are no longer classified.” Actually they were still classified, it was just that they’ve been dumped on the Internet (Honestly, Jim has no idea how that happened).

“Look, right now the worst thing you have to deal with is trying to get David’s teddy bear away from him.”

“That’s going to take a miracle.” Jim mumbled under his breath.

"Did you try switching it out for a replica?” The lawyer asked.

"Yes. He came to our room to retrieve the original before we were able to wash it." David then proceeded to crawl into their bed. Thankfully they’ve gotten in the habit of sleeping fully dressed. Jim will not risk traumatizing the child if he walked in on the couple after an enthusiastic round of “fun grown-up playtime”. Although Jim is just happy that they’ve had some time recently for grown-up playtime.

"If that’s the worst thing you’re dealing with, then you’ll be fine." Alexis actually laughed at that.

"He has nightmares.” Which is the other reason why they’re going to sleep fully dressed. It’s a lot easier to run to David’s room if Jim is at least wearing boxer shorts.
"That’s what the therapist is for."

"I have nightmares.” Jim confessed reluctantly. “We both still do about him being taken away from us."

"Understandable with what happened, but Alexander Marcus is dead. Carol has no other living relatives that will be suitable to raise an almost three-year-old, at least not for a couple of years. At worst, the courts may decide that Amanda and your soon to be stepfather may be better temporarily, but the mere fact that neither of you blew a hole through Alexander Marcus’ head really works in your favor.”

Jim felt it best not to mention that only occurred because Jane Jackson took care of that for him, but he knew better than to say that out loud. Jim will be forever indebted to the woman who just did everything she could to keep David safe and then turned around and not only took out the man who kidnapped him, but also the man who triggered David’s premature birth. It’s a shame she paid with her life.

“From the way you worded your earlier statement it appears that Carol does have other living relatives.”

“Carol has a cousin, Kristen Klucking, formally Klucking-Marcus, who is barely passed the Federation drinking age. She dropped the Marcus part of her last name when uncle dearest shipped her off to a British boarding school and never bothered to call her again. She is now a first-year student at Starfleet Academy at the London campus. Honestly, I didn’t even know she existed until she contacted me to see if she could come to the funeral.” Alexis explained.

They would be planning a funeral for Carol, Rebecca, and Christine. Carol was obvious because it was their responsibility. No one else was left except for apparently a not quite three-year-old and a first-year cadet. In the case of Rebecca, the majority of her family was either light years away on various diplomatic assignments or still on Betazoid. Only Rebecca’s great-grandfather was planetside. He was also 102.

Christine’s family was equally out of the way, but the big difference was Rebecca’s family would probably be there if they could. Christine did not have the same luxury. The only decent relative she had was killed 3 ½ years ago in the battle of Vulcan.

"That’s not my call. Spock is in charge of the guest list for this.” Jim said turning to his husband.
"She should be allowed to mourn." Spock said after a moment. "David should also be given the opportunity to meet any family he has left.

"I will let her know." Alexis said solemnly.

"Thank you."

"I will keep you posted with how things are going. Now if you guys excuse me, I have an 11:30 conference call with an asshole lawyer from Georgia." With that Spock and Jim vacated her office. Although Jim had this feeling that the asshole lawyer from Georgia was probably responsible for Bones being so sad all the time.

XXXXXXX

“My relationship with Carol Marcus was complicated. Though I knew her for a time, I can say that I never truly understood her. I never really knew her except the version of her that she wanted me to see. However I do know one thing. Carol Marcus loved her son… our son.” Spock corrected himself from the podium set up for him in the usual place on Starfleet grounds were Starfleet funerals take place.

“She would do anything for David. She did do anything to protect him. I choose to remember that love and the fact that she left me with her most prized possession. I endeavor to protect David with the veracity that Carol did in life and to show him that he will always be loved.” With that the officiator handed Carol’s flag to Spock and Nyota took his place at the podium.

“Christine Chapel was my best friend. Unfortunately at the time of her death, we were fighting. It seems so silly now…” Nyota continued to speak about Christine, about the silliness of the fight and her sacrifice to protect David, the fact that she was defiant to the end. The whole thing made Chris very uneasy.

Chris hated funerals. He always has. He’s been to way too many in his Starfleet career. He always felt the worst funeral he ever went to was the one for Nhi, his number one. However, the funeral for her niece was equally heartbreaking despite the heartfelt eulogy being delivered. So young. Too young. She gave her life protecting the young boy in his arms. He will never forget that.

Of course the fact they were burying the two moms of that same child made this worse. Spock’s earlier eulogy still had Chris bleary-eyed and that was after her very young cousin Kristen shared a story about Carol protecting her from Alexander Marcus when the teenager told her guardian that she was a lesbian and he reacted badly. God, that man was a bastard.
Of course they weren’t really burying anyone, just spreading ashes and even that won’t happen here. This was mostly a memorial service. Tomorrow the ashes would be spread over the San Francisco Bay in a less formal event. But it didn’t matter. This was still a goodbye on the lawns of Starfleet as is the tradition for fallen comrades.

Dr. Margarita suggested that David be here. She felt the child needed a chance to say goodbye. However, Chris didn’t want the child to be overwhelmed, meeting his unknown cousin was enough, which was why Chris was staying towards the back of the group with David still perched on his lap.

Yes, he was still in the chair. His body was slowly coming back. Chris actually took 20 steps yesterday in physical therapy. However, it may still be a miracle if he will be able to dance by the Valentine’s Day wedding day. Chris is still deciding if that date is too soon or not soon enough. He just hopes that they have a house by that point because although he loves his apartment, it’s way too small for four people for any significant period of time.

Chris would like to blame the fact he was preoccupied with Nyota breaking down the moment she was presented with Christine’s flag for not recognizing the woman completely dressed in black with her head covered who was sitting next to him. Actually, it wasn’t until David pulled out of his arms to go to the stranger that Chris realized who was sitting beside him.

“Dr. JJ.” David screamed before being shushed by the woman.

"No one’s supposed to know I’m here." She whispered. Thankfully nobody else saw her, too focused on the Federation’s first ambassador to Betazoid eulogizing his great-granddaughter.

"You’re supposed to be dead." Chris whispered to the woman.

"I know that. I should’ve died nearly 300 years ago that yet I’m still here." Jane quipped.

"I’m not surprised. How did you survive this time?" Chris really wanted to know that.

"I’m sure you know that Pavel Chekov is also Section 31.” She mentioned casually.
"I do now." Chris is now well aware that despite being in charge of a secret organization with in Starfleet there is so much he doesn’t know about what’s going on. He’s sure that Lume’s fingerprints were all over this particular mission. It makes sense. If Jane Jackson is gone, people will stop looking for her and it would be a lot harder to question the official story.

“I was beamed out the second I dropped the ring and then hidden away until we reached Earth.” He wasn’t sure how much of that story he believed, but considering no one else on Enterprise including Spock mentioned anything else about her possible survival, it seems probable.

"Where it was decided that you are better off dead.” Chris said it as a statement not a question.

"Something like that. But I needed to be here to say goodbye.” She said passing David back to him. “I considered wearing white, but I needed to be inconspicuous. Unfortunately the little one recognized me.” She said pointing to David.

"Thankfully they’re too preoccupied with the service to pay attention.” Also almost all the seats anywhere near them were empty.

“For the moment.” Jane replied.

“What will you do now?”

"I’m not sure. I think I need to go somewhere where Jane Jaya can get lost in the crowd and blend into the scenery. Maybe somewhere where they need doctorates, but not genetic engineers. Maybe a colony somewhere. I don’t know, but I’ll figure it out.” She said getting up from the seat beside him.

"But I may come back for the wedding.” With that she was gone.

XXXXX

"I can’t believe we’re taking our barely 3-year-old to therapy.” Spock heard his husband say from the floor of the child friendly doctor’s office as they waited for Dr. Suarez to arrive. Jim was playing with brightly colored blocks because in Spock’s opinion, Jim needed to make up for an inadequate childhood whenever possible.

On the other hand, David was preoccupied with the dollhouse and his Starfleet Barbie doll. They were able to get David to eventually give up the bear so they could clean it. However, now he is
carrying the Starfleet officer Barbie doll that once belonged to Rebecca everywhere. Jim likes the doll because she has a phaser that lights up. Spock finds it ironic that her Starfleet uniform actually covers more than the actual uniform.

“It is necessary. Especially if we want him to be well-adjusted enough for daycare. At present he will not be without either of us for more time than it takes to use the facilities unless he is asleep.” And even then 82.3% of the time they will discover that David somehow managed to crawl in their bed by morning. This was the main reason why Jim no longer slept nude with Spock even though the extra heat made him somewhat uncomfortable.

"Do we really have to put him in daycare?" James does not like daycare because he was teased a lot as a child during his time there due to having a deceased father. It is logical that he believed David will suffer similar ridicule.

"We will both be teaching at the Academy next semester. The only alternative would be to start him in preschool, but…” Spock stops speaking then because the preschool subject was somewhat contentious. The only preschool that can handle a precocious three-year-old of David’s intellect with adequate security happened to be where Winona Kirk/Whitney River worked. Spock knows his husband well enough to know that Jim has not quite forgiven her for her decision to fake her death to protect both herself and her unborn child.

“Winona is the only preschool teacher in the greater San Francisco area that can deal with him. Which makes me worried for the daycare prospects as well. But I’m not sure if I’m ready to deal with her every day after school and parent teacher conferences.

"You will need to deal with it eventually." Spock reminded his husband. Winona and Christopher were still friends.

"Not today. Let’s focus on David’s issues.” James said just as a woman in her late 50s open the door. Spock did not know what to make of her “We’re all Ms. Marvel” T-shirt.

“I dressed like this because it makes my little darlings more at ease with me. I’m Dr. Suarez.” She extended her hand to James, but thankfully knew the proper greeting to offer Spock.

"My wife and I studied on Vulcan when we were first married. So I’m familiar with the customs. It’s part of the reason why Margarita recommended me. Actually, she was one of Margarita’s instructors at the Academy."
“So your wife is Starfleet?” James asked in an attempt to make conversation.

“She was a Starfleet therapist actually. She died on a mission a couple years ago.” Dr. Suarez said with a sad smile.

“I’m sorry for your loss.” James said sincerely.

“It’s okay. I’ve dealt with it and I’m here to help you guys with things.” She said before turning to David.

“My name is Alayna. What’s yours?”

“David.” He answered quickly before returning his attentions to the dollhouse.

“Can I play with you?” Dr. Suarez asked. David just shrugged. For a moment Spock wondered how this would be beneficial.

“What is your Barbie’s name?”

“Mommy Carol.” At those words Spock looked down at the Barbie and realized the resemblance to Carol for the first time. David even cut the doll’s hair, with safety scissors he wasn’t even supposed to have access to, to match the length of Carol’s hair. This explains why David’s affections have transferred to the doll in recent days.

“Tell me more about mommy Carol.” Surprisingly enough David responded. Spock felt for the first time that maybe Dr. Suarez would be beneficial.

XXX

Nyota really wished she was still in space instead of dealing with funerals, hearings, and boxing up Christine Chapel’s meager possessions. That last part was worse than testifying about her almost rape, but just barely. She cried a lot when Leonard told her what happened weeks ago in that Vulcan hospital room. He wanted to wait until she got back to Enterprise to break the news, but Gaila’s slip changed that. It didn’t matter, as soon as she returned to the ship, she ran to Christine’s room only to find it completely empty. Honestly she stayed in there crying until the ship made it to Earth.
They scattered Christine’s ashes over San Francisco Bay four weeks ago after the official memorial service at Starfleet. She wished Gaila could have been there, but she was too busy dealing with the fallout from Marcus’s attempt to take over the Vulcan government. Her cover as the intended of a Council member was coming in handy (although Nyota is not 100% sure it’s actually a cover anymore because there was something going on there). Three additional officials from the Council have been arrested in the last month.

However, she had Spock and Jim to hold on to her as the ashes were spread. She was not alone, so that was a good thing.

The day after the spreading of the ashes she was testifying about everything to a grand jury. A few days after, she was going through Christine’s things figuring out what to take and what to give the charity. She cried a lot. Nyota was still angry with herself because they left things so messy between the two. Her other self warned her about this, but she believed that warning only applied to Leonard. She was so wrong.

But she can’t be completely upset about that because things are going well with Leonard. Good enough that they’re going to be sharing an apartment when they returned to San Francisco in January and her semester of advanced Captain training begins. She was keeping her field promotion. A part of her is upset about leaving Enterprise, another part of her was excited about getting her own ship. She was the youngest female Captain in Starfleet history. Not bad at all.

Right now she and Leonard were together in the woods of Georgia at some cabin belonging to some distant cousin of Leonard’s that was allowing them to use it. Margarita felt she could use some time away from Starfleet in San Francisco to deal with everything and she was essentially ordered to take a vacation. Considering everything she was dealing with including a sick father, a dead friend, killing 19 people (despite it being a life or death situation, it still bothered her), and almost being raped, she agreed with the psychologist. Weeks of good 100% consensual sex and just resting helped get her head back where it needed to be, especially if she was going to be getting her own ship.

So they’re not exactly spending Thanksgiving with Jo Jo, but she has successfully managed to cook, not replicate, a turkey by herself. It’s a little crispy, but that’s why warm chicken stock was created.

"You know we could just have turkey burgers or something like that. We are going to be eating turkey for the next three days." Leonard said as he brought the gigantic bird to the table. Unfortunately the store she went to did not have a single bird under 7 kg, so they really would be eating turkey for days. But they were going to be in Georgia at least another week so that was fine.

"This is our first Thanksgiving in years where we are not eating something straight out of the
replicator; therefore we eat real macaroni and real turkey and will enjoy ourselves. Tomorrow we will burn off all the calories going to real brick-and-mortar stores to buy actual furniture for our actual apartment." At least they would go to brick-and-mortar stores that have locations in San Francisco that would ship their once they got back.

"We could just rent the furniture." Leonard suggested as he went back to get the macaroni and cheese. Leonard had side dish duty which was good because at least she knew one dish was edible.

“No I told you we were going to have a real relationship. Renting furniture is just so temporary.” Besides it wasn’t like she was going to end up doing a five-year mission. They would be doing short missions which meant it would be a good ideal for her to set up something permanent and she liked the idea of setting up something permanent with Leonard.

"So buying a couch together shows commitment?” He asked flippantly.

"By my standards. Actually having sex with the same person on two different days is a commitment.”

"I’m so happy I met that standard.” Leonard said just as they heard a knock at the door.

"I really hope that’s not your crazy neighbor bringing more pie.” Nyota sighed as she reluctantly got up from the table.

"It was good pie.”

"She stayed here for four hours talking about her ingrown toenails as soon as she found out you were a doctor.”

"Welcome to the south, darling.” The person knocked again and she started walking to the front door faster. It was not in fact their crazy neighbor, but rather Alexis with a very special guest. As soon as she opened the door, Jo Jo ran right past her to her father. Leonard was on the verge of tears as he enveloped her in a hug.

"You actually came through." Nyota said excitedly. She knew Alexis was a miracle worker, but this was still a surprise to her
"It took a while because honestly, that woman made Alexander Marcus seem like a good person and her team of lawyers were real assholes.” Alexis told her in French so that Jo Jo would not hear them speaking bad about her mother.

“But you worked it out.” She also replied in French.

"Of course I worked it out. I’m not a kidnapper. At least I managed to work things out for Thanksgiving. You have to drop her off Monday. Then I’ll see if I can work on something more permanent.” Alexis smiled at her.

"Thank you.” Nyota told her trying not to shed happy tears.

"You’re welcome. Just remember that you have to stop by the house for Christmas. Your dad wants to see you.” A year ago she would have said no. Three months ago she would have said no. But if the Christine situation taught her anything, it was that she couldn’t hold a grudge anymore. She needed to let go of the past before it suffocated her.

“We’ll be there.”

“That’s all I ask.” Alexis said getting ready to leave.

"You can stay if you want. I made way too much food." She said pointing to the way too big bird. Maybe she should have went with the turkey loaf instead.

"She made a whole turkey even though it was just going to be the two of us?” Alexis raised an eyebrow at her.

"And he made macaroni and cheese, collard greens, potatoes, green beans, and cauliflower. There is plenty of food. There’s even enough for you to bring some to Ivy if we have any Tupperware containers that can survive the transporter or are you taking the shuttle back to San Francisco?” Nyota asked.

"Don’t forget my pumpkin pie.” Leonard called out from the back.
"I love your pumpkin pie.” Jo Jo said excitedly.

“Well I do have to eat and the next shuttle for San Francisco doesn’t leave for at least four more hours.” Alexis said as she walked in and closed the door behind her. Even though they ended up burning the Crescent rolls, it turned out to be a great Thanksgiving.

XXXXXXXX

Jim seriously wondered what he was doing sitting in his vintage red convertible (gift from Spock) outside of his mom’s house. Now Jim remembered, his favorite baby sister-in-law all was very unhappy that Georgia could not spend Thanksgiving with the family even though David’s brand-new cousin Kristen did. It’s not Jim’s fault that he instantly found a kindred spirit in Kristen and David needed to be exposed to some normal family members. (Okay Jim completely adores Kristen because she was the one who leaked certain files that made her uncle look like the bastard he truly was. Jim may have a new apprentice now that Nyota is moving on to Captain things.)

Thankfully the four-year-old did not realize it was Jim’s fault that Georgia was not there which is why he was spending the day traditionally dedicated to half-price PADD to trying to fix things with his mom. Also, after two disastrous instances with daycare, Jim has come to the conclusion that his mom was probably the only preschool teacher/childcare provider in San Francisco who would be willing to take a three-year-old in the middle of the school year. David hasn’t done very well with daycare. Actually Jim and Spock managed to be called in four times in six days. Not a good sign. Even though child welfare services are good with David being with him and Spock at the moment, another call about daycare disaster behavior may change that. So basically Winona Kirk is their only hope right now.

Jim knew she was there because Georgia and her other mom were off with Amanda and the girls for a day filled with shopping and probably wedding planning. Winona opted out because she deals with enough screaming children on a daily basis to not want to deal with them on Black Friday as they scream at their parents to buy them replicator phasers. However, Spock was not as lucky. He was currently being dragged around by his little sisters.

So Jim may have been so wrapped up in his own thoughts that he did not see Winona until he heard a knock at his car door. It’s been a long couple weeks filled with hearings and teaching prep. Seriously, why are they making Jim teach at the Academy? Every single person in his class was going to be older than him except for Nyota.

"Are you actually planning to come in?” Winona asked startling him.
"I was thinking about it." Jim said nonchalantly once he regained his composure.

"Well in that case can I come in?" Jim just nods his head yes. "This is a nice car." Winona said after several moments of silence.

“It was a wedding present from Spock, although this is the first time that I’ve really gotten to use it.” They were in space within a couple of weeks after the destruction of Vulcan. They were back on planet for a few weeks due to the volcano incident hearings, but Jim didn’t exactly have time to enjoy the car because they were too busy being railroaded by Starfleet.

“T’Pay said that you’re going to be here for a while.”

“That’s true. At least till June.” It could be longer. Jim wasn’t entirely sure if he and Spock wanted David to be raised in space. It was something they were still discussing. “What else did she tell you?” Jim was curious because the baby Vulcan had a big mouth.

“That she’s having lots of fun playing with her baby nephew.”

"Did she show you the pictures of her and Georgia covering him with Amanda’s makeup?" So Jim may have been avoiding his baby sister, but his son has not and maybe all the nice things he has been saying about Georgia has made Jim a little more willing to at least talk to Winona.

"Yes. I’m pretty sure Sam did the same thing to you.” She smiled for a moment before she became extremely sad. Jim understood that look.

"We still need to figure out what we’re going to do with the body." Jim finally said acknowledging the Sam shaped elephant in the room.

"I figured you just had him cremated. Nobody knew how to contact me after they found the body." They were planning the other three funerals. Jim considered adding a fourth person but it didn’t seem fair. He didn’t want to take Sam’s away from Winona.

"I had other more pressing things to do and planning three funerals was bad enough." Jim said as an excuse.
"We should spread his ashes in space. He always wanted to live on a different planet someday." Winona said wistfully.

"I will find someplace nice."

"I’m sorry. I should have never brought that bastard into our lives." Winona doesn’t even look at him as she speaks.

"You didn’t know it was going to turn out like this.” With Sam being dead. However, Jim had the decency to not say that out loud.

“I’m still sorry. I know I’m never going to be able to make up for what happened. I really wish things were different.” Jim did too. He wished he didn’t want her for the last eight years, but what was the point of being so angry now.

"Well at least Georgia will have a good childhood." And after a month, Jim can actually say that out loud without any real bitterness.

"Excluding your father, I think I have better taste in women than men.” Winona joked.

"Even if she turned out to be a secret agent."

"Still better than Frank. She’s never tried to kill me." Winona said in all seriousness. Statements like that make him really glad for Spock.

"There is that." Jim just shrugged.

"So does this mean we’re talking to each other?” Winona asked after a bit.

"Means that you can come to Christmas and I won’t run the other way.” Jim said only half joking.

"That’s progress."
“And how would you feel about David joining your preschool class the moment he turns three?”

"Oh please just lie about his birthday and let him start a little bit early. He’s already reading."

“Only a little bit.” Okay David can read Green Eggs and Ham by himself, but that’s a beginner’s book.

"And by the time he’s old enough to go to kindergarten he’ll be doing algebra."

"Probably,” Jim conceded.

"I know you’re jealous of your sister.” Seriously why does this woman still know Jim all too well?

"Because you finally left the bastard for good for her.” He answered honestly.

“I was hoping you would have grown out of the sibling jealousy by now. I know you don’t believe me, but I did it for you to keep you guys safe."

"I’m starting to believe you.” Jim admitted reluctantly. “However, it may take me a little bit longer to completely accept that.”

"The only truth you need to accept is that I love you. Maybe sometimes I did the wrong thing. I made a lot of bad choices. I have 1,000,001 regrets, but I never regretted you.” That’s when he hugged her. Maybe he wasn’t completely ready to forgive her today, but he will eventually because despite everything he really does love her. In the end, love is the only thing that matters.

The end

Chapter End Notes

I considered doing a wedding epilogue, but too many of my stories end with weddings
so I’m going to do an entire sequel instead. On A3O you can put this series on alert. Give me a couple of months because there is some MCU stuff I want to work on but be prepared for fluff and a wedding. Maybe more than one who knows?

Bonus question: For those of you who read my other stories, I included two Easter eggs in this chapter. What or rather who were they?

Note: In many municipalities in the US children who are gifted or have certain disabilities are allowed to start preschool as soon as they turn three. This happened with one of my nieces even though her birthday was in the middle of January. (And the fact that she’s graduating high school this year makes me feel old, even though I’m just barely thirtyish.) The downside is you have to stay in preschool until you hit the normal kindergarten age. In my niece’s case, this meant two and half years of preschool. This is what’s happening with David.

End Notes

This is pretty much the darkest chapter in this story. It will get lighter. Those of you that read the original, or anything else that I have written, you know that I tend to mix the light and the dark together. The last story started light and got more serious. This story will start serious and become fluffier as time goes on.

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!